Healthy eating in pregnancy, and enough of it, is very important for your baby to grow and develop. You should consume 200 to 500 more calories than you did before you became pregnant. You need a total of 1800 – 2000 calories approximately. (View calorie contents table, end of document)

Although nausea and vomiting during the first few months of pregnancy can make this difficult, it usually improves as the pregnancy goes on. Try to eat a well balanced diet and take vitamins.

Goals for Healthy Eating

- Eat a variety of foods to get all the nutrients you need. Recommended daily servings: 1-3 servings of breads and grains, two to four servings of fruit, four or more servings of vegetables, four servings of dairy products, 1-2 servings of protein sources (meat, poultry, fish, eggs or nuts).
- Use fats and sweets sparingly. (a serving is what is enough for one person to eat)
- Choose foods high in starch and fibre such as whole-grain breads, cereals, pasta, rice, fruits and vegetables.
- Make sure you are getting enough vitamins and minerals in your daily diet. You should take a vitamin supplements to make sure you are consistently getting enough vitamins and minerals every day. I will recommend an over-the-counter brand or prescribe a prenatal vitamin for you.
- Eat and drink at least four servings of dairy products and calcium-rich foods a day to help ensure that you are getting 1200 mg of calcium in your daily diet. 2-3 glasses of milk, a good portion of cheese and 100 -200 gms of yogurt.
- Eat at least three servings of iron-rich foods per day to ensure you are getting 30 mg. of iron in your daily diet. (red meat, dark green leafy vegetables, liver, our Egyptian “foul” is rich in iron)
- Choose at least one good source of vitamin C every day, which include: oranges, grapefruits, strawberries, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, green peppers, tomatoes and mustard greens.
- Choose at least one good source of folic acid every day, which include: dark green leafy vegetables, veal and legumes (lima beans, black beans, black-eyed peas and chickpeas). Every pregnant woman needs 0.4 mg of folic acid per day to help prevent problems with the baby back bones (Spina bifida). We will have prescribed folic acid tablets if you have come early in your pregnancy or in the preconception period.
- Choose at least one source of vitamin A every other day. Sources of vitamin A include carrots, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, spinach, water squash, apricots and cantaloupe.
Are There Foods You Should Avoid?
- Avoid alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol causes premature delivery and low birth weight babies.
- Limit caffeine to no more than 300 mg. per day (two 150mls cups of coffee, three 150mls cups of tea). Chocolate contains caffeine -- the amount of caffeine in a chocolate bar is equal to 1/4 cup of coffee.
- Do not use saccharin, it can cross the placenta and may remain in your baby tissues.
- Decrease the total amount of fat you eat to 30% or less of your total daily calories. For a person eating 2000 calories a day, this would be 65 grams of fat or less per day.
- Limit cholesterol intake to 300 milligrams (mg) or less per day.
- Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish, because they contain high levels of mercury.
- Avoid soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined, and Mexican-style cheese. These cheeses are often unpasteurized and may cause Listeria infection. Hard cheese, processed cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese, or yogurts are all OK during your pregnancy.

What Should I Eat When I Don't Feel Well?
During pregnancy you may have morning sickness, diarrhea or constipation. You may find it hard to keep foods down, or you may feel too sick to even eat at all. Here are some suggestions:

- Morning Sickness. Eat crackers, cereal or pretzels before getting out of bed; may be with a small cup of weak teas. Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day; avoid fatty, fried and greasy foods.
- Constipation. Eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. Also drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day.
- Diarrhoea. Eat more foods that contain pectin and gums (two types of dietary fibre) to help absorb excess water. Examples of these foods are: applesauce, bananas, white rice, oatmeal, refined wheat bread and smooth peanut butter.
- Heartburn. Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day; try drinking milk before eating; and limit caffeinated foods and beverages. We can also prescribe some medications which will help.

Can I Diet While I am Pregnant?
No, do not diet or try to lose weight during pregnancy. You and your baby need the proper nutrients in order to be healthy. Eat a balanced diet and reduce fats and sugars. Do not add more weight than permitted. An acceptable weight gain during the whole 9 months is 10 – 12 kgms.

Can I Eat a "Low Carb" Diet While I'm Pregnant?
The effects of a low carbohydrate diet on pregnancy, have not been studied so its effect on the fetus, if any, are unknown. While you are pregnant, you should eat a balanced diet from all of the food groups.

Can I Maintain My Vegetarian Diet While Pregnant?
Your baby can receive all the nutrition he or she needs while you follow a vegetarian diet. Eat a wide variety of healthy foods that provide enough protein and calories for you and your baby. And do not forget calcium rich foods, or take calcium supplements, 1200 mgm / day.
You should consume 200 to 300 more calories than you did before you became pregnant).

Why Do I Need More Calcium?
Calcium is needed to build strong teeth and bones. Calcium also allows blood to clot normally, muscles and nerves to function properly, and the heart to beat in a normal fashion. Most of the calcium in your body is found inside your bones.
Your growing baby needs a considerable amount of calcium to develop. If you do not consume enough calcium to sustain the needs of your developing baby, your body will take calcium from your bones, decreasing your bone mass and putting you at risk for osteoporosis (bone weakness because of lack of calcium) which causes thinning of the bone, resulting in weak, brittle bones that can break easily. Pregnancy is a critical time for a woman to consume more calcium.

How Much Calcium Should I Consume During Pregnancy?
The following guidelines will help ensure that you are consuming enough calcium throughout your pregnancy:
- The U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance for calcium is 1200 milligrams (mg) per day for pregnant and breastfeeding women over age 24 and 1500 mg. of calcium per day for women under age 24.
- Eating and drinking at least four servings of dairy products and calcium-rich foods a day will help ensure that you are getting 1200 mg. of calcium in your daily diet.
- The best sources of calcium are dairy products including milk. (A glass of milk contains 300 milligrams of calcium, 2 glasses of milk will give you half of your calcium needs). Yogurt stands out as another calcium champion, containing 450 milligrams of calcium per 1-cup serving. Eat cheese, cream
soups and pudding. Calcium is also found in foods including green vegetables (broccoli, spinach and greens), seafood, dried peas and beans.

Vitamin D will help your body use calcium. Adequate amounts of vitamin D can be obtained through exposure to the sun and in milk, eggs and fish.

**How Can I Get Enough Calcium if I’m Lactose Intolerant?**
Lactose intolerance is the inability to digest lactose, the sugar found in milk. If you are lactose intolerant, you may have cramping, gas or diarrhea when dairy products are consumed. If you are lactose intolerant, you can still receive the calcium you need. Here are some suggestions:
- Try consuming small amounts of milk with meals. Milk may be better tolerated with food.
- You may tolerate certain milk products with less sugar including cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese.
- Eat non-dairy calcium sources including greens, broccoli and sardines.
- Use Lactaid Milk fortified with calcium, if available.

**Should I Take a Calcium Supplement?**
If you have trouble consuming enough calcium-rich foods in your daily meal plan, we will prescribe calcium supplement.

**Why Do I Need More Iron Now That I am Pregnant?**
Iron is a mineral, an important part of hemoglobin, the substance in blood that carries oxygen throughout the body. Iron also carries oxygen in muscles, helping them function properly. Iron helps increase your resistance to stress and disease. The body absorbs iron more efficiently during pregnancy; therefore it is important to consume more iron while you are pregnant to ensure that you and your baby are getting enough oxygen. Iron will also help you avoid symptoms of tiredness, weakness, irritability and depression.

**How Much Iron Should I Consume?**
- The USRDA for iron is 30 milligrams (mg) per day for pregnant and breast feeding women.
- Eating at least three servings of iron-rich foods a day will help ensure that you are getting 30 mg. of iron in your daily diet. One of the best ways to get iron from your diet is to consume a highly fortified breakfast cereal. Absorption of iron into the body is greatest with meat sources of iron such as liver.
- The best sources of iron include enriched grain products; lean meat, poultry and fish; and leafy green vegetables which also contain calcium and vitamins.

**Should I Take an Iron Supplement?**
The National Academy of Sciences recommends that all pregnant women following a balanced diet take an iron supplement providing 30 mg of iron during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. If your blood iron is adequate and does not drop during your pregnancy, the iron contained in your vitamin supplement is usually enough. Iron deficiency anemia is a condition in which the size and number of red blood cells are reduced. This condition may result from inadequate intake of iron or from blood loss.

**What Are Good Sources of Iron?**
- Meat and Seafood: Lean beef, chicken, clams, crab, egg yolk, fish, lamb, liver, oysters, pork, sardines, shrimp, turkey, and veal.
- Vegetables: Black-eyed peas, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, collard and turnip greens, lima beans, sweet potatoes, and spinach. Egyptian broad beans (foul) are a very good rich source for iron.
- Legumes: Dry beans and peas, lentils, and soybeans.
- Fruits: All berries, apricots, dried fruits, including prunes, raisins and apricots, grapes, grapefruit, oranges, plums, prune juice, and watermelon.
- Breads and Cereals: Enriched rice and pasta, soft pretzel, and whole grain and enriched or fortified breads and cereals.
- Other Foods: Molasses, peanuts, pine nuts, pumpkin or squash seeds.

**Other Facts about Iron**
- Vitamin C helps your body use iron. It is important to include sources of vitamin C along with foods containing iron and iron supplements.
- Caffeine can inhibit the absorption of iron. Try to consume iron supplements and foods high in iron at least one to three hours before or after drinking or eating foods containing caffeine.
- Iron is lost in cooking some foods. To retain iron, cook foods in a minimal amount of water and for the shortest possible time.
- Constipation is a common side effect of taking iron supplements. To help relieve constipation, slowly increase the fibre in your diet by including whole grain breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables. Drinking at least 8 cups of fluids daily and increasing moderate exercise (as we may advice), and drinking milk can also help you avoid constipation.

**Is Food Cravings Normal During Pregnancy?**
Yes. Although there is no widely accepted explanation for food cravings, almost two-thirds of all pregnant women have them. If you develop a sudden urge for a certain food, go ahead and indulge your craving if it provides energy or an essential nutrient. But, if your craving persists and prevents you from getting other essential nutrients in your diet, try to create more of a balance in your daily menu. During pregnancy, your taste for certain foods may change. You may suddenly dislike foods you were fond of before you became pregnant. In addition, during pregnancy, very few women feel strong urges to eat non-food items such as ice, laundry starch, dirt, clay, chalk, ashes or paint chips. This is called pica, and it may be associated with an iron deficiency such as anemia. Do not give in to these non-food cravings -- they can be harmful to both you and your baby.

Follow please find calorie contents of different foods. Unless you are overweight, adjust your calorie intake to 1800 calories a day.

Contact us for any further information, question or comments.

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