



## Pregnancy Nutrition Guide

Good nutrition is vitally important to you and your growing baby during the months of your pregnancy. You should strive to eat at least four servings from each of the four food groups (dairy, breads and cereals, proteins, fruits and vegetables) each day. The following suggestions can help you make healthy choices:

### *Dairy Products—*

Dairy products are an important source of calcium and other key vitamins and nutrients.

- Milk (Skim or 1% is preferred), cheese, yogurt, frozen yogurt and pudding are all good sources.
- High levels of calcium are also found in greens such as turnips, collards and broccoli.
- Many orange juice companies now sell calcium-fortified orange juice that can count as one calcium exchange.
- If you are unable to consume these foods in adequate amounts you should take a calcium supplement daily. Caltrate, Posture and Os-Cal are examples of good calcium supplements. Any brand, including generic, is acceptable if it contains 500 mg-600 mg calcium plus vitamin D. (Calcium cannot be absorbed without vitamin D.)

### *Breads and Cereals—*

- Includes rice, potatoes, pasta, tortillas, dry and cooked cereals (note that dry cereals are high in sodium), grits, breads and rolls.
- Choose breads and cereals made with whole grains, which has more nutritional value. Limit sugary cereals.
- Corn, peas and butter or lima beans are also considered starches.

### *Proteins—*

- Includes meats such as chicken, fish, pork and beef. These should preferably be baked, boiled, broiled or grilled.
- Eggs (no more than three per week).
- Other good protein sources include peanut butter, nuts, cheese, dried beans, legumes and tofu.

### *Fruits and Vegetables—*

- Includes all fruits (fresh, frozen or canned in their own juices).
- Fruit juices are also a good choice. Choose a juice high in vitamin C which will help

the iron in your diet and aid in the absorption of other supplemental vitamins.

- Fresh or frozen vegetables are preferred over canned vegetables, which are high in sodium.
- Salads are an excellent choice as long as dressings are low-calorie and used sparingly.

### *Snacks—*

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Graham crackers
- Regular Fig Newtons
- Low-sodium popcorn
- Cheese

### *Beverages—*

- Limit caffeine intake to two servings per day.
- Avoid all sweet tea due to caffeine & sugar calories. Use decaffeinated tea, coffee and caffeine-free soft drinks.
- Beware of Mountain Dew, which contains even higher levels of caffeine than other soft drinks.
- Sprite, 7 Up, and Sierra Mist are allowed.
- Drink at least 6 glasses of water each day.

### *Your Worst Nutritional “Enemies”—*

Fat, sugar and salt can sabotage your efforts to eat healthy and must be restricted. Consuming too much of these things can lead to excess weight gain and other health issues for you and your baby.

- Tips for limiting fat: choose low-fat or fat-free dressings and condiments (like mayo), limit the amount of seasoning in your vegetables, and remove fat and skin from your meats. Use margarine sparingly.
- Ways to cut sugar: avoid refined sugars like those in cakes, pies, candies and donuts. Substituting with some artificial sweeteners is allowable. Equal, Sweet-n-Low, or NutraSweet products are a good choice (unless there is a family history of phenylketonuria, or PKU). Restrict intake

of these products to 2 per day in yogurt, diet soda, etc.

- Ways to reduce salt: read labels and count your sodium intake each day. One teaspoon of salt contains 2544 mg of salt, and your total intake for one full day should be between 3000 mg-4000 mg.
- Fish/Mercury: Fish and shellfish are an important part of a health diet, but some large fish contain significant amounts of mercury. Mercury in high levels may harm the unborn baby or young child's developing nervous system.

Women who may become pregnant, pregnant women and nursing mothers should avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tile fish because they contain high levels of mercury. They may eat up to 12 oz. a week of shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish, all of which are very low in mercury. Albacore (white) tuna and tuna steaks have more mercury than canned light tuna, but 6 oz. per week are allowed. Avoid raw seafood.

- Listeriosis high risk foods: Unpasteurized “soft” cheese and deli-counter products. Pre-packaged deli meat (i.e. Oscar Meyer, Hillshire Farm, etc.) is fine.