



HEALTHY EATING



Your recipe for a healthier baby!

Babies often get a good head start on growing, well before most women learn that they are pregnant. If you are already eating a healthy diet at the time pregnancy happens, you'll have helped your baby get the best start possible.

Healthy eating can even help you to better the odds of getting pregnant in the first place. Research suggests that the roles both men's and women's bodies play in pregnancy can be affected by too much or too little of some important nutrients.

Healthy food choices, before and during pregnancy, tie into how well a baby forms and grows. Those choices also help a woman be the weight that is healthy for her at each stage of pregnancy.

Eating habits are formed early in life so it is important that both want-to-be parents set good examples. Start now.

Your choices

For each statement, check a 'Yes' or 'No' box that applies to you.

Do you eat regular meals and snacks?

Regular meals and snacks will give your body the energy and nutrients it needs everyday. Be sure to eat breakfast, don't skip meals or go longer than 3 to 4 hours without eating. Some people make the mistake of eating too little throughout the day, which can lead to increased hunger later in the day and result in over eating. Include foods from each of the 4 food groups at every meal and foods from at least 2 food groups for snacks.

YES NO

Do you eat 5-12 servings of grain products each day?

These foods are your main source of energy. They are a good source of iron and fibre. Choose whole grain breads and cereals, rice and pasta.

YES NO

Do you eat 5-10 servings of vegetables and fruit each day?

These foods will give you important vitamins and fibre. Choose dark green and orange vegetables and fruit more often.

YES NO

Do you eat 3-4 servings of milk products each day?

These foods will give you a source of calcium and protein. Milk, cheese and yogurt are some of the foods in this food group. Choose lower fat milk products more often. (If you are allergic or have intolerance to milk, consult a dietician for alternative sources of calcium.)

YES NO

Do you eat 2-3 servings of meat and alternatives each day?

These foods provide you with iron and protein. Choose leaner meats, poultry and fish, as well as beans, lentils and tofu more often. (Vegetarians who do not eat eggs or milk products may need to consult a dietician to ensure that they are getting enough iron, vitamin B-12 and protein.)

YES NO

Do you eat small amounts of "other" foods?

Other foods are not part of the 4 food groups but they add taste and enjoyment to eating. Sweets, snack foods and added fats such as margarine and olive oil can be enjoyed in small amounts.

YES NO

Bag of balance

All "checks" mean you are making a difference to your own health and to the future health of your baby.



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Coffee, tea and other beverages

It is important to drink enough fluid every day to prevent dehydration. The recommendation is 8-10 glasses of fluid each day. Make water one of your choices.

Other beverage choices may contain caffeine. Coffee, tea and chocolate are some sources of caffeine. Too much caffeine may result in a baby being born underweight. While planning a pregnancy and during pregnancy limit your caffeine intake to 300 milligrams (1½ cups of coffee) per day.

Your meal ticket to change

No one food or food group will meet all of your needs. You should have a mix of foods to get the vitamins and nutrients you and your baby need. Use this space to write down changes that you would like to make.

Example:

GOAL: I'd like to learn more about healthy eating.

PLAN: I'll get a copy of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

GOAL:

PLAN:

GOAL:

PLAN:

FOR HELP CLOSE TO HOME CONTACT:

Registered Dietician at the local public health unit, hospital or community health centre:

Health care provider:

Library:

Bookstores:

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html