

# Kids First

## Baby Talk

**S**o you just found out you're pregnant. Congratulations!

Generally, a baby will take whatever it needs nutritionally from its mother. As a result, many mothers become literally undernourished.

Since a baby's rate of growth is seven times faster than her three-year-old brother, it's much like feeding a baby elephant! A mother must provide the proper fuel, and the following nutrients are essential.

A mother-to-be requires at least 800 mg of iron to adequately develop red blood cells. Iron is contained in most dark leafy vegetables and a liquid iron supplement can be obtained from your health food store. Perhaps the nicest way of getting iron is from a tablespoon of dark molasses in a glass of unhomogenized milk three times a day. Vitamin C will help in the absorption of iron from your digestive tract.

Folic acid is important to the nervous system and cannot be omitted. Luckily, folic acid is contained in most foods which contain iron, so it's a cinch to get.

Mom and baby need at least 1,200 mg of calcium daily. The molasses drink described above is a good source, as is cheese or fermented dairy foods such as kefir or yogurt. Try raw almonds if you don't eat dairy. Vitamin D will also help in the absorption of calcium.

### Essential Vitamins

Be cautious of taking vitamin B when pregnant, because it tends to reduce the amount of available breast milk. Babies also do not like garlic, so avoid caesar salad while breast-feeding. Chocolate tends to give babies diarrhea.

A generation ago, weight gain was limited to eight to 10 pounds. This is no longer the case. Latest research indicates that weight gain of 35 pounds or more on a high-protein diet is healthy as long as it is well-balanced and the food doesn't contain chemicals, preservatives or refined sugars.

Moms are also often told to restrict

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their salt intake. But

natural sodium (a part of salt)

is important in the production of extra blood volume and a lack can be disastrous. I recommend that you use sea salt or Celtic salt to taste. This is an easy way of listening to what your body is telling you.

There are other pregnancy no-nos. One is alcohol. It causes problems with the development of your baby's nervous system. The caffeine found in coffee, cola, black and green teas and chocolate has been linked to birth defects. As well, limit your preservative intake, including aspartame (or Nutrasweet, found in diet colas), and be very cautious of using any type of medication, because all drugs cross the placental barrier.

One of the most common nuisances of pregnancy is morning sickness, mostly caused by a lack of blood sugar—hypoglycemia. After all, you haven't eaten since the night before and your developing baby literally feeds all night while you are asleep. I suggest my pregnant patients have an energy bar or a snack high in protein, fructose and complex carbohydrates late in the evening, which will level out blood sugar level until breakfast.

Having a chiropractic check-up helps to ensure that your nervous system is functioning normally so that you have a good pregnancy and much easier labor and delivery.

Red raspberry leaves make a good uterine tonic and help prevent miscarriage and/or anemia. Red raspberry leaves also aid in fighting infection. Peppermint tea will help with digestion and nausea, as will ginger root. Other herbs such as echinacea and camomile are very relaxing when taken as a hot tea. All of these are available from your health food store. ■

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