Being younger and pregnant means you need more nutrients in your pregnancy than an adult would. This is because your body is still growing. Getting enough nutrition can help you give birth to a healthier baby.

For these reasons it is very important that you eat a nutritious and balanced diet. This sheet discusses some of the most important parts of a healthy diet during your pregnancy.

**Eat a balanced diet.** A healthy diet contains:

- Plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Lean meats, particularly beef and lamb
- Wholegrain cereals
- Dairy products
- Adequate protein
- Limited fried, fatty and salty foods
- Small amounts of fats

Eating healthily makes it more likely you’ll be getting all the nutrition you and your baby need. Here are some of the most important nutrients to include:

**PROTEIN**

Protein is needed for growth. Proteins are found in both plant and animal foods.

Major sources: Lean meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, dairy products, nuts, legumes

**FOLATE**

Not having enough folate when you are pregnant has been linked to neural tube defects. Folate taken before the time of conception and throughout the first trimester is of most benefit.

Sources: Many breakfast cereals, breads and fruit juices are fortified with folate. Leafy green vegetables e.g. spinach, broccoli, asparagus, legumes, nuts, yeast extracts e.g. vegemite, promite, marmite

**IRON**

The need for iron is increased in pregnancy because of a greater blood supply and also due to your growing baby and placenta. Not enough iron intake can lead to anaemia. This is more common in teenage pregnancies.

Sources: Beef, lamb, poultry, seafood, legumes, nuts, some vegetables, fortified breads and cereals.

Eating Vitamin C rich foods (tomatoes, fruits) or small amounts of meat/poultry/fish with vegetarian sources of iron can help your body absorb them better.
CALCIUM

Until you are around 25 years old, you are still able to add calcium into your bones. It is very important that you eat enough calcium containing foods when you are pregnant. If you do not consume enough calcium when you are pregnant, calcium will be taken from your bones. This may lead to osteoporosis in later life. Aim for 3-4 serves of calcium each day (eg 1 serve = 1 cup milk/ 2 slices cheese/ 1 tub yoghurt).

Calcium is best absorbed from dairy products. Low fat dairy products usually contain more calcium than their full fat equivalents.

NUTRITIOUS MEALS and SNACKS

A nutritious meal doesn’t always mean a cooked meal. Here are some ideas for some quick, cheap and easy to prepare meals and snacks which are still nourishing for you and your baby.

- Toasted sandwiches i.e. cheese and tomato, tuna and asparagus
- Crackers with cheese or peanut butter
- Baked beans or canned spaghetti on toast
- A bowl of breakfast cereal with milk
- Baked potato with vegetable filling and cheese
- Canned chunky vegetable or meat soups
- Fruit smoothie
- Muesli bars
- Rice pudding or custard with fresh or tinned fruit
- Dried fruit and nut mix
- Raisin toast
- Tub of yoghurt
- Fruit

WEIGHT GAIN

Weight gain in pregnancy is vital for a healthy pregnancy. The amount gained by women varies, however as a guide 9-13kg is recommended. Weight gain in the first trimester is generally slower and usually 1-2kg in total. For the remainder of the pregnancy weight gain of 1-2kg/month is recommended. For younger girls (13-16 years) an amount between 13 and 16kg is recommended. Weight gain may be less if you are overweight prior to falling pregnant.

You should not try to lose weight while you are pregnant as this is likely to be harmful to you and your baby. Instead, try to improve your eating habits and keep as active as possible.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND CIGARETTE SMOKING

High intake of alcohol or cigarette smoking is known to be harmful to both mother and baby. Women who intend on becoming pregnant are advised to stop drinking and smoking before conceiving. It is recommended that women stop smoking during pregnancy. Because there is no known ‘safe’ level of alcohol consumption in pregnancy, it is recommended that no alcohol is consumed. Smoking marijuana and/or taking other drugs is not recommended in pregnancy.
COMMON DISCOMFORTS AND CONCERNS

Morning Sickness
“Morning sickness” is thought to be due to hormonal changes early in your pregnancy. It can occur at any time of the day. If you have severe or frequent vomiting it is important to see your doctor as you may become dehydrated. Continuing nausea can affect your dietary intake. Here are some tips that may help:

- Have a slice of toast or a dry biscuit before getting out of bed in the morning
- Sip drinks between meals e.g. dry ginger ale, flat lemonade, water
- Avoid citrus drinks first thing in the morning
- Eat small meals throughout the day as an empty stomach can make nausea worse
- Choose low fat foods as fatty foods take longer to digest and may make you feel worse
- Avoid being around food cooking if the smells make you feel sick
- Try cold or freshly prepared foods such as salads, sandwiches, cereals, cheese and biscuits or fruit
- Limit caffeine intake e.g. coffee, tea, cola
- Ginger is known to reduce nausea- try ginger ale, fresh ginger, ginger tea or ginger supplements
- If none of these suggestions help eat whatever you can keep down

Speak to your doctor if you have ongoing or severe nausea and/or vomiting.

Heartburn
Many women experience a burning sensation in the middle of their chest and in their throats. This is partly due to changes in hormones causing the muscles that keep food in the stomach to relax. Also as your pregnancy progresses the baby takes up more room and presses on your stomach. There are some diet tips that may help:

- Avoid foods that make your heartburn worse. These are generally fatty, spicy or acidic foods
- Decrease caffeine intake
- Eat smaller meals
- Eat slowly
- Drink between meals not at your meal
- Sipping milk may help.
- Do not lie down or bend over for 2 hours after eating
- Sleep propped up with a couple of pillows
- Wear loose fitting clothing
- Ask your doctor before using antacids

Constipation
This is a common complaint in pregnancy, particularly in the final stages. Again it can be a result of hormonal changes during pregnancy and pressure from the baby on the bowel. It can also be due to a low fluid intake, low fibre intake, iron supplements or lack of exercise.

You can increase your fibre intake by:

- Choosing wholegrain breads and cereals, legumes and nuts
- Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Drink plenty of fluid (6-8 glasses/day, preferably water)
- Exercise regularly
LISTERIOSIS

Listeriosis is a type of food poisoning. Listeria may be found in raw foods such as meat and vegetables as well as in processed foods that are contaminated after processing. It grows in contaminated foods kept in the refrigerator but is destroyed during cooking.

It usually isn’t serious for the mother but can be very dangerous for your unborn child. To reduce the risk of infection while you are pregnant, follow these guidelines:

- Eat freshly cooked foods
- Cook beef, pork, lamb, poultry, eggs and seafood thoroughly. Do not eat these foods raw
- Wash all raw fruit and vegetables before eating
- Keep uncooked meats separate from vegetables, cooked meats and ready to eat foods
- Wash hands, utensils and cutting boards well
- Avoid unpasteurised milk and unpasteurised milk products
- Eat only salads that are freshly prepared. Avoid commercial salads i.e. coleslaw, potato salad
- Dips that contain vegetables should be eaten on the day they are made
- Observe good food hygiene at all times

The following foods may contain listeria and should be avoided:

- Pate
- Vacuum packed meals
- Salami, cabanossi
- Cooked cold meats i.e. chicken, ham
- Uncooked smoked fish and shellfish
- Marinated raw fish and shellfish
- Feta, blue vein style cheese, soft cheese e.g. brie and camembert
- Soft serve ice-cream
- Olives (except those used in cooking)

Symptoms of listeriosis include fever, headaches, muscle aches, vomiting and diarrhoea. Most pregnant women may only feel like they have a mild flu. If you think you may have listeria you should see your doctor as soon as possible. Listeriosis can be treated with antibiotics. Proper diagnosis and treatment is important. For further information contact your doctor or dietitian.
Try to aim for the following amounts of foods each day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD GROUP</th>
<th>NUMBER OF SERVES</th>
<th>NUTRIENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breads and cereals</td>
<td>1 serve = 1 slice bread or ½ cup cereal or ½ cup cooked rice/pasta</td>
<td>At least 8 serves (depends on activity level and appetite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dietary fibre, carbohydrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vitamin, minerals, energy and folate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>1 serve = 1 piece of fruit or ½ cup tinned fruit or sml handful dried fruit or ½ cup fruit juice</td>
<td>2 serves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vitamins, minerals, energy and folate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Fresh, frozen, canned, cooked 1 serve = ½ cup cooked veges or 1 cup salad type veges</td>
<td>5 serves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>1 serve = 250ml milk or Tub of yoghurt or 1 slice of cheese or 250ml soy milk (calcium fortified)</td>
<td>2.5—3.5 serves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protein, Iron, Zinc, Calcium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>1 serve = 65-80g cooked meat/chicken or 100g fish 2 eggs or 1 cup legumes or 30g cup nuts</td>
<td>3.5 serves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluid</td>
<td>Water is best choice. Avoid alcohol. Coffee (max) 2-3/day. Tea (max) 4/day.</td>
<td>At least 6 glasses per day. Tea and coffee are not included due to their dehydrating effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dietitian: Natasha Leader Phone: 9382 6544  2013