

**Your Pregnancy.**

**Your guide to having a healthy  
pregnancy.**



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# **Your Pregnancy**

## **Welcome to Your Pregnancy**

**Congratulations – you are pregnant! Now, more than any other time in your life, you will be considering what to eat.**

**Being pregnant and nourishing your baby in the first nine months of his or her life is a huge responsibility and not something to be taken lightly. During the early weeks and months of a pregnancy, your baby's cells are dividing and multiplying rapidly and his or her organs are formed.**

**We used to think that the womb protected a baby from any harmful substances that we, as mothers, were exposed to. But this is not the case. Consequently, it is as important to know what to eat and drink and what to avoid.**

**But eating well isn't only important for your baby, it is equally important for you, as your baby will take first priority over the nutrients you consume – it's one of nature's protective mechanism. This means, that you may become deficient in a number of key nutrients if your diet isn't optimal and may increase your chances of pregnancy or birth related problems, such as pre-eclampsia, which can be harmful to both you and your baby.**

**The purpose of this e-book is to explore how to optimize your diet and lifestyle to INCREASE your potential to have a problem free pregnancy, birth and healthy baby. In following the below guidelines, you have made a very wise decision – namely, to give your baby the best start in life and you the best start in your new life.**

# **Your Pregnancy**

## **Three basic principles to improve Your Pregnancy**

**There are a range of dietary measures that can be taken in order to improve your potential to have a problem free pregnancy, birth and healthy baby. Some of the key recommendations are listed below.**

- 1. Eat unprocessed, unrefined foods to obtain the maximum amount of nutrients. Your baby's development is dependant on an optimal intake of vitamins and minerals. For example, Zinc is important for nervous system, brain, teeth, bones and birth weight and for your own health as it helps regulate your blood sugar balance and may help prevent gestational diabetes.**
- 2. Increase Essential Fats. The omega 3 oils produce hormone type chemicals that are needed for vision, brain function, coordination, immune system and mood. Omega 3 fats are also key in brain development so a deficiency can cause learning disabilities. They may also help prevent premature births and post natal depression.**
- 3. Eat good quality protein. Protein is the building block of life. During pregnancy, your need for protein increases as you are not just replenishing your own body, but also providing the raw materials from which your baby is made.**

# Your Pregnancy

## Five Top Tips

- 1. Eat little and often, using complex carbohydrates as snacks to keep your blood-sugar levels up. Regulating your blood sugar may help reduce one of the most common pregnancy problems – namely, morning sickness. Suitable snacks include rice cakes, wholemeal bread and rye crackers.**
- 2. Make sure you have a good stash of snacks to hand. Many pregnant mums carry a snack with them at all times (in your car/handbag) to avoid the onset of hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar).**
- 3. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. One of the most important things fruit and vegetables can do is to supply us with a good source of antioxidants. Antioxidants protect us from the effects of free radical molecules which can damage cells. Eat seasonal fruits such as clementines and apples.**
- 4. Buy organic where possible. Organic food is largely free of antibiotics and other chemicals that are routinely added to an animal's feed. Avoiding these chemicals, means a healthier happier pregnancy. So buy organic eggs, which are also usually a good source of omega-3 fats!**
- 5. Drink plenty of fluids. Aim to drink around 1.5-2 litres of water a day to flush out toxins (thereby aiding your immune system) and to keep the baby and yourself hydrated to sustain energy and brain function.**

# **Your Pregnancy**

## **Ten foods to avoid during pregnancy**

- 1. Liver and cod liver oil (which can provide too much vitamin A);**
- 2. Meat pates (which may contain food-borne illnesses, and which are often made of liver; see above)**
- 3. Peanuts (in excess these can cause allergies in your baby);**
- 4. Unpasteurised soft or blue cheese, such as Camembert, Brie and Stilton (there is a risk of food-borne illnesses, such as listeria)**
- 5. Raw eggs, including mayonnaise (which may contain salmonella);**
- 6. Raw meat and raw fish (which can contain food-borne illnesses)**
- 7. Ready-to-eat salads in bad (because of the risk of listeria)**
- 8. Ready-to-eat meals (because of the risk of food poisoning or incorrect labelling);**
- 9. Sweets and chocolates (which provide unacceptable levels of sugar and/ or caffeine that may harm your baby);**
- 10. Fizzy drinks (for the same reasons as sweets and chocolates)**

# Your Pregnancy

## Four reasons to avoid caffeine, alcohol and cigarette smoke for your baby:

- 1. Stimulants such as coffee, tea, smoking and alcohol have the same effect on the baby as they do on an adult but the effects are more likely to be amplified because the unborn child does not have the same ability to detoxify.**
- 2. Caffeine is estimated to stay in a baby's system for up to 100 hours, increasing heart beat and breathing causing anxiousness, nervousness and irritability if consumed in large amounts. Alcohol and smoking can harm the unborn child as its delicate physiology cannot deal with alcohol as well as humans can even in small doses.**
- 3. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage. Alcohol also depletes nutrients from the mother and therefore deprives the child. Too much alcohol can impair liver function in the mother and can hinder hormone regulation and excretion. Consequently, despite recent reports in the media that it is OK to drink some alcohol during pregnancy, I do not believe that it is safe or wise to do so, as there is insufficient evidence as to what constitutes a 'safe' limit. In my opinion, therefore, it is better to be safe than sorry which means avoiding alcohol completely.**
- 4. Mothers who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have premature and low birth weight babies as the oxygen to the baby is impaired.**

# **Your Pregnancy**

## **Three lifestyle factors to improve Your Pregnancy**

- 1. Taking regular exercise increases oxygen flow around the body and to help aid the passage of nutrients in and toxins out of cells. If you did not undertake regular exercise before becoming pregnant, please do not overdo it now as this could be just as harmful to you and your baby as no exercise (it would be a good idea to seek the advice of your doctor or midwife before embarking on any new fitness programme).**

**Swimming is a good form of exercise as is pregnancy yoga - look out for classes in your area. Giving birth has been likened to running a marathon, so the fitter you are the easier and more enjoyable (in theory!) your birth experience should be.**

- 2. Relaxation. Stress is an everyday fact of life and a little bit of stress is good for us. However too much stress can impact on your baby's wellbeing and has been linked to colic. Good ways of relaxing include yoga, listening to relaxing music, meditation or having a massage (check that your massage therapist specialises in pregnancy massage).**

- 3. Planning your maternity leave. You are entitled to up to 3 months maternity leave prior to your baby's birth date, plus up to 1 year's maternity leave. Ideally, you should take at least 1 month off before the due date of your baby. This is not only to ensure you have enough rest before one of the busiest, most tiring, but rewarding periods of your life, but also to get everything you need organised for the arrival of your new baby.**

**Don't forget, it is not uncommon for your baby to be born 1-2 weeks ahead of schedule – this will be quite a shock if you're still at work!**

# **Your Pregnancy**

## **What pregnancy health conditions can the Your Pregnancy programme help with?**

**Optimising your diet throughout your pregnancy may help with the following conditions:**

- **Anaemia**
- **Constipation**
- **Cravings (abnormal cravings)**
- **Faintness**
- **Fluid retention**
- **Gestational Diabetes**
- **Headaches (including migraines)**
- **Infections (e.g. cystitis, thrush)**
- **Leg cramps**
- **Low birth weight or premature babies**
- **Migraines**
- **Morning sickness**
- **Nose bleeds, bleeding gums**
- **Oedema (swelling of hands, ankles, feet)**
- **Pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure)**
- **Stretchmarks**
- **Thrush**
- **Varicose veins**
- **Weight gain (excessive)**

**Remember, it is never too late to optimise your diet during your pregnancy.**

# Your Pregnancy

## Following the Your Pregnancy programme, a day's meals might look like this:

### Breakfast:

Porridge *or* muesli made from oats, fresh hazelnuts, sunflower, pumpkin and sesame seeds and raisins with milk, oat milk, natural yoghurt and some apple juice *or* rye/wholemeal toast with a nut butter (such as almond butter) and a piece of fruit (e.g. an apple or clementine).

### Lunch:

A baked potato with tinned mackerel, tomato, celery and spring onion, with olive oil and lemon juice *or* a big brown rice salad with many types of fresh vegetables, cottage cheese, pumpkin seeds, olive oil, lemon juice and freshly ground black pepper.

### Dinner:

Grilled fresh fish, chicken or lean meat or a vegetarian alternative made from beans, lentils or soy. Serve with a large helping of freshly steamed or lightly stir-fried vegetables *or* roast a selection of root vegetables, such as parsnips, carrots and pumpkin *or* a pasta (made with spelt or wholewheat pasta) in a tomato sauce.

### Snacks:

Fresh fruit, raw nuts and seeds (e.g. almonds, hazelnuts, Brazils, pumpkin and sunflower seeds). Rice cakes, ryevita, raw vegetables (e.g. carrots, broccoli, celery) with hummus. seeds, olive oil, lemon juice and freshly ground black pepper.

### Drinks:

At least six glasses of water, herbal and fruit teas (beware of artificially flavoured or sweetened ones), fresh fruit and vegetable juices, occasional 'smoothies' — freshly made with fruits/fruit juices and yoghurt or soy milk.