

A Guide for a Healthy Pregnancy



Name: _____

Baby is due: _____

Having a Healthy Pregnancy

Now that you are pregnant you have more than just yourself to think about. Everything you eat and a lot of the things you do will affect your baby as it grows.

Eating right and taking care of yourself will help you have a healthy pregnancy. A healthy pregnancy means a better chance for a healthy baby.

This booklet is a guide to having a healthy pregnancy. It will answer some of the questions you may have.

Ask the WIC staff if you have questions. They will be glad to help you!



Key Points to Remember

- Start prenatal care as soon as you find out you are pregnant.
- Gain enough weight to help you have a healthy baby.
- Eat right while you are pregnant to help your baby be healthy.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water, juice, milk, or soup each day. Limit caffeine.
- Eat the amount of salt you usually do unless your doctor tells you not to.
- Take prenatal vitamins every day.
- Check with your doctor before taking any medications or herbal remedies.
- Avoid alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes.
- Walk, stretch, or swim while you are pregnant.
- Plan to breastfeed.

Have a happy, healthy baby!



For a healthy pregnancy, I will: _____

What about breastfeeding?

After your baby is born, breastfeed! Breastfeeding will give your baby the best start in life!

Breast milk provides all the nutrients for good growth and development. Breast milk is easy to digest.

Breast milk protects baby against common infant illnesses. Antibodies in breast milk protect the baby against diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory infections, and other illnesses.

Breastfeeding promotes a special bond between you and your baby.

Breastfeeding helps you lose weight after delivery. Breastfeeding helps your uterus shrink quickly to prepregnancy size.

Ask the WIC staff about breastfeeding.



What about after my baby is born?

Think about what birth control method you want to use. Spacing pregnancies is good for you and your children. Even if you are breastfeeding, you could still get pregnant. WIC staff can refer you to low-cost or free family planning services.

WIC can also help you find well-child care and immunizations for your baby.



What about prenatal care?

- As soon as you find out you are pregnant, go to a Prenatal Clinic or a doctor. Early prenatal care can help prevent many problems.
- Regular check-ups are important too! Your doctor wants to check on the progress of your pregnancy. Regular check-ups will keep you and your baby healthy.
- Your care during pregnancy does not have to cost a lot. Ask the WIC staff for referrals to low-cost clinics.
- Ask your doctor to check for the virus that causes AIDS, known as Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV. Women who test positive for the virus can begin treatment early and greatly reduce the risk of passing the virus on to their unborn baby.

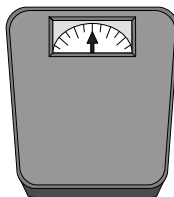


Is weight gain important?

Yes! Gaining the right amount of weight during pregnancy is important for your baby to grow and be healthy. Not gaining enough weight during pregnancy increases the chances of having a baby born too early (before 37 weeks gestation) or a low birth weight baby (less than 5½ pounds at birth). Smoking, late prenatal care, and having a short amount of time between pregnancies may also increase the risk of having a low birth weight baby. Low birth weight babies may be less healthy and have to stay in the hospital longer after birth.

How much weight should I gain?

Most women should gain 25-35 pounds. Babies born to women who gain enough weight are healthier and weigh more. The amount of weight you need to gain depends on how much you weighed before you became pregnant. Check with your doctor or WIC staff to see what weight gain is best for you.

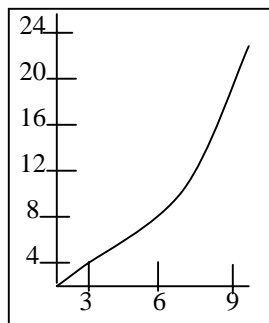


| <u>Weight before pregnancy</u> | <u>Recommended weight gain</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Underweight | 28-40 pounds |
| Normal | 25-35 pounds |
| Overweight | 15-25 pounds |

If you are pregnant with twins, you should gain about 35-45 pounds.

Weight gain should be smooth and steady. In the first three months expect to gain about 2-4 pounds. In the last six months you need to gain about one pound each week. Gaining more than 35 pounds is usually not a problem but it may be harder for you to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight. Pregnancy is never a time to lose weight!

My weight gain goal is _____ pounds.



What can I do about stress?

Everybody has some stress in their life. Too much stress during pregnancy may lead to health problems and premature labor and delivery. It is important to find simple healthy ways to relieve stress such as:

- Getting enough sleep
- Meditating and deep breathing
- Taking a walk
- Eating right



Using cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs to help handle stress increases the risk of birth defects. Share your feelings and concerns with family and friends and ask for help when you need it.

May I exercise?

Yes! Exercise during pregnancy is good for your muscles and your heart. It can help you relax and feel good all over. Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program. Exercise on a regular schedule. Listen to your body. If you are out of breath you are working too hard. Try walking, swimming, low-impact aerobics, or riding a stationary bike. Use caution with activities that require balance and coordination. Remember to drink plenty of fluids.



What is premature labor?

Premature labor is labor that occurs more than three weeks before you are expected to deliver. Premature labor can happen to any woman and can lead to an early delivery.

Contact your health care provider immediately if you have any of the following signs of premature labor:

- Contractions
- Cramps
- Backache
- Pelvic pressure
- Unusual vaginal discharge

Are there other things I should be careful about?

Artificial Sweeteners

These artificial sweeteners are generally considered safe to use during pregnancy:

Aspartame (Equal) Acesulfame potassium (Sunett)
 Saccharin (Sweet 'N Low) Sucralose (Splenda)

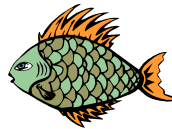
Use only moderate amounts of these during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Fish

Some fish are high in mercury, which can damage the unborn baby's nervous system. It is best to not eat these fish while you are pregnant:

Shark King mackerel
 Swordfish Tilefish

You may eat up to 12 ounces per week of other fish such as shellfish, canned salmon and tuna, and farm-raised freshwater fish.



Soft Cheeses

Pregnant women should not eat soft cheese such as Feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined or Mexican-style cheese (such as Queso Blanco or Queso Fresco). These cheeses can cause listeriosis. Listeriosis is an illness that feels like having the flu. The illness can be transferred to the unborn baby and can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, or serious health problems for the baby.



You can eat hard cheese (such as cheddar), semi-soft cheese (such as mozzarella), processed cheeses (such as American), cream cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt.

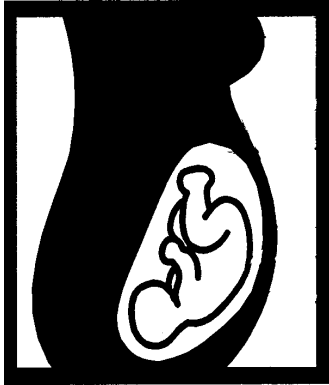
Other Foods

Other foods that can cause listeriosis are ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs, luncheon meats, cold cuts, sausage, and other deli-style meats. The bacteria that causes listeriosis is destroyed if these foods are heated until steaming hot.

If my baby is only going to weigh 7 to 8 pounds, why do I need to gain so much weight?

Some women think that once they have gained about 8 pounds for the baby, the rest will be fat. This is not true.

As you can see by the table below, weight gained during pregnancy goes towards helping your baby grow.

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|
|  | Baby | 7½ pounds |
| | Changes in mother's body | |
| | Breasts increase | 1-2 pounds |
| | Blood increase | 2½-3½ pounds |
| | Body stores | 5-8 pounds |
| | Body fluid | 2-4 pounds |
| | Baby's sack | |
| | Uterus increase | 3-4 pounds |
| | Placenta | 2-3 pounds |
| | Amniotic fluid | 2-3 pounds |
| | Total | 25-35 pounds |

Does the way I eat when I'm pregnant make a difference?

Yes! Eating a variety of healthy foods is one of the best things you can do for your baby. Good food gives your baby the nutrients to grow and be healthy.

The foods that you eat while you are pregnant can affect your baby's growth and development, birth weight, teeth, brain cells, bones, eyes, muscles, and blood.



What about herbal medicines?

Check with your doctor before taking any herbal remedies or medicines. Also, let your doctor know if you are taking any herbal remedies or medicines. Some may be harmful!

What about alcohol, drugs, and smoking?

Alcohol, drugs, and cigarette smoke all pass into your baby's body and can be very dangerous. They can cause the baby to be born too early, too small, and with health problems.



No amount of alcohol or street drugs is safe. Alcohol and drugs can cause your baby to have birth defects.

Even common medicines can harm your baby. Don't take aspirin, laxatives, antacids, cold medicines, or vitamins other than prenatal ones unless recommended by your doctor.

Remember, the sooner you quit smoking, drinking, or taking drugs, the more likely you will have a healthy baby. Ask your health care provider for help.





What about salt?

Eat salt the same way you always do unless your doctor or nutritionist tells you not to. You and your baby need some salt. But avoid eating a lot of salty foods. Some salty foods are: salted nuts, crackers, chips, popcorn, pickles, canned soup, salad dressings, frozen dinners, ham, luncheon meats, bacon, and soy sauce.

What if I crave things to eat?

You may have cravings when you are pregnant. As long as you are getting all the foods you need, eating **some** of the **foods** you crave is okay.

Eating non-food things like dirt, clay, chimney soot, laundry starch, corn starch, plaster, freezer frost, coffee grounds, or even raw flour can be bad for you and your baby. **Avoid eating these things.** If you really have the urge to eat them talk to your health care provider.

Should I take vitamins?

Your prenatal care provider will help you get prenatal vitamins. Be sure to take them every day. You still need to eat a good diet! Vitamins and minerals add extra nutrients, but they do not replace food!



Do not take vitamins or other supplements without your doctor's approval. High doses of some vitamins can harm your baby.

How can I eat for a healthy pregnancy?

Eat breakfast, lunch and supper. Don't skip meals. You may also need to eat between meals.

Choose a wide variety of foods that you enjoy. Eat foods from each of the food groups every day.

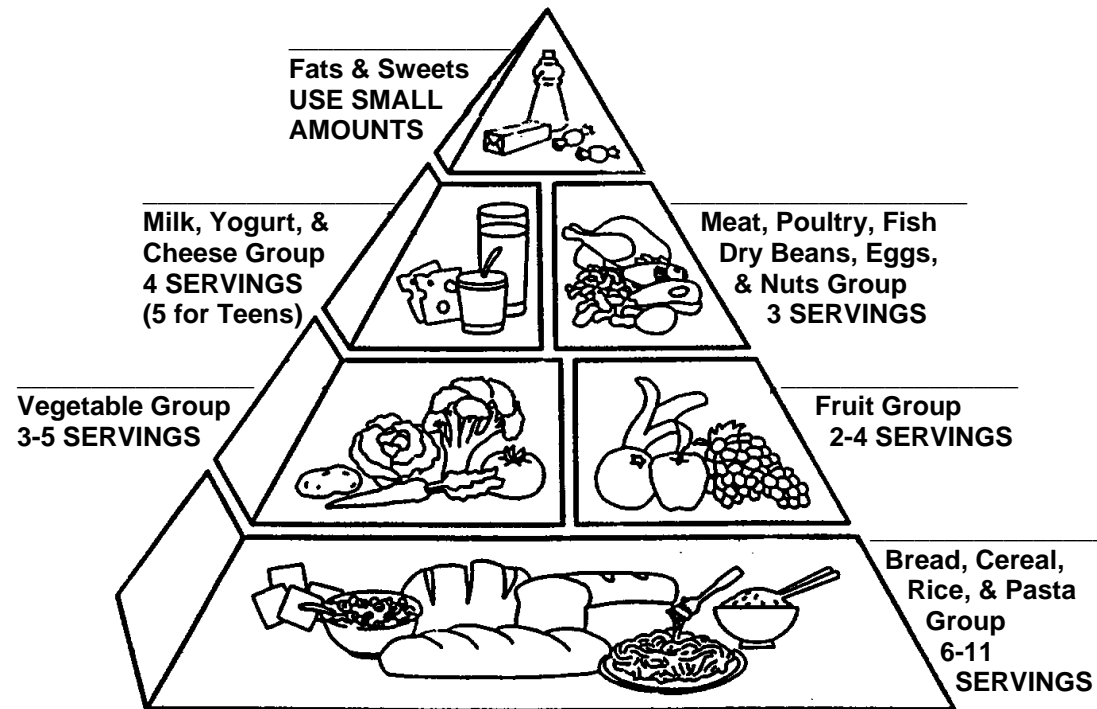
Challenge yourself to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Drink some juice every day. Eat salads. Have cooked or raw vegetables with lunch and supper. Snack on fruit.

Drink milk with your meals. Also eat foods made from milk, like cheese, yogurt, ice cream and cottage cheese.



What should I be eating?

The Food Guide Pyramid shows the foods you should eat every day. The food groups give the calories, vitamins, and minerals you and your baby need. Each food group is important. One group cannot replace another.



Adapted from: U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



Do I need to drink water?

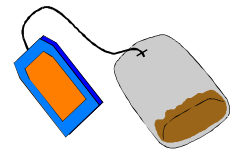
You need extra fluids when you are pregnant. Drink 6-8 glasses of liquid a day. Choose water, milk, juice, soup, and other non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks. It is good to drink some plain water every day.

What about caffeine?

A small amount of caffeine is probably okay, however, too much may cause health problems. Caffeine is found in coffee, some soda pop, tea, and chocolate. It is best to drink no more than 12-oz. of coffee a day. Instead drink more water, milk, and juice.

May I drink herbal tea?

Most major brands of herbal teas are probably okay to drink during pregnancy, however, it's best to limit herb tea to two 8-oz. servings a day. Some herbs can be harmful. **Avoid teas that contain lobelia, sassafras, coltsfoot, comfrey and pennyroyal.**



What If my hands and feet swell?



Swelling is common during the last few months of pregnancy. It can be related to your blood pressure, so talk with your doctor if you have any swelling. Standing or sitting for a long time can make swelling worse. When you sit or lie down, prop up your feet.

Too much salt can also make swelling worse. You and your baby need some salt during your pregnancy, so it is important not to omit salt from your diet.

Remember to drink plenty of fluids!

What counts as 1 serving?

The chart below shows serving sizes for each food group. The amount you eat may be more than 1 serving. For example, a dinner portion of spaghetti would count as 2 or 3 servings.

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bread, Cereal, Rice , & Pasta Group | | |
| 1 slice of bread | 4-5 crackers | 1 roll/muffin |
| ½ cup cooked rice/pasta | 1 tortilla (6") | 1 hamburger/hot dog bun |
| ½ cup cooked cereal | 1½ cups popped corn | 1 pancake/waffle (5") |
| ¾ cup ready-to-eat cereal | ½ English muffin/bagel | |
| Vegetable Group | | |
| ½ cup chopped raw or cooked vegetables | | 1 cup leafy raw vegetables |
| Fruit Group | | |
| 1 piece fruit or melon wedge | ¾ cup juice ½ cup canned fruit | ¼ cup dried fruit |
| Milk, Yogurt, & Cheese Group | | |
| 1 cup milk/yogurt | 2 ounces processed cheese | 1½ cups ice cream or frozen yogurt |
| 1½ ounces natural cheese | | |
| 1½ cups cottage cheese | | |
| Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, & Nuts Group | | |
| 2-3 ounces cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish | 1 cup cooked beans 2 eggs | ½ cup tuna salad 1 cup tofu |
| 2 hot dogs | 4 Tbsp peanut butter | ½ cup seeds |
| Fats & Sweets | | |
| <p>The tip of the Food Guide Pyramid contains the fats and sweets. These foods include salad dressing, cream, butter, margarine, sugar, candy, soda pop, sweet desserts, and some snack and fast foods. These foods provide calories but not many vitamins and minerals. They can be used in moderation to add variety to your diet once you have chosen foods from the other food groups.</p> <p>Some pregnant women may need foods that are high in fat or calories to improve the growth of their baby. The WIC staff will let you know if this applies to you.</p> | | |

Eat a variety of foods from each group everyday.



How can I eat well when I'm busy?

Eat a variety of foods. Here are some ideas about eating at fast food restaurants or grabbing something on the run:

Try **MORE** of these

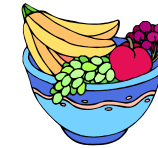
Salad
Baked potato
Fruit juice or milk
Peanut butter crackers or popcorn
Cheese sandwich
Taco or bean burrito
Fruit or fruit salad
Yogurt or pudding

... and try **LESS** of these

Fried foods
French fries
Soda, punch, or fruit drink
Potato chips or cheese twists
Hot dog
Bratwurst or sausage
Cupcake or pie
Candy

Do you have any ideas for good snacks?

Tortilla with melted cheese
Peanut butter sandwich and a glass of orange juice
Apple, banana, or other fruit
Graham crackers with peanut butter
Cereal with or without milk
Cut-up fresh vegetables with a lowfat dip
Hard-boiled eggs
A glass of milk



Ask the WIC staff for other ideas about snacks, planning meals, shopping, and budgeting your money.

What if I feel sick to my stomach?

Eat a few crackers, some dry cereal, or dry bread before getting out of bed.

Eat small, frequent meals and snacks instead of 3 large meals. Never go for long periods without food.

Drink small amounts of liquids such as apple or grape juice, carbonated drinks, or soups between meals.

Avoid greasy, fried, and spicy foods

Wear clothes that are loose around your waist.

When you sleep or cook, make sure to have plenty of fresh air in the room.

Take prenatal vitamins before going to bed.

