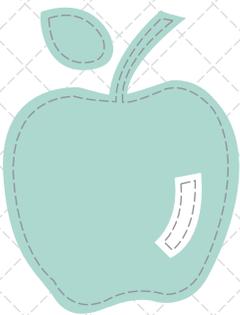
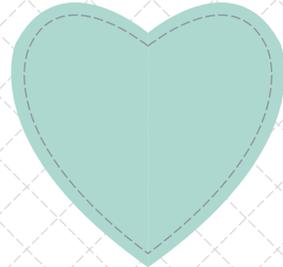
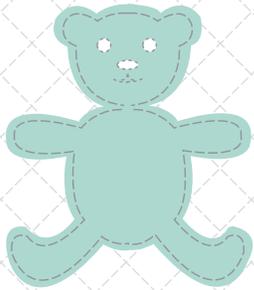


# Healthy Eating



A NEW LIFE



# Healthy Eating

What did you feed your baby today?

When you are pregnant, the food you eat feeds your baby, too. What you eat at this time can have a big effect on your baby's growth and health.

Healthy eating can also improve your own health when you are pregnant. It can help you prevent or control some of the uncomfortable things that happen, such as feeling like you are going to throw up (nausea), constipation, and heartburn.

Your eating habits affect your family's eating habits. If you start good eating habits now, your baby and your whole family will be healthier.

Healthy eating is good for you, good for your baby, and it tastes good, too! *Canada's Food Guide* will help you plan meals and snacks that give you all you need to nourish yourself and your baby.





## Healthy Weight Gain During Pregnancy

Gaining weight is a natural part of pregnancy. It helps your baby grow and develop, and prepares you for breastfeeding.

How much weight you should gain depends on your Body Mass Index before you became pregnant (your pre-pregnancy BMI).

Find out your pre-pregnancy BMI and your recommended weight gain at [healthcanada.gc.ca/pregnancy-calculator](http://healthcanada.gc.ca/pregnancy-calculator) and talk to your health care provider.

Based on my pre-pregnancy BMI (\_\_\_),  kilograms (kg)  
my recommended weight gain is between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_  pounds (lbs)

Most of this weight gain will happen in the second and third trimesters, as your baby and the tissues that support your pregnancy continue to grow.

### Where does the weight go?

#### Here's an example:

Sarah's pre-pregnancy BMI: 23  
Her recommended weight gain:  
11.5-16 kg (25 to 35 lbs)

- Extra blood, fluids and protein: 3.5 kg
- Breasts and energy stores: 3 kg
- Uterus: 1 kg
- Placenta: 1 kg
- Baby: 3.5 kg
- Amniotic Fluid: 1 kg

Sarah's total weight gain  
at 40 weeks: 13 kg (29 lbs)



Gaining a healthy amount of weight during pregnancy has benefits:

- it helps your baby have a healthy start;
- it can reduce your risk of complications in pregnancy and at delivery; and
- it improves your long-term health.

Here are two things you can do every day to gain a healthy amount of weight during pregnancy:

Enjoy being active.

- Add up activities like brisk walking or swimming in periods of at least 10 minutes, for a total of about 30 minutes of activity each day.
- Remember to talk to your health care provider before increasing your activity level or starting an exercise program.

Eat “twice as healthy” not “twice as much”.

- One extra snack each day is often enough. For example, have an apple or a pear with a small piece of cheese (50 grams or 1 ½ oz) as an afternoon snack.
- Follow *Canada’s Food Guide* to eat for you and your baby.



For more information on eating well and being active during pregnancy, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canada-food-guide/resources/prenatal-nutrition.html>

# What You Need

When you are pregnant, every day you should have:

- Regular meals and snacks
- A variety of healthy foods
- Foods that have iron and folic acid
- Foods high in fibre

You should also have fish and omega-3 fats every week.

When you are pregnant, you should limit:

- Caffeine
- Artificial sweeteners
- Foods that do not nourish your body

When you are pregnant, you **must not** drink alcohol. See Section 1 - Healthy Start, for more information.

Balance is the key to healthy eating. You need to eat many kinds of foods, but not too much of any one thing.

No food is perfect all by itself. You need many kinds of healthy foods to be healthy and to have a healthy baby.



## Regular Meals

**E**ating regular meals and snacks is important. Both you and your baby need a steady supply of food to stay healthy. It is hard to get this if you miss meals.

Try to make a habit of eating regular meals. If you find it hard to eat three meals a day, try to have more small meals and more snacks. The important thing is to stay with a pattern of eating that you enjoy. It should also be one that gives you and your baby the food you need.

Pregnant women need to eat when they get up in the morning. The night is a long time to go without food. Your body slows down while you are asleep, and you need healthy food to get moving again.

Canada's  
food guide

# Eat well. Live well.

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

Have plenty  
of vegetables  
and fruits

Eat protein  
foods

Make water  
your drink  
of choice

Choose  
whole grain  
foods

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Canada's  
food guide

# Eat well. Live well.

Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat



**Be mindful of your eating habits**



**Cook more often**



**Enjoy your food**



**Eat meals with others**



**Use food labels**



**Limit foods high in sodium,  
sugars or saturated fat**



**Be aware of food marketing**

# Healthy eating recommendations



**Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat. It is also about where, when, why and how you eat.**

#### **Be mindful of your eating habits**

- Take time to eat
- Notice when you are hungry and when you are full

#### **Cook more often**

- Plan what you eat
- Involve others in planning and preparing meals

#### **Enjoy your food**

- Culture and food traditions can be a part of healthy eating

#### **Eat meals with others**

**Make it a habit to eat a variety of healthy foods each day.**

**Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods. Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.**

- Choose foods with healthy fats instead of saturated fat

**Limit highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.**

- Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added sodium, sugars or saturated fat
- Choose healthier menu options when eating out

**Make water your drink of choice**

- Replace sugary drinks with water

**Use food labels**

**Be aware that food marketing can influence your choices**

## *Water*

**A**lthough water is not a food group, it helps to keep your body healthy.

- It helps keep your body temperature normal.
- It moves vitamins and minerals to where your body needs them.
- It helps your bowels to work well, prevents constipation, and lets the fibre in your food do its job.

Fresh, clean drinking water is part of healthy eating during pregnancy. You need 6 to 8 glasses of water a day. Make sure you do not drink so much water that you have no desire for food.

### **Making sure your water is safe**

If your city or town supplies water to your house, you can be quite sure that it is safe for you and your baby.

If you get your water from a well, you need to have it tested. It may contain things that could affect you and your baby.

Contact your local Public Health office, Health Protection Branch to learn more about testing your well water.

## *Extra Omega-3 Fats, Folic Acid, and Iron*

**O**mega-3 fats, folic acid and iron are very important for your baby's growth. You need more than usual while you are pregnant. The best way to be sure you are getting enough is to eat many a variety of healthy foods every day.

## *Omega-3 Fats*

### **Why do I need omega-3 fats?**

Omega-3 fats play an important role in the growth and development of your baby.

### **What foods contain omega-3 fats?**

Nuts, seeds, vegetable oils and fatty fish contain healthy fats.

Choose fish that have low levels of things that could affect you and your baby. Fish like salmon, trout, herring, haddock, canned light tuna, pollock (Boston bluefish), sole, flounder, anchovy, char, hake, mullet, smelt, Atlantic mackerel and lake white fish. Limit fish like fresh/frozen tuna, albacore/white tuna, shark, swordfish, escolar, marlin, and orange roughy that contain things that could affect you and your baby. Eat no more than 2 servings of these fish each month.

If you do not like fish, talk to your health care provider about other ways to get the omega-3 fats you need. Omega-3 eggs contain omega-3 fats. Be aware they do not have nearly as much omega-3 fats as fish.

**Why do I need iron?**

You need iron to build red blood cells. They carry oxygen and iron to your baby. Babies need to have a good supply of iron in their bodies when they are born. The iron they are born with has to last them until they are about 6 months of age.

**What foods contain iron?**

Some good sources of iron are:

- Protein foods, like lean red meat, clams, lentils, legumes, dried peas and dried beans
- Whole grain breads, cereals and wheat germ
- Dried fruit, like raisins, dates, apricots and prunes.



Easy Ways to Add Iron	
Use dried fruit	Dried fruit, like apricots, dates, raisins, and currants, make good snacks. You can also add them to cereal, applesauce, salad, muffins, sweet loaves, and cookies.
Use beans	Dried peas, beans, and lentils — homemade or canned — are good sources of iron. Baked beans, chili con carne, split pea soup, and lentil soup taste good, are popular, and good sources of iron. If you make homemade soup, try adding a can of kidney beans or chick peas for extra iron.
Use whole grains	Switch from white to whole wheat breads. Add oatmeal to meatloaf and meatballs. Use bran flakes in baking, instead of corn flakes.
Use wheat germ	Add wheat germ to meat loaves, hamburgers, muffins, breads, and cookies. You can also use it as a crunchy topping on casseroles and fruit crisps, or sprinkle it on salads and cereals.
Avoid coffee or tea at mealtimes	These make it harder for your body to use iron. Wait at least an hour after meals before having coffee or tea.

## *Folic Acid*

Vitamin C helps your body to use the iron in vegetables, fruit, grain products and legumes. Try to eat foods with vitamin C at the same time you are eating non-meat foods rich in iron. Some foods high in vitamin C are oranges and grapefruit, tomatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli.

### **Why do I need folic acid?**

Folic acid is a vitamin that works with iron to keep your blood healthy. You need folic acid to build healthy blood and tissue for your baby.

Research has shown that women need more folic acid than we thought before. Taking folic acid before you get pregnant and during the first three months you are pregnant will help prevent problems in your baby. The most common problem it prevents is spina bifida. Your body does not store folic acid, so you need to be sure to get enough every day.

The New Brunswick Department of Health suggests that all women who could become pregnant (from the time they start having periods until the end of menopause) do two things:

- Eat food sources of folic acid every day, and
- Take a multivitamin containing folic acid every day.

### **What foods contain folic acid?**

Many kinds of food are good sources of folic acid.

- Vegetables and fruit, such as broccoli, dark greens (romaine and spinach), green peas, brussels sprouts, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, oranges, grapefruit and cantaloupe.
- Plant-based protein foods like peanuts and peanut butter, other nuts, dried peas, and dried beans
- Whole grain breads, cereals and wheat germ

Folic acid is destroyed by heat, air, and water. Be sure to keep fruit and vegetables cool in the fridge until you use them. Eat some fruit and vegetables raw. When you cook, use as little water as possible. Try steaming your vegetables instead of boiling them.

<b>Easy Ways to Add Folic Acid</b>	
Use spinach	Try a spinach salad, or add spinach to your salads. Use it with lettuce, or instead of lettuce in sandwiches. Add it to soups, stews, and casseroles.
Eat raw fruit and vegetables	Try raw broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, and green pepper with a dip. Add fruit and vegetables to your salads. Tomatoes are good with most salads, and oranges taste great with spinach. Oranges are a very good source of folic acid.
Add vegetables as often as you can	Choose fresh, frozen or canned vegetables. Add tomatoes to macaroni and cheese. Add an extra can of tomatoes to your chili or spaghetti sauce.
Use wheat germ	Sprinkle it on salads and cereals. Add it to meat loaf and casseroles. Add some in when you bake bread, muffins, or cookies.
Use whole grain flour	Make baked goods rich in folic acid by using whole-wheat flour, oatmeal, and wheat germ for cookies, fruit crisps, muffins, granola, or fruit loaves.
Use nuts	Snack on peanut butter and crackers or whole wheat toast. Snack on peanuts, almonds, and walnuts. Add them to salads. Put them into casseroles and vegetable dishes. Add chopped nuts to cookies, muffins, and bread when you bake.
Eat beans, peas, and lentils	Try pea soup, bean soup, lentil soup, bean salads, and canned or homemade baked beans.

## Foods Higher in Calcium and Vitamin D

Choosing foods that are high in calcium and vitamin D is healthy at any time, but many women do not get enough calcium and vitamin D in their diets. You need calcium to stay healthy and to help your baby have strong bones and teeth.

### What foods contain calcium and vitamin D?

Milk, milk products like cheese and yogurt, or milk alternatives — like fortified soy beverage — are common and good sources of calcium.

Milk and fortified soy beverage are enriched with vitamin D, which your body needs in order to use the calcium in foods. Some cheeses and yogurts are now enriched with vitamin D.

If you do not like milk products or cannot eat them, talk to your health care provider about other ways to get the calcium you need. Sardines and salmon (with the bones), tofu, sesame seeds, almonds, baked beans, and broccoli contain calcium. Be aware that they do not have nearly as much calcium as milk and alternatives. Nor do they all contain vitamin D. This means you will have to eat a lot more of them to get the calcium you need.

### Easy Ways to Add Calcium

Use skim milk powder when cooking	Five tablespoons of dry milk powder gives you the same calcium as one cup of milk.  Add skim milk powder to puddings, custards, cheese dishes, scrambled eggs, meat loaves, muffins, bread, chowders, and milk soups for extra calcium. Mash potatoes in their cooking water, add 45–60 mL (3 to 4 tablespoons) of skim milk powder, and then mash again.
Use cheese	Try cheese for a snack. You can also grate it into salads, casseroles, and sandwiches. Make cheese sauces for vegetables and pasta. Try low fat cheese.
Use yogurt	When cooking, use plain yogurt instead of sour cream. Use yogurt to replace some or all of the mayonnaise in salad dressing, dips, or sandwich fillings.
Use milk instead of water when you can	Make hot cereals and cream soups with milk, not water. Add extra milk powder for even more calcium.

Choosing foods that are high in fibre is healthy at any time.

### Higher Fibre when you are pregnant

Constipation is a common problem for pregnant women. Fibre is a natural laxative. It helps prevent constipation. When you eat foods higher in fibre, be sure to drink lots of fluid to keep the fibre soft.

Higher fibre foods include:

- Whole grain breads and cereals
- Vegetables and fruit
- Dried peas, beans, and lentils

Staying active is also good if you want to prevent constipation. See page 32 in the Section 2 - Nine Months of Changes, for more information about constipation.

If you are vegetarian, you can still nourish yourself and your baby in a healthy way. There are a few things you should know.

- Be sure to eat enough. When you are pregnant, you must get enough food energy (calories) to meet your own needs and the needs of your baby. Because vegetarian food often contains fewer calories, you may need to eat more than usual to get the energy you need.
- Be careful to get enough protein. Good quality protein is very important when you are pregnant.
- Make sure you are getting enough vitamins and minerals. If you are a strict vegetarian and avoid all foods that come from animals, you may need extra calcium, iron, zinc, vitamin D, or vitamin B12 when you are pregnant.

If you have any questions about vegetarian eating during pregnancy, talk with your health care provider.

## Higher Fibre Foods

## Vegetarian Eating

# What You Do Not Need

---

In this section, we'll be talking about caffeine, artificial sweeteners, and highly processed foods.

Highly processed foods are sometimes called “empty calories.” They do not nourish your body but they do make you feel full. This leaves less room for the healthy foods you and your growing baby need.

## Caffeine

**H**ere are some good reasons to limit caffeine while you are pregnant.

- Caffeine enters the baby's blood, and the baby cannot get rid of it very well.
- Drinks that contain caffeine, like coffee, tea and colas, may take the place of healthier drinks, like water or milk.
- Caffeine makes you pee (urinate) more often. If you have a problem with having to go to the bathroom often, caffeine will make it worse.
- Caffeine makes it hard for your body to use calcium and iron. Both of these are very important for your baby's growth and health.

Many of us use caffeine and do not know it. Did you know there is caffeine in chocolate, and in many soft drinks and medicines? Read the labels on food and choose products that have the least caffeine.

If you want to replace coffee or tea with herbal teas, you need to be aware that not all herbal teas are safe during pregnancy. If you use herbal teas, use the safe ones. Safe herbal teas are: rosehip, lemon balm, citrus peel, ginger, and orange peel. Check with your health care provider before you use other herbal teas.

One way to cut down on caffeine is to know when you use it and think about what you could have instead.

For example:

- Do you usually have two or three cups of coffee each morning? Try to stop after one cup.
- Do you have the habit of drinking coffee or tea on your breaks at work? Drink water or milk. Eating some fruit. Make sure that the foods or drinks you have instead of coffee will nourish your body.
- Do you drink coffee or cola, or eat chocolate, to boost your energy? Getting plenty of rest, eating well, and doing exercise will increase your energy during the day.

## Artificial Sweeteners

The two most common artificial sweeteners are aspartame and sucralose. These are known as Equal, Nutrasweet, and Splenda. Small amounts of these sweeteners will not hurt you or your baby.

Two other artificial sweeteners, saccharine and cyclamate, should be used only if your doctor says it is okay.

If you use artificial sweeteners, think about the kinds of foods and drinks that contain them. Most of them do not nourish you or provide the kind of energy that you and your growing baby need. Be very careful that these products do not replace better foods. Now is the time to make healthy food choices. Water, and milk are healthy choices. An apple or orange is a better snack than sugar-free jello.

Highly processed foods are often called junk foods because they're high in salt, sugar and fats. They do not nourish your body in a healthy way. They give you calories but nothing else. Candy, chocolate bars, cake, donuts, soft drinks, fruit drinks, French fries and chips are considered unhealthy foods.

When you are pregnant, you should make sure that the foods you eat nourish both you and your growing baby. Do your best to limit unhealthy foods and desserts. For example, if you go to a fast food restaurant, have a cheeseburger but do not have French fries. Order a salad and drink milk, not pop.

## Highly Processed Foods

Replace unhealthy foods with healthy food. Try:

- An apple instead of a chocolate bar
- Glass of water and an orange instead of orange pop
- Cheese and crackers instead of cheese flavored snacks (Cheezies™)
- Milk instead of coffee
- Peanuts instead of chips
- A whole grain muffin instead of cake
- Whole grain bread and peanut butter instead of bread and butter/margarine

The key to healthy eating is to have a balance of many kinds of foods. Before you eat something that you know is not healthy, ask yourself “Have I eaten a variety of healthy foods and followed *Canada's Food Guide*?”

# Getting the Foods You Need

---

It is good to know what you should be eating. But it may seem hard at first to fit all the details about including a variety of foods, extra omega-3 fats, iron, folic acid, low fat, and high fibre foods into the meals you prepare every day.

We are here to help! In this section, sample menus show you how to get the foods you need.

## Menus

The menu sheets on the next few pages can help you to plan meals so you and your baby will be nourished and have the energy you need.

The first two menu sheets have been filled in. They contain meals and snacks that most people know about. They are easy to make, and do not cost a lot. They give you a variety of healthy foods as well as the extra omega-3 fats, folic acid and iron that you and your baby need.

Use the sample menus for a few days to help you understand healthy eating. Then start making small changes so you are using different kinds of food. For example, replace the apple on the sample menu with an orange or a pear. Try green beans instead of peas, or broiled pork chops instead of roast beef.

As you keep track of what you eat, be aware that you do not have to follow Canada's Food Guide plate at every snack. Instead, you should meet the pattern of the plate for your snacks *over the whole day*

When you look at these menus, it may seem like they have more food than you could eat in one day. Please remember that the serving sizes are small. Your goal should be to eat a variety of different foods from *Canada's Food Guide* each day. This means that you should try to eat smaller servings of many kinds of foods rather than large servings of just a few.

Sample Menu #1

What did you eat?	Type of food	How much of your plate would it fill?
<b>Breakfast</b> stewed prunes whole wheat toast peanut butter milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drink	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Morning Snack</b> vegetable sticks whole grain crackers	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Lunch</b> tossed salad whole wheat roll split pea soup milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drink	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Afternoon Snack</b> fruit and milk smoothie oatmeal carrot muffin milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drink	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Dinner</b> Brussels sprouts cauliflower applesauce whole wheat noodles broiled chicken	Vegetables and Fruits Vegetables and Fruits Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Evening Snack</b> orange whole grain bread peanut butter milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drinks	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate

Sample Menu #2

What did you eat?	Type of food	How much of your plate would it fill?
<b>Breakfast</b> sliced fruit small bran muffin scrambled egg milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drinks	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Morning Snack</b> canned pineapple graham crackers peanut butter	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Lunch</b> carrot sticks apple slices whole wheat bread tuna milk	Vegetables and Fruits Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drink	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Afternoon Snack</b> grapes cheese chunks	Vegetables and Fruits Protein Foods	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Dinner</b> broccoli whole wheat roll small steak milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drink	¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate ¼ of your plate
<b>Evening Snack</b> banana whole grain cereal milk	Vegetables and Fruits Whole Grain Foods Protein Foods/Healthy Drink	½ of your plate ¼ of your plate

**Your Own Menu #1**

<b>What did you eat?</b>	<b>Type of food</b>	<b>How much of your plate would it fill?</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>		
<b>Morning Snack</b>		
<b>Lunch</b>		
<b>Afternoon Snack</b>		
<b>Dinner</b>		
<b>Evening Snack</b>		

**Your Own Menu #2**

What did you eat?	Type of food	How much of your plate would it fill?
<b>Breakfast</b>		
<b>Morning Snack</b>		
<b>Lunch</b>		
<b>Afternoon Snack</b>		
<b>Dinner</b>		
<b>Evening Snack</b>		

## *Loving And Hating Foods When You Are Pregnant*

**Y**ou may find that when you are pregnant there are some foods that you love. You may even “crave” these foods. This means you want them often, and cannot seem to get enough of them. There may be other foods that you hate. Just thinking about them can make you feel sick

No one knows why this happens. There is no physical reason for loving or hating certain foods.

In other words, you do not want chocolate because your body “needs” chocolate for some reason.

If you crave something that is good for you and your baby, like milk or fruit, go ahead and enjoy! Just make sure that you leave enough room each day for other good foods.

If you crave less healthy foods, like candy or chips, look for foods that are sweet or salty, and healthy. Instead of candy, you could eat raisins, date squares, muffins, and quick breads. Instead of chips, you could eat a small amount of peanuts or salted almonds.

The same advice applies to foods you hate. If you really do not like fried foods, do not worry. Broiling or baking is much better for you!

If you hate a healthy food that you and your baby need, try to find a way to put it into other foods. Or eat other kinds of foods that you like from the same food group. For example, if you hate milk, try yogurt or cheese. You could also put powdered milk into other things you cook, like muffins or meat loaf. If this does not work, look for other ways to get calcium, such as salmon, tofu, or broccoli. If you hate the smell of fish cooking, try to have someone cook it for you.

If you are very concerned about foods you love or hate, ask your health care provider for advice.



## Be Mindful of Your Eating Habits

Being mindful of your eating habits is important. It can help you make healthier food choices.

Be mindful by:

- taking enough time to eat
- planning your meals and snacks
- decreasing distractions during meals
- including a wide variety of healthy foods

## Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

*C*anada's Food Guide recommends that women who are pregnant take a multivitamin that has folic acid and iron every day. Many people think that if they take a vitamin pill or supplement, they do not have to worry about what they eat. This is not true. Your body needs more than 50 kinds of vitamins and minerals every day. No vitamin or supplement can replace a healthy diet.

When you are pregnant, you need to study your eating habits and make changes where you can. Your health care provider can help with this.

Do not take vitamin pills or supplements beyond the recommended multivitamin on your own. Always talk to your health care provider.

Treat your multivitamin and any other vitamins or supplements like medicine. Follow the directions and keep it away from children.

### Be sure to ask these questions:

- What is it?
- What's it for?
- What will it do to me and my baby?
- What are the side effects?
- What is the smallest amount I can take?

Remember that even the best supplement cannot replace healthy eating.

## Check Your Eating Habits

**N**ow that you know what you should be eating, check to see how well you are doing.

If you can say YES and put a check mark next to each of these questions, you are doing well! Your eating habits will help you create a healthy baby and a healthy family.

If you cannot put a check mark next to all the questions, do not give up. Change is not always easy. It takes time. Look at the things you need to change and think about how you can start changing them.

### On most days, do you:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods each day ?
- Follow Canada's Food Guide?
- Eat whole grain bread and cereal?
- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits?
- Eat/drink foods rich in calcium?
- Eat/drink foods rich in folic acid?
- Eat foods rich in iron?
- Have at least one food rich in vitamin C?
- Eat regular meals and snacks?
- Eat healthy snacks?
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of healthy fluids?
- Limit caffeine?
- Limit the amount of highly processed foods?
- Limit artificial sweeteners?
- Keep active?

# After the Baby Comes

Healthy eating does not stop when your baby is born. You will still need to eat a variety of healthy foods every day.

Healthy eating will help you and your family stay healthy and active. *Canada's Food Guide* can help you make healthy choices. Use the *Food Guide* to learn how to get a healthy balance of different types of foods at each meal and snack.

## Losing Weight

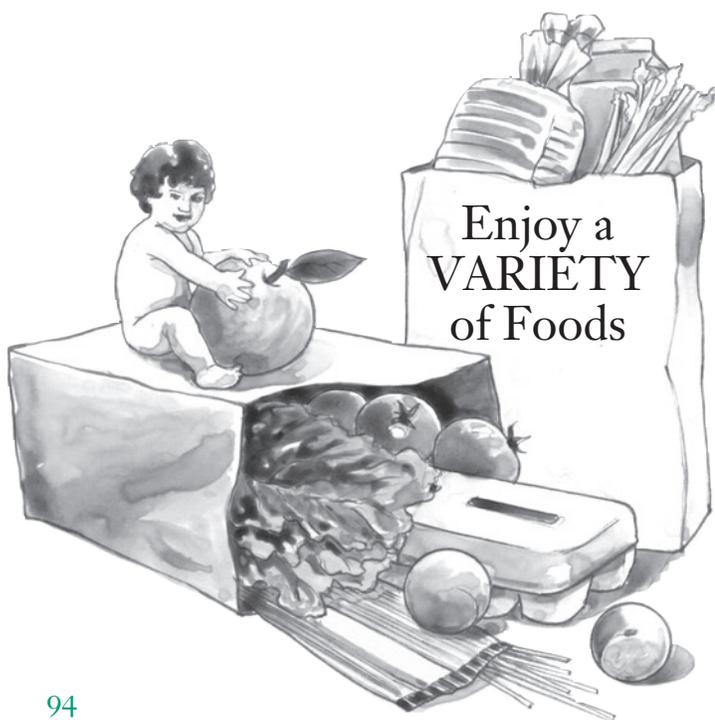
**E**very mother loses weight as soon as her baby is born. You lose the weight of the baby, the weight of the placenta, and the weight of the waters around the baby (amniotic fluid).

During the next few weeks, you will also lose the weight of your uterus as it returns to its normal size. The extra blood and fluid you needed when you were pregnant are not part of your body anymore.

If you are breastfeeding, do not try to lose weight by eating less. When you start to breastfeed, you will use up the fat your body stored when you were pregnant. This fat will help you prepare for breastfeeding.

If you have eaten healthy food during your pregnancy and continue to do so, it will not be hard to lose the extra weight. Many women find that they lose the weight gained during pregnancy by the time the baby is eight months old. This may seem like a long time, but remember, you were pregnant for nine months! Your body needs time to get back to normal.

Getting back to your “normal” weight does not mean you will look like you did before you were pregnant. Healthy eating and active living will help with this. Join an exercise program for new mothers. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity, to help you get started.



**I**f you need to lose a few pounds to reach a healthy weight, do it slowly. Remind yourself that it took nine months to gain the weight.

The best way to lose weight is to follow Canada's Food Guide, eat a variety of healthy foods, watch your portion sizes, and limit your amount of unhealthy foods and drinks.

If you want to learn more, talk with a your health care provider.

Regular activity will help you to use calories, tighten muscles, and feel great.

## *Making Healthy Food Choices to Help You Lose Weight*

### **Tips to help you make healthy choices**

- Eat a variety of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein foods.
- Be mindful of your eating habits by taking the time to enjoy your food, eat with others and cook more often.
- Avoid large portion sizes. Go back for seconds only if you're still hungry or have a healthy snack later on.
- Make water your drink of choice. Drink plenty of water each day, including with meals and snacks.
- Use skim milk, 1%, or 2% milk. Use 2 % milk instead of cream in coffee or tea.
- Look on cheese and yogurt labels for the percentage of milk fat (MF). Choose cheese that has less than 20% MF and yogurt that has less than 2% MF.
- Use lean cuts of meat and trim off fat before cooking. Remove the skin from chicken before you cook it.
- Drain off fat when you are cooking meat.
- Try making some meals with peas, beans, and lentils instead of meat.
- Bake, broil, roast, or steam foods.
- Limit fried foods.
- Choose healthier snacks like apple slices with peanut butter, yogurt and berries, whole grain crackers and cheese, or veggies and hummus dip.
- Use only a little butter, margarine, or mayonnaise.
- Cut back on high sugar foods like jam, sugar, honey, candy, pop, and fruit drinks.
- Cut back on lunchmeats like salami, bologna, and hotdogs.
- When you buy food in packages, read the Ingredient List and Nutrition Facts table. You can find tips for reading food labels on Canada's Food Guide website at [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/using-food-labels/) (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/using-food-labels/>)

# *Make Healthy Eating A Habit*

Healthy eating is a good habit. It means that you can enjoy many different kinds of foods that taste good and nourish your body. It means that you avoid alcohol and limit foods high in fats, caffeine, salt, and sugar.

Good eating habits can help your family stay healthy for life. Right now is a good time to make healthy eating a habit.

Once your new baby arrives you can learn more about breastfeeding and healthy food for children by calling your local Public Health office.

