

# feeding the bump

By Cliff Harvey\*

## how much of what, when?

AUT's Human Potential Centre has recently made recommendations to the Ministry of Health updating New Zealand's dietary guidelines. Co-author of these recommendations, nutritionist Cliff Harvey, gives us the latest view on how best to eat for two.

Good nutrition before, during and after pregnancy is crucial to ensure the best health outcomes for both Mum and baby. However the definition of 'good nutrition' has changed somewhat over the years. The move towards natural, whole, unprocessed foods is based on sound research. But the question now is how much of what food, when?

I have adapted the Ministry of Health 'Eating for Healthy Pregnant Women' guide to provide the best nutrition for baby and you.

### eat a variety of natural, whole, unprocessed foods

The greater the variety of foods, the more nutrients you will have to support the growth and development of the baby – and your own wellbeing. Pregnant women are typically recommended to eat at least six servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day. However, nutrient depletion in New Zealand soils is reducing the quantity of nutrients in fresh produce, so I advise clients to eat at least 10 servings per day if they can. This is equivalent to eating three fist-sized servings of green, orange and yellow vegetables at both lunch and dinner, with a few pieces of fruit throughout the day. Adding berries to smoothies, fruit salads or on top of natural nut- and seed-based muesli or granola is an easy way to boost your intake.

### drink lots of fluids

Dehydration affects mental and physical performance more quickly than any other nutritional factor for you and your baby. It is recommended that you drink around nine glasses of fluids per day, with water being the best choice. Avoid or limit fruit juices because they encourage maternal weight gain and may also increase the likelihood of childhood obesity in the infant. Also limit or avoid all caffeinated beverages.

### reduce or avoid added sugar

Adding sugar is the quickest way to gain unwanted fat. The chemistry behind this is interesting. Excess sugar intake causes the release of large amounts of the fat-storing hormone insulin. Fructose (fruit sugar) – one of the 'end-product' sugars – also encourages weight gain if eaten in large amounts. Some carbohydrates are necessary for a healthy pregnancy and breastfeeding, but it is best to get these from natural, unprocessed sources such as kumara, yams, whole grains like quinoa, millet, amaranth and wild rice and the residual carbs you get from berries, fruit and vegetables.

### reduce or avoid processed & refined foods

Highly processed, refined foods often contain fast-digesting carbohydrates and sugars that lead to weight gain. These are often combined with high levels of omega 6 fats from vegetable oils which, although essential in small amounts, encourage excessive inflammation if consumed in excess. Man-made trans-fats found in refined foods are also linked to a range of health disorders.

### safe food practices

During pregnancy, your baby may be more susceptible to food-borne illnesses. Follow simple food safety guidelines to keep you and baby safe.

- Avoid cross-contamination between foods (especially 'high-risk' foods, such as raw chicken) by keeping cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw and unprocessed foods
- Wash your hands, utensils and chopping boards before and after preparing foods
- Cook food thoroughly, especially all meats (which should be cooked until juices run clear)
- Eat freshly cooked foods as soon as possible after preparing, or put in the fridge as soon as the food has stopped steaming
- Use cooked, canned or prepared foods within two days and keep refrigerated. Don't reheat foods more than once and heat until piping hot.

(For more information and the most up-to-date list of high-risk foods to avoid, consult the MPI Food Safety resource *Food Safety in Pregnancy*. This can be viewed at [www.foodsmart.govt.nz](http://www.foodsmart.govt.nz))

### avoid alcohol completely

There is no safe limit for drinking while pregnant. Any alcohol taken during breastfeeding may be passed to your baby. The best option for health and safety is to completely avoid alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

### take a supplement containing folate, iodine and vitamin D

Iodine is crucial for brain and nervous system development of your baby, and folate is proven to reduce neural tube defects. Vitamin D can be deficient in your baby if you don't get enough sun and so a supplement containing vitamin D is also recommended. Recommended amounts for pregnancy according to the US Office of Dietary Supplements are: Vitamin D 600iu, Iodine 220-290mcg, Folate 600mcg-500mcg.

If you're worried about your diet during this important stage of life, an easy way of ensuring you are getting enough nutrients is to take a high quality, multi-nutrient supplement. Remember to check with a suitably qualified health practitioner before taking any supplement.

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FOR FULL TERMS AND CONDITIONS, PLEASE REFER TO PAGE 3

