

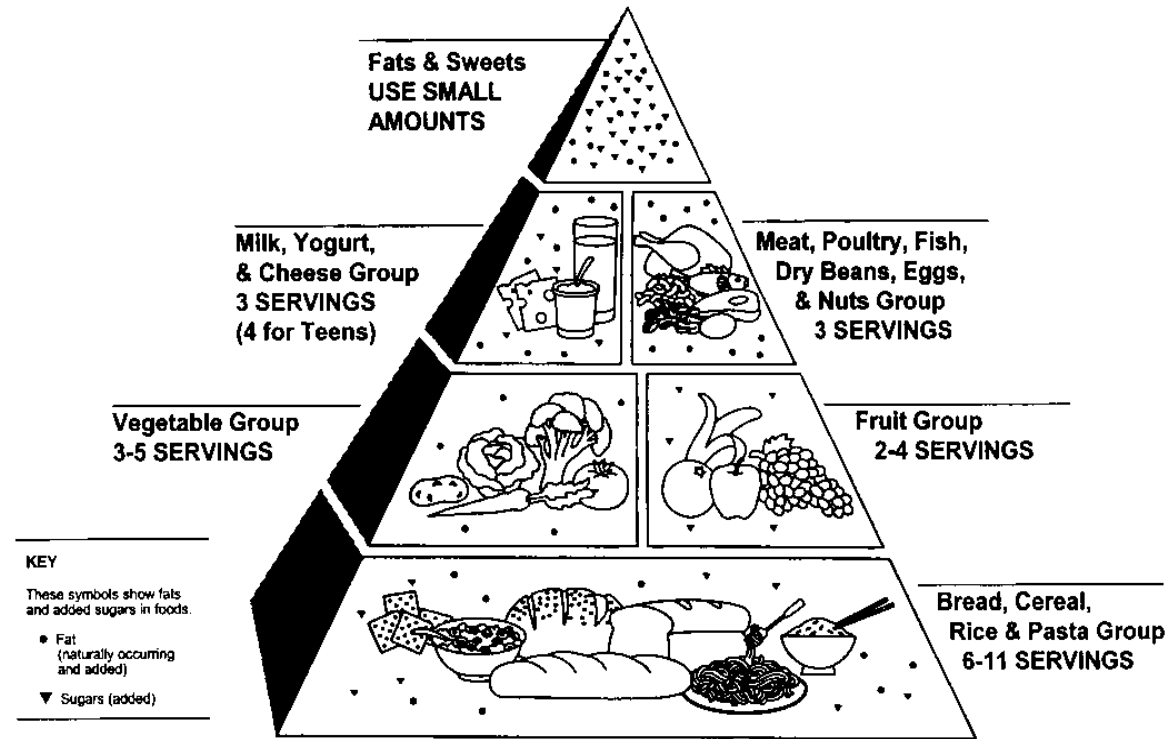


Focus on You

Healthy Tips for New Moms

Eat a healthy diet

What you eat affects how you look and feel. A healthy diet will replace the nutrients given to the baby during pregnancy. Use the food guide pyramid to plan meals and snacks for you and your family. Eat a variety of foods every day. No one food supplies all of the vitamins and minerals needed for good health.



Stay smoke, alcohol, and drug free

If you quit smoking or using alcohol or drugs during your pregnancy, way to go! Not using tobacco, alcohol, and drugs is best for you and your baby.

Infants and children who breathe second-hand smoke have a higher risk for bronchitis, pneumonia, SIDS, ear infections, and childhood behavior problems. Nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs can pass into your breast milk and can affect your baby's health and development.

Smoking tobacco increases your risk of lung disease, stroke, heart attack, cancer, and early wrinkled skin. Drinking alcohol too often or in large amounts can damage your liver and other body organs. Using street drugs even once can harm your body and brain. Alcohol and other drugs can impair your ability to safely take care of your baby.

If you have not quit smoking or using alcohol or drugs, ask your family and friends to support your decision to quit. Ask your WIC staff for places you can go for help. Set a good example for your baby by not using tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.

Resources To Help

- Registered Dietitian: _____
- Life Skills Coach: _____
- Family Planning: _____
- Breastfeeding: _____
- Other Support: _____

For good health, I will: _____

Plan your family

Family planning is important to think about after delivery. Spacing children at least 24 months apart allows a mother time for her body to recover from pregnancy and enjoy her new baby. Ask your doctor about the birth control method that is right for you.

Breastfeeding is not a reliable method of birth control. If you are breastfeeding, use a birth control method that does not contain estrogen. Condoms, IUDs, cervical caps, and spermicide methods do not interfere with breastfeeding.

If you have unprotected sex you may be putting yourself at risk for getting a sexually transmitted disease, like AIDS. Take care of yourself and ask your WIC staff if you have any questions.



Breastfeed

If you are breastfeeding, good for you and your baby too! While breastfeeding is natural, you may feel unsure of yourself in the beginning. Be patient with learning this new skill. Your family, friends, WIC staff, or doctor can provide loving support to help make breastfeeding a success. Ask your WIC staff if you have any questions. If you are not breastfeeding, think about it if you have another baby.

Keep those good eating habits you had when you were pregnant.

- Eat breakfast, lunch, and supper. Don't skip meals. You may also need to eat a small snack between meals.
- Choose a wide variety of foods that you enjoy. You should eat foods from each of the food groups every day.
- Challenge yourself to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a 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, such as cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and cottage cheese.
- Drink water and juices regularly. Fluids are important for recovery after delivery.



Folate is part of a healthy eating plan

Folate is a B vitamin that helps in forming a baby's brain and spinal cord before a woman even knows she is pregnant. It also helps lower your risk of heart disease. Whether or not you are planning to have another baby, it is important to get enough folate. Choose foods that have a lot of folate, such as:

- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Enriched rice, pasta, and bread
- Cooked dry beans, peas and lentils
- Sunflower seeds, peanuts, and peanut butter
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Orange and pineapple juice



It is recommended that women of childbearing age take a multivitamin with folate every day.

Be patient with weight loss

Most new mothers want to lose weight after delivery. Losing ½ to 1 pound each week is a healthy goal. Avoid diets, drugs, or herbs that promise quick results. These are not healthy. Weight lost quickly is often regained. Ask your WIC staff for more information.

Choose to breastfeed. Breastfeeding can help you lose weight after delivery. Breastfeeding also helps your uterus shrink quickly to pre-pregnancy size. Your body uses about 500 calories a day making milk.



Be active

Exercise can help you lose weight, get fit, and relax. Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Start slowly by doing activities like walking with your baby or taking the stairs. Weight-bearing exercises such as lifting weights, walking, and aerobics will tone muscles. Find an activity you enjoy that fits into your daily schedule.

Be aware of the blues

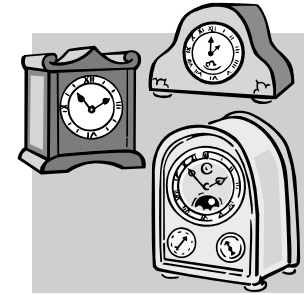
It is normal to have many different feelings about a new baby. You may feel happy, scared, overjoyed, tired, delighted, or stressed. Many women are surprised that they feel sad or depressed during this happy time.

Hormonal changes after delivery and being overtired are possible causes of the “baby blues.” Symptoms include crying easily, having trouble sleeping, feeling overwhelmed, irritable, exhausted, and anxious. The baby blues usually don’t last longer than a few weeks. It is important to share your feelings with family and friends during this time and get plenty of rest. ***If symptoms worsen it may be a sign of postpartum depression. Contact your doctor right away. Depression is treatable.***

Make time for you

Being a new mom can be stressful. When you are less stressed you can be a better mom. Get enough rest and try to make time for yourself. When you need a break:

- take a walk
- take a warm bath
- read a book or magazine
- talk with a friend
- go to bed early
- nap when your baby is napping
- accept offers of help from family and friends
- join a support group for new mothers and babies



See your health care provider

Regular health care check-ups are important, especially after delivery. Make an appointment to see your doctor six weeks after your baby is born. Write your questions down and ask them at the appointment. Call your doctor if you experience any fever, heavy bleeding, clots, or unusual pain after delivery. Remember to have a woman’s health check-up yearly.