

# PRENATAL NUTRITION

## Prevention

"Adequate nutrition is the single most important physical factors in determine the outcome of pregnancy".

-Ann Fry, Holistic Midwifery Volume I

## LOVE

"Optimal nutrition is a way of loving and caring for ourselves and our babies that maximizes our fullest potential."

-Aviva Romm, The Natural Pregnancy Book

## Habit

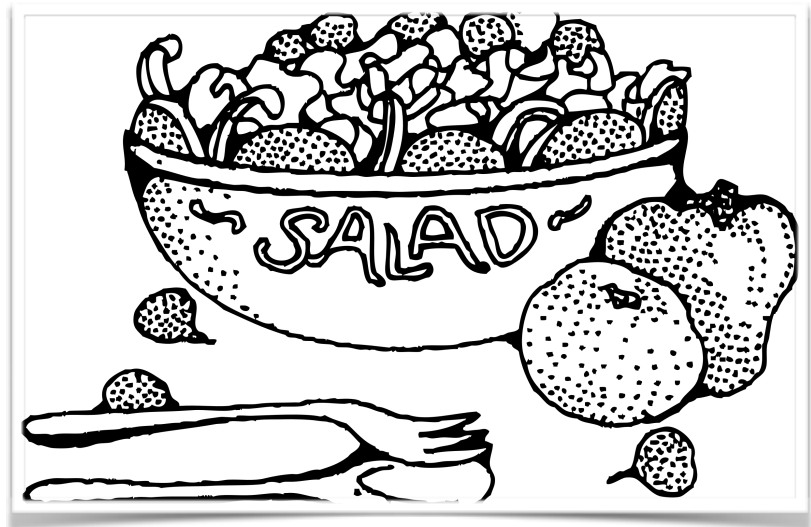
"The effects of maternal diet may even extend to a child's preferences for foods that the mother ate during pregnancy."

-Varney's Midwifery, Fifth Ed.

## Medicine

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

-Hippocrates



## Health for a lifetime.

What you eat when you are pregnant affects your baby for the rest of their life! As our diets have progressively gotten worse, our current generation of children is forecasted to have shorter life expectancies than that of their parents. Diseases such as diabetes and asthma are on the rise as well as childhood allergies and autism. The good news is that you can get your baby started towards a healthy lifestyle NOW by eating healthfully during pregnancy. We are finding out that when a mom eats healthy food during her pregnancy, her child's preferences will lean towards healthy food. In other words, unless you are counting on feeding your child fast food and chocolate milk every day, don't eat this way during pregnancy!

### *Simply Whole Foods.*

The easiest way to eat healthy is to choose whole foods, meaning foods that are as close to their natural state as possible. Eat things that swim in the sea, walk on the earth, and grow from the

## What to drink when you're expecting

During pregnancy, dehydration can cause headaches, urinary tract infections, preterm labor, too little amniotic fluid, and an inadequate blood volume. Every metabolic process that your body is doing to grow your child requires water! Use these tips to make sure you stay hydrated:

- Choose **clear, no caffeine, no sugar** beverages (water, herbal teas, fruit infused water, smart water are great options)
- Use this formula to figure out how much water to drink each day.... **Your Weight / two = Ounces of water to drink per day.**

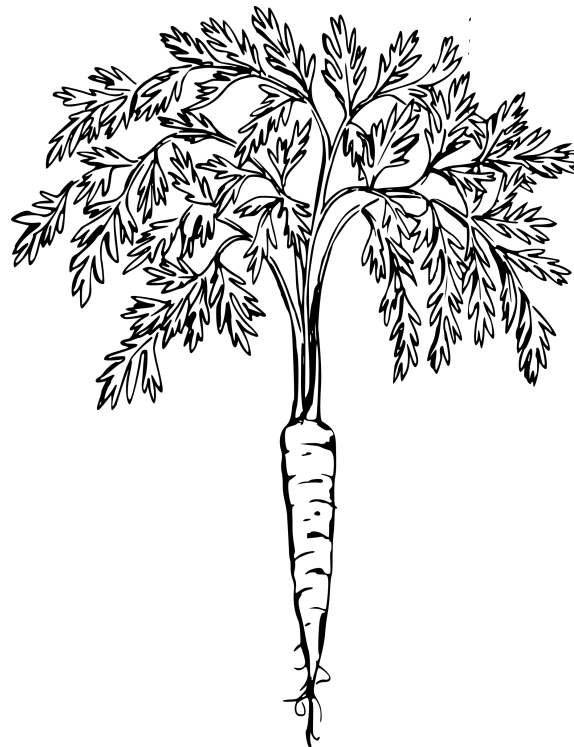
## Supplements

**Supplements should not be your primary source of vitamins and minerals.** They are meant to supplement a diet that should be providing these for you almost on its own. The demands of pregnancy may cause a need to supplement, and the following are recommendations. Come up with a customized plan with your midwife:

- Prenatal Vitamin
- Calcium Citrate (2000 mg) with Magnesium (320 mg)
- Vit D (2000 iu daily)
- Vit C (1000 mg daily)
- Probiotics

ground! Change the way you look at the grocery store. As you walk through, think about what foods provide the most nutrients for you and your baby. Shop the outside of the store in the produce, meat, and dairy sections. Here are a few more tips to get you started:

- Eat **unprocessed foods** (choose apples over apple juice, real cheese and pasta over boxed mac n cheese, etc.)
- **Cut way back on sugar.** (This one is hard but well worth it! Switch out sweet tea with pregnancy tea, eat fruit for dessert, and watch out for hidden sugar in condiments and processed foods)
- Eat **organic** whenever possible (this is actually more affordable once you cut out the processed foods. Even organic processed foods should be limited.)
- Choose meat and dairy that are **organic, grass-fed, and antibiotic-free.** (These hormones and chemicals carry a heavy weight compared to your tiny growing baby)
- Avoid high-mercury fish and farm-raised fish
- Eat a **rainbow!** Select a variety of colors for your plate!



## Calories

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Pregnancy is a time of increased metabolic demands. Your body is working hard and requires more calories, usually around 300 additional calories per day. If you are an athlete, are experiencing high stress loads, or are pregnant with more than one baby, your needs could be more.

## Fats

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Fats are vital for brain and neurological development in your baby and should make up 30-40% of your caloric intake. Healthy fats include animal fats (butter, whole milk, meats), coconut oil, flax oil, fish, avocado, nuts and seeds.

## Sodium

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Sodium is essential to balance fluid levels. During pregnancy this means amniotic fluid and your ever increasing blood volume. Without enough sodium in your diet your blood pressure rises and kidney function is impaired. You should salt your food to taste with sea salt and himalayan pink salt. Good dietary sources of sodium are celery, cucumber, kelp, seaweed, and fish.

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There are a few major groups of nutrients that you'll want to include in your diet to make sure that you have a healthy pregnancy and birth.

## Protein

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*How much:* 60-80 grams per day

*Why you need it:* Protein is the building block for all cells and tissues and is necessary for the massive blood volume expansion that happens during pregnancy. **Adequate protein intake reduces your risk for pregnancy induced hypertension, preeclampsia, and gestational diabetes.** At least 30% of your protein intake needs to be complete protein.

*Sources:* Complete proteins include meat, eggs, beans with rice, and dairy products. Have a grass-fed burger or steak! **Vegans or vegetarians with limited diets need to pay careful attention to food combinations to achieve complete protein in their diet.** Spirolina and blue-green algae are good sources for protein with minerals. Try combining: beans with rice, corn with beans, rice with nutritional yeast, soybeans with wheat and sesame, peanuts with sesame and soybeans, lima beans or green beans with sesame seeds or brazil nuts and mushrooms.

## Carbohydrates

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*How much:* 4 to 6 servings per day (or 240 g/day) spread out evenly through meals

*Why you need it:* Without enough carbs in your diet, your body will start tapping into important protein stores that are necessary for other functions. You also might find that your blood sugar becomes unstable without enough protein, causing a lack of energy, shakiness, and a foggy head.

*Sources:* Best sources for complex carbohydrates are whole grains and vegetables!



## Green Leafy Vegetables

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*How much:* at least 2-3 servings/day.

*Why you need it:* Dark green leafy vegetables are an excellent way to get iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium and vitamins K, C, E, and the B complex! This prevents anemia, muscle cramps, and infection. You can lower your risk for a postpartum hemorrhage by getting plenty of leafy greens in your diet, and bolster your milk supply at the same time.

*Sources:* Kale, swiss chard, spinach, beet/turnip/collard greens, seas vegetables. Put them in salads and smoothies, sauté them in real butter. My trick is to freeze a big bag of kale greens and crumble it into everything I make: meatloaf, spaghetti, soup, everything!

## Yellow and Orange Vegetables

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*How much:* 2 servings/day

*Why you need it:* Yellow and Orange vegetables are high in vitamin A and C. Eating 2 servings a day helps your body fight off infection and support healthy skin and mucous membranes (think urinary tract and vaginal health here). You cannot properly digest protein without vitamin A. Vitamin C is superb for building a strong placenta and amniotic sac and to prevent hemorrhage. You need vitamin C to assimilate iron.

*Sources:* Peppers, alfalfa sprouts, tomatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes

## Fruit

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*How much:* 2 servings/day

*Why you need it:* Fruits are an excellent way to get fiber into your body, preventing constipation. Enzymes in fruit aid in digestion and protein assimilation. Make sure you are selecting whole fruits and not fruit juices which contain most of the sugar and none of the fiber.

*Sources:* berries, melons, apples, bananas

## Pregnancy Tea

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As your belly grows your appetite may shrink! Herbal teas are a great way to get nutrition without filling up with the accompanying indigestion. The following herbs are typically found in pregnancy tea.

Alfalfa: vitamin A, B1, C, D, calcium, iron

Nettle: vitamin A, C, D, calcium, iron

Red Raspberry Leaves: vitamin A, B1, calcium

Dandelion: vitamin A, B1, B2, C, calcium, iron

## Sources:

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King, T., Brucker, M., Fahey, J., Kriebs, J., Geger, C., Varney, H., & Varney, H. (2015) *Varney's midwifery*. Burlington: Jones & Bartlett Publishing.

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