

# Pregnancy – The prime time for Top Nutrition

There are many things that you can do before and during your pregnancy to provide your child with the best start possible. This pamphlet will clarify what the best nutrition is for you and your baby.

*A healthy pregnancy is key  
to a healthy baby!*



# It's All About Iron

Iron carries oxygen to your cells. Low iron stores can lead to low birth weight or early birth, and can make you more tired and prone to colds or infections.

All pregnant women should take a vitamin with 16 to 20 mg of iron throughout their pregnancy. The vitamin supplement is in addition to eating a diet rich in iron.

- ☑ The best sources of iron are: clams, tofu, liver, meat products, and legumes like baked beans or kidney beans.
- ☑ Other sources of iron are: iron-enriched pastas and cereals, eggs, dried fruits, nuts, seeds, fish and cooked spinach.

The iron that your body takes in can be affected by other dietary factors. These include:

- ☑ Tea and coffee which can reduce iron absorption. Drink them after or between meals.
- ☑ Vitamin C can help iron absorption. Some sources are orange juice, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cantaloupe and strawberries. Take these as part of your meal.

# The Developmental Duo: Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D are both important to the development of your baby's teeth and bones. Making sure that you are consuming good sources of calcium and vitamin D is also important to maintain your bone status. Not taking enough can increase the risk of osteoporosis (weak bones).

## Calcium

The recommended daily intake of calcium during pregnancy is 1000 mg.

- ☑ The best sources of calcium are: milk, yogurt, cheese and fortified soy beverages.
- ☑ Other sources of calcium are: tofu, legumes, figs, salmon with bones, almonds and sesame seeds.
- ☑ Calcium-fortified orange juice can be used sometimes. It has very little protein so it should not replace milk.

## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is needed to help your body absorb calcium. The recommended intake is 200 IU per day for both pregnant and non-pregnant women.

- ☑ Your body can make some vitamin D from sun exposure. However with sunscreen and the Canadian winter, we do not tend to make enough.
- ☑ Key sources of vitamin D are: milk, fortified soy beverage, margarine, salmon, egg yolk and some yogurts.

# Think Folic Acid First

Folic acid is a B vitamin that you should start taking before you become pregnant. Ideally, all women who could become pregnant should take a multivitamin with 0.4 mg folic acid and continue through their pregnancy. It is needed so that your baby's spine and brain will develop normally. The vitamin supplement is in addition to eating a diet rich in folic acid.

- ☑ Great food sources of folic acid are: asparagus, avocado, broccoli, brussels sprouts, spinach, beets, dark green leafy vegetables, orange juice, oranges, peas, black beans, kidney beans, lentils, peanuts, and sunflower seeds.
- ☑ In Canada, folic acid is added to flour. This means that any bread, buns, or pasta made in Canada will give you some folic acid in your diet.



Too much caffeine is not good for you or your developing baby. You should consume less than 300mg caffeine per day during pregnancy. One cup of coffee has 150mg of caffeine. Teas and colas have 50mg per cup. Avoid all energy drinks.

# Should I try an Herbal Product?

The effects of many herbal products are not well studied, especially in pregnancy. Just because they are "natural" does not mean they are safe. Herbal teas are becoming a common beverage. Pregnant women need to be aware of possible dangerous side effects to their baby.

## SAFE DURING PREGNANCY

Citrus Peel  
Ginger  
Lemon Balm  
Orange Peel  
Rose Hip

## NOT SAFE DURING PREGNANCY

Aloe  
Buckhorn  
Chamomile  
Coltsfoot  
Comfrey  
Duckroot  
Juniper Berries  
Labrador Tea  
Lobelia  
Pennyroyal  
Senna Leaves

NOTE: orange pekoe and flavoured black tea are not herbal. They are safe.

# So, How Much Extra Food Should I Eat?

You do not need any extra food than usual during the first trimester. In the second and third trimester, you need 2-3 extra servings each day. (Refer to *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* for your base food guide servings per day based on age).

## A Healthy Weight Gain

The amount of weight you gain and the way you gain it can help tell if your baby is growing as expected. The ideal range for a baby's birth weight is 3.5 to 4 kilograms or 7¾ to 8¾ pounds.

- Slow and steady weight gain is best.
- First Trimester guideline: gain 1-3.5 kg (2-8 lbs) total
- Second and Third Trimester guideline: 0.3-0.5 kg (½ lb to 1 lb) per week
- Total weight gain guidelines are based on your pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI). Talk with your family health care practitioner to understand more about healthy weight gain.

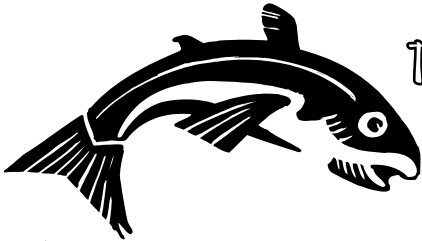
## Be Finicky about Food Safety

Food borne illness and food poisoning are particularly dangerous during pregnancy. They can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, blindness or birth defects in the baby.

Some foods are more at risk of being contaminated.

NOT safe during pregnancy are:

- Unpasteurized milk, juice or cider
- Soft cheeses eg. feta, brie
- Pâtés
- Sprouts (of any kind)
- Sushi
- Undercooked meats, particularly hamburger
- Raw or ungraded eggs
- Uncooked wieners or deli meats



## Fill me in on the Fish Facts

The new *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* recommends eating at least two servings of fish per week. When you are pregnant there are some fish to avoid because of mercury levels. Here are some facts:

- Omega-3 fatty acids from fish are good for you.
- Omega-3 fatty acids play a role in the development of your baby's brain, nervous system and retina.
- Mercury is a toxin found in large predatory fish. The toxin can lead to brain damage in your baby.
- Health Canada suggests no more than 150 grams or five ounces (two servings) per week of low mercury fish. Eating a variety is best.

### LOW MERCURY FISH

- Anchovy
- Atlantic mackerel
- Blue crab
- Capelin
- Char
- Clam
- Herring
- Lake whitefish
- Light (skipjack) tuna
- Mullet
- Mussel
- Oyster
- Pollock or Boston bluefish
- Rainbow trout
- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Smelt

### HIGH MERCURY FISH TO AVOID

- Escolar
- Marlin
- Orange Roughy
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tuna - Fresh/Frozen
- White (albacore) tuna - no more than 300 grams per week

# Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners are now used in a variety of products. Read labels carefully. Be sure to use safe sweeteners. Discuss any questions with a health care professional.

## SAFE IN PREGNANCY - Use in moderation

- Aspartame (Equal / Nutrasweet / Sugar Twin / Sweet'N Low aspartame)
- Sucralose (Splenda)
- Acesulfame Potassium (Ace-K)

## NOT SAFE IN PREGNANCY

- Cyclamate (Sucaryl / Sugar Twin / Sweet'N Low cyclamate)
- Saccharin (Hermesetas)

Read the ingredient list to know what sweetener is used!



## Want To Know More?

There are many resources out there for pregnant women. Be sure to check the facts. Here are some reliable websites for more information:

- ☞ Huron County Health Unit: [www.huroncounty.ca/health](http://www.huroncounty.ca/health)
- ☞ Dietitians of Canada: [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)
- ☞ Health Canada: [www.healthcanada.gc.ca](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca)
- ☞ Healthy Pregnancy: [www.healthypregnancy.gc.ca](http://www.healthypregnancy.gc.ca)
- ☞ MotheRisk: [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)
- ☞ Eat Right Ontario: [www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca)  
or 1-877-510-5102 to talk to a registered dietitian



Huron County Health Unit  
519-482-3416  
Toll free 1-877-837-6143