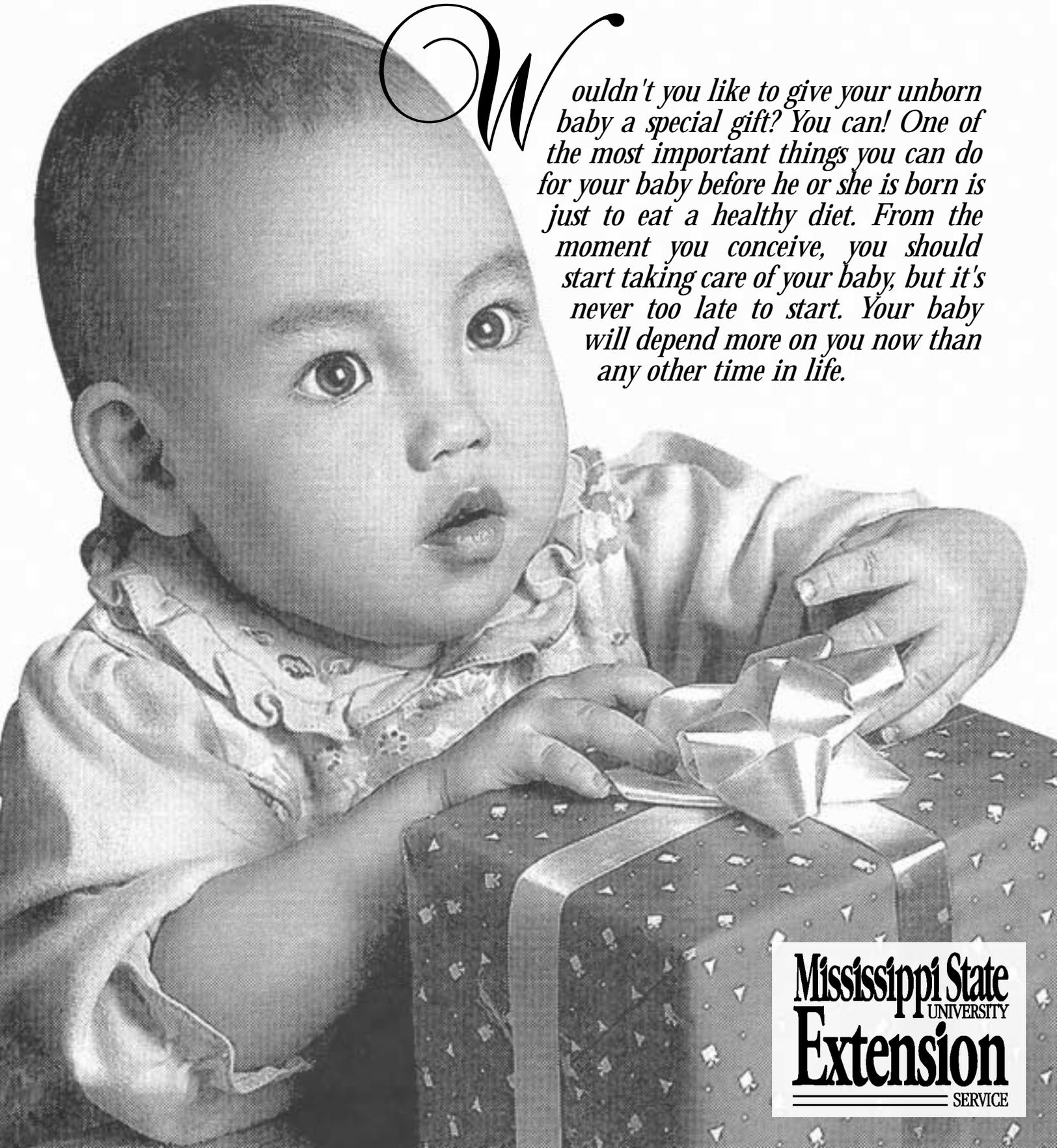


Nutrition During Pregnancy

A Gift for Your Baby

A black and white photograph of a baby sitting and looking at a gift box with a ribbon. The baby is wearing a patterned shirt and is looking towards the right. The gift box is wrapped in dark paper with a light pattern and has a large white ribbon bow on top. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Wouldn't you like to give your unborn baby a special gift? You can! One of the most important things you can do for your baby before he or she is born is just to eat a healthy diet. From the moment you conceive, you should start taking care of your baby, but it's never too late to start. Your baby will depend more on you now than any other time in life.

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Weight Gain

Amount of Weight Gain

Gaining the right amount of weight when you are pregnant is important. It is one measure of the healthy growth of your baby, especially after the first three months of pregnancy. Your weight gain also affects your baby's birth weight--and studies have shown that babies with birth weights in the range of 5 1/2 to 9 pounds tend to be healthier.

The number of pounds you should gain while you are pregnant depends on your weight before pregnancy and your height.

Recommended Total Weight Gain

	Pounds
Women who are underweight for height *	28-40
Women who are normal weight for height *	25-35
Women who are overweight for height *	15-25

**Before pregnancy*

Studies show that shorter women should gain near the lower end of the range; black women and very young women should gain close to the upper end of the range. The recommended gain for women who are carrying twins is 35 to 45 pounds.

A word of WARNING! Pregnancy is not the time to diet to lose weight. Gaining too little weight during pregnancy may produce a baby too small at birth. Gaining too much weight during pregnancy can cause problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and a difficult delivery. It can also result in very large babies (more than 9 pounds), who are more likely to have health problems than smaller babies.

Rate of Weight Gain

During your first three months of pregnancy, you will usually gain two to four pounds. When your baby begins to grow fast, you gain about one pound per week (more if you are underweight, less if you are overweight). Small differences in this rate are not important.

Mild swelling during the last three months of pregnancy is normal. If your legs, ankles, or feet become puffy, put your feet on a stool or chair for a while. A large, sudden weight gain accompanied by swelling of your hands and face is not normal, however, and needs medical attention quickly. (If you gain less than two pounds per month after the first three months, you should tell your doctor.)

1 Daily Food Guide for Pregnant Women

Milk, yogurt, and cheese: 4 or more servings. Count as a serving: 1 cup of milk or yogurt or about 1-1/2 ounces of cheese.

Whole grain and enriched breads, cereals, rice, and pasta: 6 or more servings. Count as a serving: 1 slice of bread, 1 small piece of cornbread, 1 small biscuit, 1/2 bun, 1 ounce of dry ready-to-eat cereal, 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta. Eat a variety, such as wheat, rice, oats, and corn.

Fruits: 2 to 4 servings. Count as a serving: 1 medium apple, orange, or banana; 1/2 cup of small or chopped fruit; 3/4 cup of juice. Have citrus fruits or juices, melons, or berries often.

Vegetables: 3 to 5 servings. Count as a serving: 1 cup of raw leafy greens, 1/2 cup of other kinds. Have dark-green leafy and deep-yellow vegetables often. Eat dried beans and peas often. Also eat starchy vegetables, such as potatoes and corn. Include all types of vegetables regularly.

Lean meat, fish, poultry, and eggs: a total of 6 to 7 ounces. Count as 1 ounce of lean meat: 1 egg, 1/2 cup cooked dry beans or peas, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter. (A 3-ounce portion of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.)

Fats and sweets: Use sparingly, as these add very little to your diet except calories.

Adapted from USDA/HHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2000



Recommended Calorie Levels

To meet your extra food needs for a healthy weight gain, you need to add an average of 300 extra calories per day to your diet after the first three months of pregnancy. (If your exercise habits change during pregnancy, you may need to make adjustments.)

Add these extra calories with extra servings of milk, lowfat cheese, lean meats, poultry, fish, leafy and dark green vegetables, dried beans and peas, fruits, whole grain, and enriched breads and cereals. (See Daily Food Guide for Pregnant Women.)

Don't eat lots of cookies, candies, cakes, chips, soft drinks, and fats such as butter, margarine, gravy, fried foods, salad dressings, and mayonnaise. These high-calorie foods provide very little nourishment for you and your baby.

2 Food Sources of Iron and Folate

Iron-rich foods*:

Lean meat, poultry, fish, organ meats (such as liver)

Dried beans and peas (such as lima, navy, kidney, and pinto beans and split green and black-eyed peas)

Dark-green vegetables (such as collard greens, turnip greens, mustard greens, spinach, and broccoli)

Whole-grain and enriched breads and cereals (such as whole-wheat bread, pumpernickel bread, bran muffin, oatmeal, fortified ready-to-eat cereals)

Folate-rich foods:

Liver (any kind)

Dried beans and peas (such as black-eyed peas; red, kidney, or white beans; butterbeans; lentils)

Dark-green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, broccoli, turnip greens, mustard greens, collards, romaine lettuce)

Whole-grain breads and cereals, cereals fortified with folic acid (check the label)

Fruit (such as oranges and orange juice, grapefruit, bananas, cantaloupe, and tomatoes and tomato juice)

**The iron in meat, fish, and poultry is more readily absorbed by the body than the iron in plant foods. To increase iron absorption, eat plant foods with meat or with foods that contain vitamin C. Some good sources of vitamin C are oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, strawberries, potatoes, and bell pepper.*

Other Nutrient Needs

Your needs for almost all nutrients (vitamins and minerals) are greater when you are pregnant. Nutrients are important in your own body's growth, your baby's, and later for breast-feeding.

The amount of iron and folate in your diet is important, so eat foods containing these nutrients often.

Iron is a mineral that carries oxygen to your baby. You need more iron than you normally do for the baby, and it is hard to get enough from foods alone. Your doctor will probably recommend an iron supplement while you are pregnant. Taking an iron supplement between meals or at bedtime on an empty stomach helps to increase its absorption. It is also important to eat iron-rich foods daily. (See Food Sources of Iron and Folate for iron-rich foods.)

Folate (Folacin, or Folic Acid) is a B vitamin that helps your body make red blood cells and genes. The amount of folate you need more than doubles when you are pregnant.

Eating various foods that contain folate is the best way to get enough. Good food sources of folate are listed in Food Sources of Iron and Folate.

Multi-vitamin and Mineral Supplements

Although vitamin and mineral supplements are common, extra servings of healthy foods are the best sources for most women. Also, supplements may not contain all the essential nutrients



supplied by healthy foods, which are less likely to cause unhealthy nutrient interactions.

Taking too many vitamin or mineral supplements can harm your unborn baby. More than 150 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) shown on the label is considered too much. Most damage occurs during the first three months, when you may not know you are pregnant.

However, you may need a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement if these conditions apply to you:

- You have a poor diet, lacking in any of the basic food groups.
- You are pregnant with more than one baby.
- You smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs (more about this follows).

Talk to your doctor about supplements.

Fluids

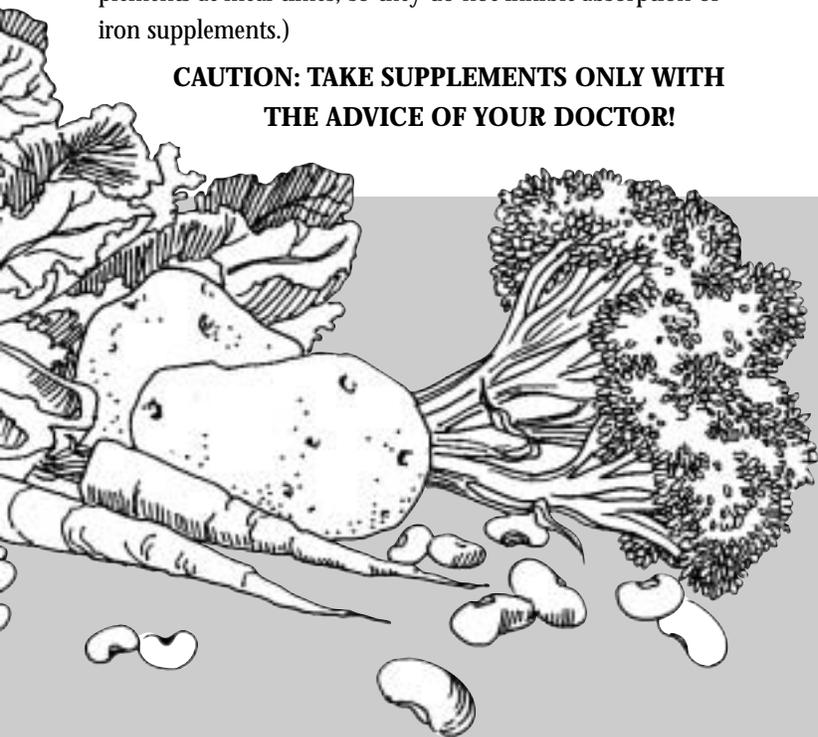
With the increased blood volume for amniotic fluid, you need to drink extra liquids. Drink at least six to eight glasses of liquid each day. Holding back on liquids won't help the swelling you may experience during pregnancy. In fact, too little fluid can put a heavy burden on your kidneys and cause them to retain fluid to ensure there is enough for your body.

Special Nutrient Needs in Special Circumstances

You may need Vitamin B12 supplements if you are a "complete vegetarian," that is--you eat no animal foods.

You may need calcium supplements if you are under age 25, especially if you do not drink enough milk. (Take calcium supplements at meal times, so they do not inhibit absorption of iron supplements.)

CAUTION: TAKE SUPPLEMENTS ONLY WITH THE ADVICE OF YOUR DOCTOR!



Making Nutrition Part of Your Life During Pregnancy

Choose foods that you enjoy and like. Do not try to force yourself to eat foods you dislike.

Be realistic and plan meals that will fit into your lifestyle. If you are always rushing in the morning, try to plan some simple but nourishing meals you can eat in a hurry. A bran muffin, a glass of milk, and an orange is one suggestion.

It is also a good idea to plan ahead so you don't just grab what's there when you are hungry. Pregnancy is not the time to snack on a bag of chips and a soft drink. Try some cheese, fruit, and crackers for a quick snack away from home.

To meet all your needs, eat at least three meals a day and possibly two or three snacks. Let your appetite be your guide. Some Ideas for Snacks lists some suggested snack foods during pregnancy. Remember, any nutritious food is appropriate for a snack.

3 Some Ideas for Snacks

Vegetable snacks

Raw vegetables such as carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, green pepper, green beans, snow peas, and mushrooms. Eat them alone or with cheese or yogurt dips.

Tomato juice or mixed vegetable juice.

Fruit snacks

Sliced or whole fresh, canned, or dried fruit. Eat plain or with cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, or yogurt with cinnamon.

Milk snacks

Milk fruit shakes, yogurt with fresh fruit, cheese and crackers, cottage cheese and fruit, custard, pudding.

Breads and crackers

Eat plain or with cheese or peanut butter. Try a variety of quick breads and muffins with whole grain and/or fruits and vegetables (for example, pumpkin, cranberry, nut, or whole wheat bread and oatmeal, apple, blueberry, corn, or bran muffins); whole grain cereal with milk and fresh fruit.

Meat, fish, poultry, and egg group and alternates

Turkey or roast beef sandwich, beef stew, chicken, hard-boiled or deviled egg. Use a nuts and seed mix, peanut butter with crackers, and split pea or lentil soup as meat alternates.

Other Considerations

Alcohol

We know drinking alcoholic beverages can be dangerous to unborn babies. Yet many women continue to drink wine, beer, or liquor during pregnancy.

More than 50 percent of the babies born to alcoholic mothers have what is known as "fetal alcohol syndrome" (FAS). These infants have birth defects, mental retardation, and reduced growth rate. Even if alcohol intake does not cause full-blown FAS, it is associated with miscarriage, low birth weight, and learning disorders.

No safe level of alcohol use has been established for pregnant women. Some studies show that as few as one or two drinks per day may harm the developing fetus. Both the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Surgeon General have recommended that pregnant women avoid drinking any alcohol during pregnancy.

Damage may occur during the first three months before a woman knows she is pregnant. Avoid alcohol if you are even considering pregnancy.

Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, tea, colas, other soft drinks, chocolate, cocoa, and some drugs. Whether a pregnant woman should avoid caffeine is still open to question.

Pregnant women who choose to consume foods and drinks containing caffeine should do so in moderation. Use all drugs only on the advice of your doctor.

Smoking

Women who smoke put their babies at a much higher risk of premature birth, low birth weight, and stillbirth compared to nonsmokers. Also after birth, the baby of a smoker is more likely to have poor lung development, asthma and respiratory infections, and even to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Drugs

Some drugs are appropriate for use during pregnancy, but don't take any medications, even over-the-counter medications, unless you check with your doctor first. Try to avoid taking drugs in the first trimester (first three months) of pregnancy. Also try to avoid taking more than one medication at a time.

Exercise

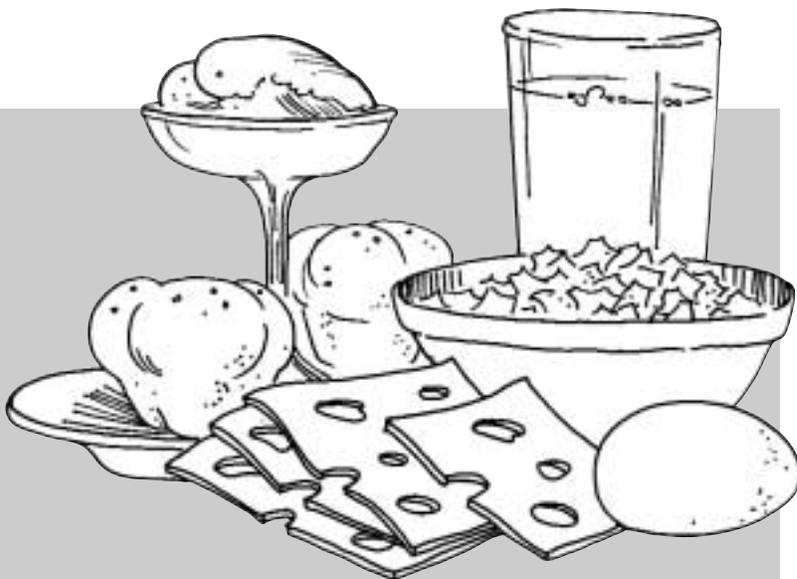
Exercise during pregnancy can be very beneficial. Women who exercise vigorously are more likely to carry their babies to full term compared with women who exercise less or not at all. Check with your doctor before exercising. If you get permission to exercise, do so at least three times a week for 20 minutes each time, recommends the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Walking, swimming, riding a stationary bicycle, and joining a prenatal aerobics class are all excellent exercise choices. Exercises requiring jerky, bouncy movements and being outside in hot weather are not good choices. Do not try deep knee bends, toe touches, sit-ups, or any exercise that requires you to lie on your back after the first trimester. Stop the exercise if you feel dizzy, faint, overheated, or pain. Be sure to drink plenty of water. Staying in shape will help keep up your stamina during labor. And, afterward, the more muscles you have, the quicker you will regain your pre-pregnancy shape.

Common Problems During Pregnancy

Nausea or Vomiting

Nausea ("morning sickness") can occur at any time of the day, but it is often most troublesome when you get up in the morning. The problem is usually mild and often goes away after the first three months of pregnancy. You can stop or reduce your nausea and vomiting if you take these precautions:

- Eat a few crackers, a handful of dry cereal, or a piece of dry toast or bread before you get out of bed in the morning. Put these within easy reach the night before.
- Get up slowly in the morning. Avoid sudden movements.
- Eat five or six small meals a day. Never go for long periods without food. Try not to get hungry.



- Drink fluids, including soups, between meals rather than with them.
- Drink a small amount of apple juice, grape juice, or a carbonated beverage if you feel nauseated between meals.
- Avoid greasy and fried foods and other foods that upset your stomach, such as highly seasoned foods.
- Open windows or use the exhaust fan to get rid of odors when you cook.
- Have plenty of fresh air in the room while you are sleeping.

Constipation

During pregnancy, your digestive system relaxes so your body can absorb more nutrients. This relaxation can cause constipation. During your last three months of pregnancy, your uterus will apply pressure to the large intestine, aggravating the problem. These suggestions may help:

- Eat more raw fruits and vegetables, including skins, dried fruits, stewed prunes and apricots, and prune juice.
- Eat whole grain cereals, such as oatmeal or brown rice and whole wheat breads. Sprinkle wheat germ or bran on cereal, or have a bran muffin.
- Eat more dried beans and peas.
- Drink more liquids. Include water, milk, fruit juices, and soups.
- Eat meals at regular times.
- Exercise regularly.

Heartburn

Especially in late pregnancy, your uterus will push up on your stomach. After you eat, swallowed food can be forced back up. This causes a "burning" feeling called heartburn.

Eating five to six small meals a day, rather than two or three large ones, often relieves this discomfort. Avoid fatty, fried, and spicy foods.

Hemorrhoids

Some women already have hemorrhoids and others develop them during the last three months of pregnancy. The reason is the weight of the baby. The suggestions for relieving constipation also help hemorrhoids.

Cravings

Some women crave non-food items, such as clay, dirt, or starch when they are pregnant. Try not to eat these because they do not provide nutrients that you and your baby need. They may also block the nutrients from foods that you do eat.

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