

Conscious Choices, Blissful Birth

Module 3 - Eating for Two

Prenatal Nutrition

It starts with why

Figuring out what to eat while pregnant, especially in the first trimester can be super hard. When the thought of looking at an egg makes you barf and the dry toast is oh so good we get why many moms give up on eating healthy during their pregnancy. Similar to ‘jonesing’ for comfort food when you’re sick, a newly pregnant mom often reaches for feel good foods to self soothe. Add on the first trimester fatigue and figuring out healthy eating can feel like just one too many things on your plate (pun intended).

Unfortunately these instincts are pretty skewed when it comes to our actual needs. Let’s take being sick for example. If I’m ill, my body needs healthy, easy to digest foods that can support my immune system and help me get well faster. If instead I fill my body with junk carbs and sugary treats, I not only deplete my nutrition, but I’m giving my body food that will take more effort to digest and is actually feeding the bad bugs! It is the same with prenatal nutrition. The tiny amazing new life growing inside requires proper nutrients to build its itty bitty organs, tissues and cells. The very foods that you consume during pregnancy is virtually all that provides the babe with these crucial building blocks of life.

It’s kind of like buying a wooden dresser. If one dresser is made of solid natural oak held together by big bolts and screws, and the other is constructed of man-made composite wood covered in veneer held together by glue and weird socket bolt thingys (you know the ones I’m talking about); which of these is the better product? Sure they both hold clothes, they both may even look great on the outside; but only one is going to be quality and withstand time, moves, bumps and nicks. The other will fall apart sooner, have constant problems and need repair or replacing. Not what we want for our furniture, let alone our bodies! A body built off great nutrition will have far fewer health problems in the future!

Conscious choices checklist:

- What type of building blocks will you give your growing baby?
- Do you know if you have a family history of gestational diabetes or pre-eclampsia?
- Can you change your philosophy around what food stands for to see it as nutrition more than emotional comfort?

What to Eat - The Basics

Eat: Meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, healthy fats and oils.

Avoid: Processed foods, sugar, soft drinks, heavily processed grains, most dairy products, artificial sweeteners, vegetable oils, margarine and trans fats.

Base your diet on these real, unprocessed foods.

- Meats: Beef, lamb, chicken, turkey, pork and others.
- Fish and Seafood: Salmon, trout, haddock, shrimp, shellfish, etc. Choose wild-caught if you can.
- Eggs: Choose free-range, organic or pastured eggs.
- Vegetables: Broccoli, kale, peppers, onions, carrots, tomatoes, etc. etc. – go green!
- Fruits: Apples, oranges, pears, avocados, strawberries, blueberries and more.
- Non-refined grains: Organic brown rice, quinoa, lentils, occasional whole grain breads
- Tubers: Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, turnips, etc.
- Nuts and Seeds: Almonds, macadamia nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and more
- Healthy Fats and Oils: Lard, tallow, coconut oil, olive oil, avocado oil and ghee
- Salt and Spices: Sea salt, Himalayan salt, garlic, turmeric, rosemary, etc.

Try to choose grass-fed, pasture raised and organic if you can afford it. If not, then just make sure to always go for the least processed option and to wash your veggies and fruits! This list is not exclusive in the meat, seafood, nuts/seeds, fruit and veggie department, however, stick with the list when it comes to grains and fats as there are some super unhealthy grains and fats out there being touted as "good for you".

What to Eat – Less Basic

Morning Sickness – there is a large difference between common “morning” sickness and a medical condition known as hyperemesis gravidarum. Most women with your basic prego nausea will have it to varying degrees at varying times per day with occasional vomiting. This generally resolves itself after the first trimester. HEG is much more than this. Those with HEG will generally have constant severe nausea that is throughout the entire day and will vomit much more than just occasionally. HEG often does not self-resolve after the first trimester and sometimes requires medical attention for nutrition and hydration.

If you have morning sickness there are tons of anecdotal remedies out there, many of which work with varying degrees of success and are very unique as to who they do and don't work for. We suggest that having a great state of health prior to pregnancy, especially in the gut, will cause less instance of sickness. For those that do get sick, we recommend eating a small amount of animal protein first thing in the morning. While this sounds really counter to what many think we have found that this can resolve the issue with no other interventions. We also recommend being on what is called a whole food prenatal, meaning that your prenatal vitamin should be made from whole foods only, not synthetic sources. This helps your body absorb nutrients better, which we see decreasing nausea in our patients. Also be sure to eat smaller meals frequently just to keep your body sated, we all know that getting way too hungry can cause nausea even when we aren't pregnant. Other easy natural remedies include ginger and lemon, either by themselves or in water; peppermint (candies, oils, extract in water/tea) and eating a small protein snack before bed have also been helpful.

Stay Hydrated!

You now have to keep your cells and a baby's cells well hydrated, not to mention maintaining amniotic fluid, a placenta and increased blood volume to deal with. This means that if you're like most people and you weren't drinking enough fluid before, you definitely need to be now!

A little over half your body weight in ounces will do. We actually recommend drinking what is known as f

fourth phase water. This "water" is actually different in chemical structure and is WAY easier for the body to absorb. The discovery of this type of hydration comes from studying populations that live in the desert and how they stay hydrated on limited resources. This type of water doesn't come in a bottle and you won't find it at the nearest whole foods. Fear not, you won't have to travel to the desert to find it either. You can simply cause your boring old water to become this way by adding: lemon, lime, apple cider vinegar (not for the faint of heart), cucumber, aloe gel, chia seeds, flax seeds or pink Himalayan salt (just a pinch!). You can also drink homemade bone broth as an excellent source of 4th phase water.

The research isn't out yet, but we are seeing some preliminary studies showing that proper hydration can also prevent prodromal labor and even preterm labor.

Conscious Choices Checklist:

- Are you currently consuming the right types of food to support baby?
- What could you at least add today to help get more nutrients?
- Have you looked into your prenatal vitamin to ensure its quality?
- How much water are you getting per day?