

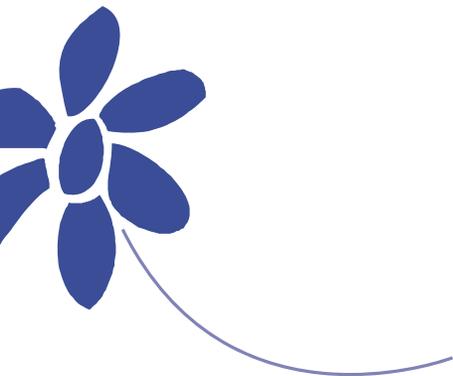


Government  
of Canada

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The Sensible Guide to a

# HEALTHY pregnancy



Nutrition

Folic acid

Alcohol and pregnancy

Physical activity

Smoking and pregnancy

Oral health

Emotional health



Canada

The Public Health Agency of Canada was created in September 2004. The Agency's role is to help build an effective public health system in Canada—one that allows Canadians to achieve better health and well-being in their daily lives, while protecting them from threats to their health security.

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# The Healthy Pregnancy Guide

If you are pregnant, or are planning to become pregnant, this guide is for you!

Having a baby can be a wonderful experience, but it can also be a time of uncertainty. Many women have questions and concerns as they face all the changes that pregnancy brings. But with advice coming from everyone, it's tough to know who to listen to. That's why having the accurate information is so important! It will help you to make good decisions about how to take care of yourself before, during and after your pregnancy.

At the beginning of the guide, you will find important facts and questions related to a healthy pregnancy. They include:

**Prenatal Nutrition**

**Folic Acid**

**Alcohol and Pregnancy**

**Physical Activity**

**Smoking and Pregnancy**

**Oral Health**

**Emotional Health**

The second half of the guide has a handy ten-month pregnancy calendar that you can personalize to help you keep track of what week of pregnancy you are in. Each month includes interesting facts, useful information and tips on a variety of pregnancy-related topics.

Planning a pregnancy and being pregnant are exciting times in your life! Using this guide can help make it a healthier experience for you and your baby.





## Prenatal Nutrition

*Healthy eating plays a very important role in a healthy pregnancy. You need to eat foods from a variety of sources to make sure you get all the vitamins, minerals and nutrients you and your developing baby need. Eating well will also help you feel better, give you more energy and help keep your weight in check. It will also contribute to your baby's healthy growth and development.*

### **IMPORTANT FACTS**

**Know what you need.** During your second and third trimesters of pregnancy, you need more calories each day to support the growth of your baby. For most women, this means an extra two or three Food Guide servings daily. You can add them in as an additional snack or as part of your usual meals. For example, have a fruit and yogurt as a snack, or have an extra slice of toast at breakfast and an extra glass of milk at supper.

**Fruits and vegetables are a must!** Pregnant women need fruits and vegetables every day. Brightly coloured vegetables and fruit contain more of the kinds of vitamins you and your baby need. You should eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day. Make sure your fruits and vegetables are prepared with little or no added fat, sugar and salt, and choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

**Grain products are important.** You need to include grain products as part of your daily diet. This includes foods like bread, rice and pasta. Try to choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar and salt, and look for the “whole grain” variety since at least half of your daily grain intake should be whole grain.

**Have milk and milk alternatives for strong bones.** Milk and alternatives are important for your growing baby. Opt for the low-fat variety, which will give you the high quality protein, calcium and vitamin D you need but with less of the fat and calories. Have skim, 1% or 2% milk every day and go for a variety of yogurt and cheese. Drink fortified soy beverages if you do not drink milk.

**Include meat and meat alternatives.** Eating meat and alternatives each day will help you and your baby stay healthy. Choose lean (less fatty) meats and meat alternatives—dried peas, beans, tofu and lentils—made with little or no added fat or salt. Fish is also important and should be eaten each week. But choosing which fish to eat, and how much, can be complicated. Visit Health Canada’s Web site to find out how to choose fish that are low in mercury so that you and your baby can take advantage of the benefits of eating fish while minimizing the risks from mercury.

## Next Steps

Aim for three meals a day with healthy snacks in between.

Check out Canada’s Food Guide to see how many servings of each food group you need each day.

Take a multivitamin every day. Make sure it has 0.4 mg of folic acid and also contains iron. A health care provider can help you find the multivitamin that is right for you.

## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PRENATAL NUTRITION

### How much weight should I gain while I’m pregnant?

It depends on how much you weighed before you got pregnant. The following recommendations are based on your Body Mass Index (BMI) before you became pregnant. BMI is a number based on a comparison of your weight to your height (BMI = weight (kg)/height (m)<sup>2</sup>).

BMI	Recommended Weight Gain
Below 20	Between 12.5 and 18 kg (28 and 40 pounds)
Between 20 and 27	Between 11.5 and 16 kg (25 and 35 pounds)
Over 27	Between 7 and 11.5 kg (15 and 25 pounds)

If you are pregnant with more than one baby (twins, triplets) you will need to gain more weight. Your health care provider will be able to advise you.





### Is there anything I shouldn't eat while I'm pregnant?

Yes. Avoid the following foods which may be contaminated by bacteria:

- Raw fish, especially shellfish such as oysters and clams
- Undercooked meat, poultry and seafood (for example, hot dogs, non-dried deli-meats, refrigerated pâté, meat spreads and refrigerated smoked seafood and fish)
- All foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs (for example, homemade Caesar vinaigrette)
- Unpasteurized milk products and foods made from them, including soft and semi-soft cheeses such as Brie or Camembert
- Unpasteurized juices, such as unpasteurized apple cider
- Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts



### I often have to eat on the run. What should I grab for a snack?

There are lots of healthy foods you can eat on the run. Try pre-washed vegetables (like baby carrots, cauliflower and broccoli), raisin boxes, low-fat cottage cheese bowls, low-fat yogurt in a cup, mixed vegetable juice or fruit juice, trail mix (raisins, dried fruit, nuts and seeds) and cheese. Don't forget to drink plenty of water!

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information on prenatal nutrition, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy).

For a copy of Canada's Food Guide go to [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide).

## Folic Acid

*Your baby's brain, skull and spine form during the first few weeks of pregnancy, before you even know you are expecting! In order for them to form properly, you must have enough folic acid.*

### **IMPORTANT FACTS**

#### **What is folic acid?**

Folic acid is one of the B vitamins important for healthy growth of your unborn baby. It is essential to the normal development of your baby's spine, brain and skull, especially during the first four weeks of your pregnancy. It is, therefore, important to start taking vitamin supplements with folic acid before you get pregnant to reduce the risk of neural tube defects.

#### **What are neural tube defects?**

Neural tube defects (NTDs) are birth defects that occur when the neural tube fails to close properly during the early weeks of pregnancy, resulting in abnormalities of the spine, brain or skull that can result in stillbirth or lifelong disability. Closure of the neural tube happens early in pregnancy, often

before a woman knows she is pregnant. Spina bifida is the most common NTD.

#### **Take a folic acid supplement daily.**

All women who could become pregnant should take a multivitamin containing 0.4 mg of folic acid every day. To help reduce the risk of NTDs, you should start taking the vitamin supplement at least three months before you get pregnant and continue through the first three months of your pregnancy. Talk to your health professional to find the best supplement for you.

#### **Eat a balanced diet.**

Taking a vitamin supplement does not reduce or replace the need for a healthy, well-balanced diet according to Canada's Food Guide. Good or excellent sources of folic acid (called folate when it is naturally occurring in foods) include dark green vegetables (broccoli, spinach, peas and brussel sprouts), corn, dried peas, beans, lentils, oranges and orange juice. Whole grain breads and foods fortified with folic acid also provide significant amounts of the vitamin.





### **Some women are more at risk of having a baby with an NTD.**

If you have had a previous NTD-affected pregnancy, or have a family history of this problem, see your doctor. You may be advised to take a higher dosage of folic acid. If you have diabetes, obesity or epilepsy, you may be at higher risk of having a baby with an NTD, and you should see your doctor before planning a pregnancy.

### **Next Steps**

You should start taking a daily multivitamin with 0.4 mg of folic acid before planning a pregnancy. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about which multivitamin would be best for you.

Make an effort to eat more foods that are good sources of folic acid (or folate).

If you are more at risk of having a baby with an NTD, see your doctor before you plan a pregnancy to discuss your options.

### **COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT FOLIC ACID**

#### **Can NTDs be detected before birth?**

Some NTDs can be detected before birth by prenatal screening tests. If you are pregnant and wish to know more about the prenatal diagnosis of NTDs, talk to your health care professional about the prenatal blood test or ultrasound test that can give you more information about whether your unborn baby has an NTD.

#### **Is it possible to get too much folic acid?**

Do not take more than one daily dose of vitamin supplement as indicated on the product label. Increasing your dose of folic acid beyond 1 mg per day without the advice of a doctor is not recommended. In large doses some substances in multivitamins could actually do more harm than good. This is especially true of vitamin A in some forms.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information on folic acid and NTDs, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy).



# Alcohol and Pregnancy

*Alcohol and pregnancy don't mix.*

## **IMPORTANT FACTS**

THERE IS NO SAFE AMOUNT OR SAFE TIME TO DRINK ALCOHOL DURING PREGNANCY.

**If you drink alcohol while you are pregnant, you are at risk of giving birth to a baby with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).** FASD is a term that describes a range of disabilities (physical, social, mental/emotional) that may affect people whose birth mothers drank alcohol while they were pregnant.

FASD may include problems with learning and/or behaviour, doing math, thinking things through, learning from experience, understanding the consequences of his or her actions and remembering things. Your child could also have trouble in social situations and getting along with others. People with FASD may be small and their faces may look different. Research shows that children born to mothers who drank as little as one drink per day during pregnancy may have behaviour and/or learning problems.

**No one knows how much alcohol it takes to harm a developing baby.** When you drink alcohol during pregnancy, it rapidly reaches your baby through your bloodstream. The effect of alcohol on the developing baby can vary depending on the health of the pregnant woman and also the amount, pattern and timing of drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Binge drinking (drinking a large amount of alcohol in a short amount of time) is especially bad for the developing baby.

## **Next Steps**

Whether you are trying to get pregnant or are pregnant already, stop drinking alcohol. No alcohol is the best (and the safest!) choice for having a healthy baby.

If you need help to stop drinking, you should ask your doctor, community health nurse, midwife or other health care professional for advice. Tell your partner, family, friends and community members who can all support you with this decision.





## **COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND PREGNANCY**

### **What type of alcohol should I avoid?**

Everything! Beer, wine, cocktails, coolers, hard liquors (such as whiskey, gin or vodka), liqueurs or even hard ciders all contain alcohol that can hurt your developing baby. There is no alcohol that is “safe” to drink when you are pregnant.

### **Are there times during pregnancy when it is okay to have alcohol?**

There is no known time during pregnancy when it has been determined that it is safe to drink alcohol.

### **How much drinking causes FASD?**

No one knows for sure how much drinking causes FASD. That means that there is no safe amount of alcohol you can drink while you are pregnant.

### **Can FASD be cured?**

No. People have FASD for their entire life. They often require supports and services like special education, vocational programs, tutors and even lifelong care.

### **Can biological fathers cause FASD?**

No. FASD can only be caused when a biological mother drinks alcohol while she is pregnant. However, it is known that women with partners who drink are more likely to drink themselves during pregnancy. Future fathers can play a big role by supporting a woman’s choice not to drink when they are having a baby.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information on FASD, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Healthy Pregnancy Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy).



## Physical Activity and Pregnancy

*There was a time when pregnant women were encouraged to avoid physical activity. Fortunately, attitudes about pregnancy have changed and medical experts now recommend regular physical activity as part of a healthy pregnancy.*

### **IMPORTANT FACTS**

**Regular physical activity during pregnancy is great.** It can:

- improve your mood and self-image
- help ensure appropriate weight gain
- help you relax and reduce stress
- promote better sleep
- increase your muscle tone, strength and endurance
- help build your stamina for labour and delivery
- speed up your recovery after labour and delivery
- help increase your energy levels

**Start easy and progress gradually.** If you've been inactive, start with mild activities like walking and swimming. Even five minutes a day will help. Gradually increase the time you're active to 30 minutes a session. Before starting a new exercise program, you should talk to your doctor.

**Don't overdo it!** You should be able to carry on a normal conversation during physical activities. If you're feeling more tired than normal, take it easy and rest for a day.

**Keep cool and hydrated.** Drink lots of water before, during and after physical activity to avoid overheating and dehydration. You should also refrain from being active outdoors on overly hot or humid days.





## Next Steps

Build physical activity into your daily routine. The type of activity you choose is up to you, as long as you feel comfortable doing it and your doctor says it's okay.

If you're already active, think about how you can modify or replace weight-bearing activities such as running, high-impact aerobics, hiking and tennis as your pregnancy progresses.

### ***COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PREGNANCY***

#### **I've never really been active. Should I start now that I'm pregnant?**

Physical activity can make you feel better and be beneficial for both you and your developing baby. The decision to be active during pregnancy may be the first step toward a long-lasting healthy way of life for you and your family. Remember to speak with your doctor before you begin and start slowly.

#### **I'm already active, but now I'm pregnant.**

##### **Can I continue to exercise?**

If you exercised regularly before becoming pregnant, continue your program and make changes as you need to. Talk to your doctor about your current routine to see if and when you may need to make any adjustments. Most importantly, listen to your body as it changes from one month to the next and only do what feels comfortable for you.

##### **Can I lift weights?**

Weight training is generally safe as long as the resistance is light to moderate. Using heavier weights could put too much stress on muscles and ligaments. Proper controlled breathing is also very important. After your fourth month of pregnancy, experts suggest modifying exercises that require lying on your back so they are performed on your side, or while you are standing or sitting.

## How can I tell if I've overdone it?

If you're really tired and you feel like stopping, then it's time to stop. If you still feel tired, give yourself a break for at least a day. Call your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- persistent contractions
- bleeding from the vagina
- increasing back pain, pubic pain, or pain in the abdomen
- sudden swelling of the ankles, hands or face
- dizziness or shortness of breath
- excessive fatigue
- difficulty walking
- changes in usual fetal movement
- swelling, pain, and redness in the calf of one leg



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information on physical activity, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy).

For a copy of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living go to [www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide).

You can also go to the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology's (CSEP) Web site at [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca).





## Smoking and Pregnancy

*When you or the people around you smoke, your baby smokes too. A smoke-free environment is best for both you and your developing baby.*

### **IMPORTANT FACTS**

**When you smoke, your baby gets less oxygen and nutrients.** This can cause your baby to grow more slowly and gain less weight in your womb. Babies with a lower-than-average birth weight tend to have more health problems. And the more you smoke, the higher the risk that your baby will have complications during the perinatal period (just before, during and just after birth). This is true for babies exposed to second-hand smoke too.

**Cigarette smoking exposes your baby to over 4,000 chemicals found in tobacco smoke.**

Fifty of these are associated with cancer.

**Exposure to tobacco smoke affects your baby for life.** Your baby may have learning problems, more ear infections and more colds and breathing problems. Being born small can affect your baby's health into adulthood.

**Smoking during pregnancy will increase the risks to your own health too.** For example, you have a greater chance of having a miscarriage than a non-smoker. During the birth, you are more likely to have complications.

**Second-hand smoke is just as bad.** Second-hand smoke contains the same toxic chemicals and carcinogens that smokers inhale. Children regularly exposed to second-hand smoke are at least 50% more likely to suffer damage to their lungs and to develop breathing problems such as asthma. When you breathe in second-hand smoke, you have a greater risk of developing lung cancer, heart disease, breathing problems and irritation of the eyes, lungs and throat.



## Next Steps

If you are currently smoking, the best step you can take is to quit! Your baby will get more oxygen and nutrients, which will help the baby's birth weight and health. You will lower your blood pressure and heart rate, as well as decrease your risk of complications during labour and delivery. You can talk to your doctor about ways to quit that are most appropriate while you are pregnant. If you have trouble quitting, ask for help.

Avoid second-hand smoke. Make your home and car smoke-free spaces. Ask your partner, family members and friends not to smoke around you. When you are with people who want to smoke, ask them to smoke outside. Explain to them that you and your baby need smoke-free air.



## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SMOKING AND PREGNANCY

### **I only smoke a few cigarettes a day. Should I still quit?**

Yes. All tobacco smoke is bad for both you and your baby. The sooner you quit completely, the better.

### **Don't some mothers who smoke while they're pregnant still have healthy babies?**

Yes, but they're lucky. Smoking during pregnancy is a gamble that puts your child at risk.

### **Will I gain extra weight if I quit now?**

It is possible that if you stop smoking you may eat more to replace your oral habit. Chewing sugar-free gum might help. If you do gain a few pounds, don't worry. Being physically active and making healthy food choices will help you lose the extra weight after your baby is born. You'll also feel great knowing you gave your baby the best possible start in life.





### **Is it okay for me to smoke after the baby is born?**

The best choice for you and your baby is to stay smoke-free. If you start smoking again, you are putting your baby at risk from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and your own health at risk from the effects of smoking. By staying smoke-free you're protecting both you and your baby from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke.

### **What can I do to help me quit?**

Some people find that picking a quit day helps. On that day, you throw away your cigarettes, lighters, matches and ashtrays. In anticipation of the quit day, you can reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke per day. Set a limit and stick to it. When you feel the urge to smoke, try chewing gum, eating a piece of fruit, calling a friend or going for a walk. Stop-smoking support groups may also help.



### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information on smoking and pregnancy, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy). You can also go to Health Canada's Web site [www.gosmokefree.ca](http://www.gosmokefree.ca).

Other useful sites include:

#### **March of Dimes**

[www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332\\_1171.asp](http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1171.asp)

#### **PREGNETS**

[www.pregnets.org/mothers/questions.aspx](http://www.pregnets.org/mothers/questions.aspx)

## Oral Health

*Taking care of your teeth and gums is very important when you are pregnant. Hormonal changes during pregnancy can increase your risk of developing periodontal (gum and bone) disease. Poor oral health may also affect the health of your developing baby.*

### **IMPORTANT FACTS**

**Pregnant women with periodontal disease may have a higher risk of delivering a pre-term or low birth weight baby.** Babies who are pre-term or have a low birth weight have a higher incidence of developmental complications, asthma, ear infections, birth abnormalities, behavioural difficulties and a higher risk of infant death.

### **Eating well is important for your oral health.**

It can also help to build strong teeth and bones in your developing baby. During pregnancy, you need to eat the right kinds of food and in the right amounts—making sure to get enough calcium, vitamins A, C and D, as well as protein and phosphorous. Taking a multivitamin can help.

**Regular dental checkups and cleanings by your dental professional are the best ways to detect and prevent periodontal disease.** Schedule a checkup in your first trimester to have your teeth cleaned and your oral health assessed. If you require dental work, the best time to schedule it is between the fourth and sixth month of your pregnancy (the second trimester). X-rays of your mouth should only be taken in an emergency.

**Morning sickness can cause tooth decay.** Stomach acid left on the teeth can damage the surface of your teeth and promote tooth decay. If you vomit, rinse your mouth with water or with a fluoride mouthwash as soon as you can afterward.





## **COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ORAL HEALTH**

### **Will it hurt my teeth if I eat between meals?**

No. It's good for pregnant women to eat healthy snacks between meals so they can meet their daily nutritional needs. Just try to avoid soft, sweet and sticky snacks that are high in carbohydrates and sugar. And remember to clean your teeth after snacking to prevent cavities.

### **Next Steps**

Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a soft toothbrush using a fluoride toothpaste. Carefully clean your teeth at the gum line, where gum disease starts. Don't forget to floss!

If you're not sure if you are brushing and flossing correctly, talk to your dental professional. He or she can show you how, so you can care for your teeth and gums properly.

Be sure to continue with routine dental check-ups during and after your pregnancy.

Given the important connection between healthy eating and oral health, follow Canada's Food Guide.

### **Is it safe to have an x-ray while I'm pregnant?**

It is a good idea to avoid routine dental x-rays while you're pregnant. In the event of a dental emergency, however, an x-ray may be essential. If this happens, your dental professional will shield your abdomen with a lead apron to protect your baby from exposure to radiation.

### **Why do my gums keep bleeding?**

Hormone changes during pregnancy can affect the gums, making them more sensitive and inflamed in response to bacteria along the gum line. This can lead to red, swollen gums that bleed easily. "Pregnancy gingivitis" often appears between the third and ninth month of pregnancy. Gently brushing along the gum line when you brush your teeth can help tender, bleeding gums. Gum problems usually disappear after childbirth. If they continue, contact your dental professional.

**I've heard that a woman loses one tooth for every pregnancy. Is this true?**

No. The calcium needed to make your baby's teeth comes from what you eat not from your own teeth. If you do not take in enough calcium to meet your baby's needs, your body will provide this mineral from the calcium of your bones. Eating enough dairy products and—if necessary—taking a calcium supplement, will ensure both you and your baby will have enough of this mineral without putting your bones at risk.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information on oral health, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy).

You can also go to the Canadian Dental Association Web site at [www.cda-adc.ca](http://www.cda-adc.ca) and the Canadian Dental Hygienist Association Web site at [www.cdha.ca](http://www.cdha.ca).

For a copy of Canada's Food Guide go to [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide).





## Emotional Health

*When you are pregnant, the thoughts and feelings you experience can range from happiness and contentment—“I can’t wait to hold my new baby”, “I’m going to be a great mother”—to worry and stress—“Will I ever lose all this weight?”, “Can I really support a baby on this pay cheque?” It’s normal to experience these types of feelings. Your moods are changing right along with your hormones and your body. That’s why your emotional health is more important than ever!*

### IMPORTANT FACTS

**One in ten women suffers from bouts of depression during pregnancy.** Learn the signs and symptoms of depression (see the next page) and contact your doctor if you feel you may be depressed.

**You need your rest.** Your body is busy 24 hours a day as your baby develops and it’s hard work. If you’re tired, don’t skip sleep. Put your feet up, take a nap or just slow down. You’ll feel better physically and mentally.

**Staying active and eating well can help keep your moods in check.** Make sure you are eating enough to nourish your baby. Eat regularly—don’t skip meals—and make sure you drink plenty of water. You also need physical activity. A walk outside or swimming at the pool can leave you feeling refreshed.

**Stay away from stress.** If certain people or situations cause you stress, avoid them as much as possible. And don’t take on added responsibilities at work or in your community. Having too much to do can be stressful at the best of times. Learn to say “no!”

### Next Steps

Take care of yourself by eating well, staying active and finding time to relax and rest when you need it.

Accept offers of help from friends and family.

Share your thoughts and feelings with others. If you are worried, upset, sad or anxious, talking about it can help. Confide in your partner, a trusted friend or a family member.

## **COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

**I'm fine one minute and in tears the next.**

**Why am I so moody?**

Mood swings are a normal part of pregnancy. Pregnancy triggers an outpouring of various hormones. These hormones can change the level of brain chemicals (called neurotransmitters) that, in turn, regulate mood. Some women may be moody all through pregnancy, but it's most common around the sixth to tenth week and then again in the third trimester when your body is getting ready for labour and delivery.

**Is it safe to have sex?**

Unless your doctor specifically advises you otherwise, sex during pregnancy is safe for both you and your baby. Intercourse can't hurt your baby or cause a miscarriage. You may find you want to have sex more than you did before you became pregnant. On the other hand, wanting sex less is perfectly normal too. Most couples resume an active sex life sometime during the first year of their baby's life.

**Could I be depressed?**

It's possible. Check with your health care provider if you have four or more of these symptoms for at least two weeks or if any of these symptoms particularly concern you:

- inability to concentrate
- anxiety
- extreme irritability
- frequent mood swings
- sleep problems
- extreme fatigue
- persistent sadness
- a lack of interest in things you used to care about
- a sense that nothing is fun or enjoyable anymore
- a dramatic change in appetite (up or down)

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For additional information on emotional health, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site at **[www.healthy Canadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthy Canadians.ca/pregnancy)**.

You can also go to the Mood Disorders Society of Canada Web site at **[www.mooddisorderscanada.ca](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca)** and the Canadian Mental Health Association's Web site at **[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)**.





## RESOURCES

### Healthy Pregnancy Web site

Public Health Agency of Canada

[www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy)

### Canada's Food Guide

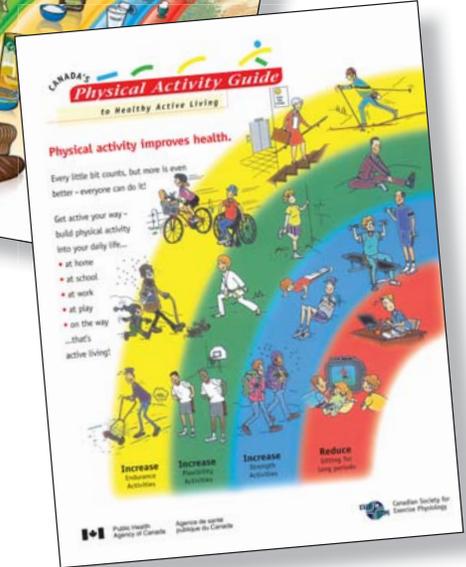
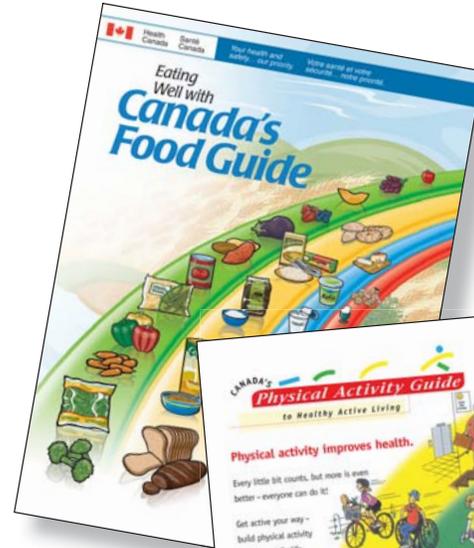
Health Canada

[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

### Canada's Physical Activity Guide

Public Health Agency of Canada

[www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/paguide)



[www.universalchildcare.ca](http://www.universalchildcare.ca) [www.gardedenfants.ca](http://www.gardedenfants.ca)

Canada's **Universal Child Care** plan



Le plan **universel** pour la garde d'enfants du Canada

Choice. Support. Spaces.      Choix. Soutien. Places.

### **Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)**

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) is a comprehensive community-based program that supports pregnant women facing circumstances that threaten their health and the health and development of their infants. CPNP aims to improve maternal and infant health; reduce the incidence of unhealthy birth weights; promote and support breastfeeding; build partnerships; and strengthen community supports for pregnant women. As a comprehensive program, services include food supplementation, nutritional counseling, support, education, referral and counseling on health and lifestyle issues.

For more information visit

**[www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy)**

### **Women's Health Matters**

New Women's College Hospital

**[www.womenshealthmatters.ca](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca)**

### **The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)**

**[www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)**





## Personalized Ten-Month Pregnancy Calendar

### *How to use this calendar*

Using the example (page 23), start your calendar on the first month. This is the month when you became pregnant. Put the name of the month on the line above the calendar (e.g. if you conceived on March 5, put “March” on that line). Using a current calendar, fill in the days for that month in the top left corner of each square. Circle the date you conceived and put Week 3 in the left column. (Doctors start counting from the first day of your last menstrual period—before you are even pregnant—so Week 1 would be the week in which the first day of your last period occurred.) Now you can find out what week you’re in at a glance. You can also use the calendar to keep track of doctor’s appointments and other important dates.

If you became pregnant near the end of the month, you may want to start your First Month calendar at the beginning of the next month. For example, using the calendar, if you conceived on March 28 you could use April as your first month instead of March. In the “Week #” column, you would put Week 4 in the first week of April since Week 3 was the last week of March.

Stages of pregnancy information within the calendar section was reprinted with permission from [www.womenshealthmatters.ca](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca).

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## MARCH

Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2	3
<b>3</b>	4	5	6	7	8	8	9
<b>4</b>	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>5</b>	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>6</b>	25	26	27	28	29	30	31





## First Month

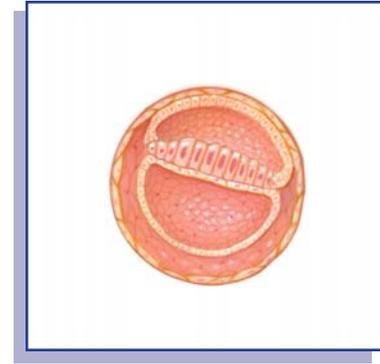
- heartbeat begins
- arm and leg buds appear
- primitive digestive system develops
- embryo is 5 mm ( $\frac{1}{5}$ <sup>th</sup> of an inch) long

### ***Feeling Sick: Nausea and Vomiting***

Feeling sick? You're not alone! Many women experience nausea and vomiting during their pregnancy. That's because changes in hormones can make you feel sick to your stomach. Certain smells and movements can make the nausea worse. The good news is that the nausea usually disappears after the first trimester.

To help cope with nausea and vomiting, you can:

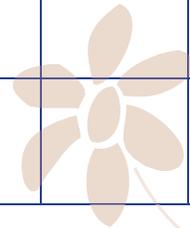
- Avoid having an empty stomach.
- Eat whatever food appeals to you in frequent small amounts until you are feeling better.
- Get out of bed slowly and eat soon afterward.
- Drink fluids between meals and not with meals.
- Choose cold foods (with less smell) or get someone else to do the cooking if possible.
- Get plenty of fresh air.
- Try smelling fresh-cut lemons.
- Avoid smoke, strong odours, alcohol and caffeine.



# 1 First Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Second Month

- brain, liver, kidneys, bloodstream, and digestive system are developing
- limbs developed
- embryo has become a fetus: it is about 2.9 cm (1 and 1/8<sup>th</sup> inches) long and weighs 0.9 g (1/30<sup>th</sup> of an ounce)



### ***Calcium and Vitamin D***

You need calcium throughout your pregnancy to build strong bones and teeth for your baby. Vitamin D is also needed to absorb and use calcium. Getting enough calcium will help your teeth and bones stay healthy too! Eat foods rich in calcium, such as milk (all types), cheese, yogurt, and fortified soy beverages.

Also eat foods that provide vitamin D such as milk, fortified soy beverages, fish and margarine.

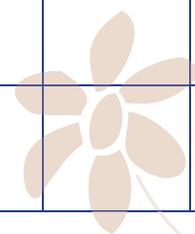
### **Did you know...**

your baby's teeth start forming in the womb?

# 2 Second Month

---

Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Third Month

- facial features are present, the nose and outer ears are formed
- movement such as head turning or sucking begins
- all internal organs are developing
- fetus is about 7.5 cm (3 inches) long and weighs 30 g (1 ounce)



### ***Caffeine***

Too much caffeine isn't good for you or your baby. For women of childbearing age the recommendation is a maximum daily caffeine intake of no more than 300 mg—a little over two eight-ounce (237 ml) cups of coffee. This total should include natural sources of caffeine, including herbs such as guarana and yerba mate.

Start trying to limit how much coffee, strong tea and soft drinks you consume. Water, pure fruit juice and milk are good alternatives that will provide you with more of the nutrients your baby needs.

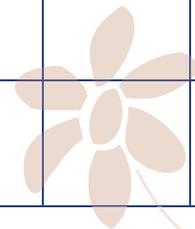
Warning! Some herbal teas, such as chamomile, aren't good to drink when you're pregnant. You'll also want to avoid teas with aloe, coltsfoot, juniper berry, pennyroyal, buckthorn bark, comfrey, labrador tea, sassafras, duck root, lobelia and senna leaves. Other herbal teas, such as citrus peel, linden flower\*, ginger, lemon balm, orange peel and rose hip, are generally considered safe if taken in moderation (two to three cups per day).

\* not recommended for persons with pre-existing cardiac conditions

# 3 Third Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Fourth Month

- strong heart beat begins
- lanugo or fine body hair develops
- fetus is about 15 cm (6 inches) long and weighs 110 g (4 ounces)



### ***Constipation***

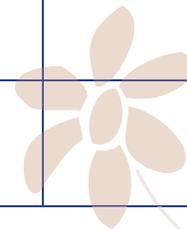
Many women get constipated during pregnancy. It happens because food passes through your body more slowly when you are pregnant so you can absorb the extra nutrients you and your baby need. Eating foods high in fibre—like vegetables and fruit, whole grains and cooked or canned beans, peas and lentils—can help. So can drinking more fluids, especially warm or hot fluids. Being physically active is also important. There's nothing like a good walk around the block to move things along!

**Warning!** If you are pregnant, do not use a laxative to treat constipation without checking with your doctor or health care provider first. Laxatives can trigger the onset of labour contractions.

# 4 Fourth Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Fifth Month

- finger and toe nails formed
- responds to noise
- hair and eyebrows are growing
- movements become increasingly vigorous
- fetus is about 25 to 30 cm (10 to 12 inches long), half its length at birth and weighs 220 to 450 g (8 ounces to 1 pound)



### *Iron*

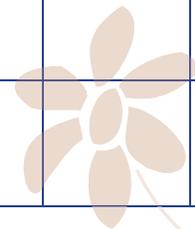
Iron is important for healthy blood. It is also needed for your baby's brain to develop properly. You need to get enough iron so your baby can grow properly and build up a good store of iron for after the birth. Babies without enough iron may have more illnesses and problems learning. To increase your iron intake, eat foods rich in iron such as red meat; eggs and poultry; whole grain and enriched breads and cereals; cooked or canned dried beans; and peas and lentils.

Don't overdo it! If you are taking a prenatal vitamin-mineral supplement that contains iron, you don't need an extra iron supplement unless it's recommended by your doctor, nurse or dietitian.

# 5 Fifth Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Sixth Month

- eyes are open
- a creamy substance called vernix covers the skin
- skin is wrinkled and the fetus appears very thin
- fetus is about 28 to 36 cm (11-14 inches) long and weighs 0.7 kg (1 1/2 pounds)

### *Low Cost Nutritious Choices*

Healthy eating doesn't have to cost a fortune! Choosing basic foods that are not pre-packaged and processed will cost less and will be healthier for you and your baby. Check out these low-cost nutritious choices from the four food groups.

**Milk and Alternatives:** milk powder, plain milk or yogurt and canned milk.

**Vegetables and Fruits:** in-season vegetables and fruit, squash, potatoes, turnip, unsweetened fruit juice (canned or frozen), canned vegetables, canned fruit packed in juice, apples, cabbage, carrots and vegetables from your own garden.

**Grain Products:** bread, rice, macaroni or spaghetti, homemade bannock (fried bread), barley and rolled oats.

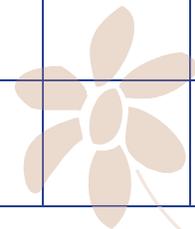
**Meat and Alternatives:** baked beans, wild meat, fish and birds, dried beans, peas and lentils, ground beef, eggs, canned fish and chicken thighs.



# 6 Sixth Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Seventh Month

- fetus weighs about 1.1 kg (2.5 pounds) and is approximately 37 cm (15 inches) in length



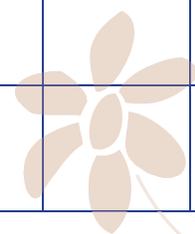
### ***Swelling (Edema)***

Many women notice some swelling in their feet and ankles in the third trimester. Pregnant women naturally retain more water in their bodies, so this is perfectly normal. Now is not the time to cut back on your fluid intake. Even when you feel bloated, you still need to keep drinking water and other fluids (like milk, fruit juice and soup) to stay healthy. To reduce swelling, put your feet up, avoid crossing your legs, wear loose clothing and get plenty of rest and exercise.

# 7 Seventh Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Eighth Month

- fetus weighs about 2.2 kg (5 pounds) and is 40 to 45 cm (16 to 18 inches) long

### *Heartburn*

Heartburn is common during pregnancy. It's caused by the pressure of the growing baby and hormone changes during pregnancy that allow stomach acid to move up to your throat.

The following suggestions might help:

- Do not lie down after eating.
- When you do lie down, raise your head and shoulders.
- Avoid fried or greasy foods.
- Drink fluids between meals, not with meals.
- Avoid coffee, colas, alcohol and smoking.
- Eat slowly. Take the time to chew well.
- Eat small meals and snacks.

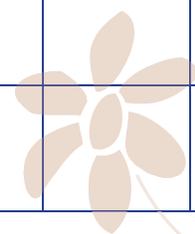
Some women take an antacid medicine to help with heartburn. An antacid reduces the amount of acid in your stomach. **Not all antacids are safe for pregnant women.** Check with your doctor or health care provider before you take one.



# 8 Eighth Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Ninth Month

- fetus weighs 3.2 to 3.6 kg (7 or 8 pounds) and may be more than 50 cm (20 inches) long
- skin wrinkles become less pronounced
- eyes open and close
- fetus responds to light



### ***Water and Other Fluids***

Your baby is always thirsty so it's important for you to drink plenty of water while you're pregnant. Water carries nutrients to your body and to your growing baby, carries away waste products from your baby and from you, keeps you cool, helps prevent constipation and helps to control swelling. Drink plenty of fluids every day, including water, milk, pure juice and soup. Drink water regularly and drink more in hot weather or when you are active.

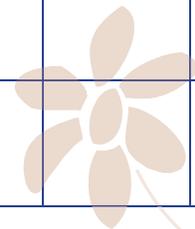
### **Did you know...**

water makes up about half of our body weight?

# 9 Ninth Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

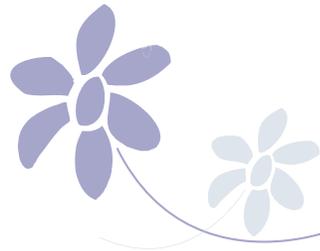




## For New Parents

Having a baby is one of the most exciting times in your life, and, at the same time, one of the most daunting. There are many changes to adjust to and many unknowns to face. With this in mind, it is important to remember that the most precious gift you can give your child is a healthy start in life. New parents can visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Pregnancy Web site for more information on specific topics in order to reduce the risk of injury and illness and to promote the healthy development of their infants.

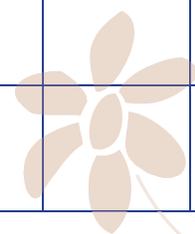
[www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy)



# 10 Tenth Month

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Week #	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday





## Immunization

### Immunization and your baby's health

Routine childhood vaccination is one of the best ways to protect your baby from common childhood diseases that can cause serious complications and sometimes even death.

Provincial immunization programs protect all our children from diseases such as whooping cough (pertussis), tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, meningitis, pneumonia, chicken pox (varicella) and Hib disease (haemophilus influenza).

### Vaccinate on time for maximum protection

For maximum protection throughout childhood it is important to make sure your child gets all the vaccines at the right time. Some vaccines need to be given more than once to build your baby's immunity; others require revaccination at a later age to boost immunity.

Children should get vaccines at 2, 4, 6, 12 and 18 months of age; and again later, between the ages of 4 and 6—before they start school.

### Get all the facts

All parents have questions about the benefits and risks of vaccinating their child. If you have questions about immunization programs or about your child's recommended immunization schedule, talk to your local health care provider or public health nurse.

For information on routine childhood vaccines visit the Public Health Agency of Canada at [www.publichealth.gc.ca/immunization](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/immunization).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### The Canadian Paediatric Society

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization)

#### The Canadian Immunization Coalition for Awareness and Promotion

[www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)

#### The World Health Organization

[www.who.int/topics/immunization](http://www.who.int/topics/immunization)

## Here's How Your Baby Gets The Best Protection



## Breastfeeding

Today, most mothers breastfeed their babies. Breast milk is the best food you can offer your baby. For the first six months it is all the food and drink your baby needs for optimal growth and development. Breast milk is specifically designed for your baby and constantly changes to meet your child's needs. It is easy for your baby to digest and can protect against infections and disease—benefits that last a lifetime. Breastfeeding has many benefits for the mother too and nurtures a special relationship between mother and baby.

Breastfeeding is natural but may take time for both you and your baby to learn. Talk to a doctor, nurse, midwife or lactation consultant for help. Contact with other breastfeeding mothers can also help build your confidence in breastfeeding.

Enjoy your baby and the special closeness that breastfeeding brings.





[www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy](http://www.healthycanadians.ca/pregnancy)  
1 800 O-Canada