



# Tips For a Healthy Pregnancy



**Prenatal Care • Eating Healthy**

**Managing Weight Gain**

**Pregnancy Discomforts • Staying Active**

**Keeping Baby Safe • Breastfeeding**

*Dear Parent to Be,*

**Congratulations!**

*We're happy for you,  
and happy to help!*

WIC is here to provide information, tools, and support for parents like you. Whether you need a sympathetic ear, healthy food or a referral to outside care and services, we're proud to provide you with the tools you need to be the parent you want to be!

As part of the WIC community, you have access to all of the services we provide. WIC can support your pregnancy in so many ways! WIC can help you:

- Make smart food choices.
- Buy healthy foods with your NC eWIC card.
- Connect with health care providers, dentists and other services to keep you and your baby healthy.
- Learn about breastfeeding your baby.
- Keep your baby safe.

*Sincerely,*

*The WIC Program staff*

The tips in this booklet do not replace your doctor's advice.  
Talk to your doctor at your prenatal checkup.



## Start Healthy: Get Prenatal Care



Prenatal care is health care for pregnant people. A doctor checks that you and your baby are healthy.

Your prenatal checkups will likely be:

- 1 checkup each month for the first 6 months
- 2 checkups each month in the 7th and 8th months
- 1 checkup each week in the 9th month
- 1 checkup 6 weeks after baby is born

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It is important to start receiving prenatal care as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Go to all your checkups to see how your baby is growing and changing.



## Choose Healthy Foods For You and Your Baby

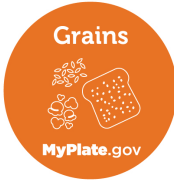
Your baby grows best when you eat well.

A healthy diet means a healthy baby!

Choose a variety of foods from all food groups every day!

### Grains 6 - 8 ounces/day

#### What counts as 1 ounce?



- 1 slice of bread
- 6 inch tortilla
- ½ bagel or hamburger bun
- ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal
- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal

### Vegetables 2½ - 3 cups/day

#### What counts as 1 cup ?



- 1 cup chopped, raw or cooked vegetables
- 2 cups raw leafy greens
- 1 cup tomato juice
- 12 baby carrots
- 1 large baked sweet potato

### Fruit 2 cups/day

#### What counts as 1 cup?



- 1 cup chopped or cooked fruit
- 1 small apple
- 1 large banana
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice
- 1/2 cup dried fruit

### Dairy 3 cups/day

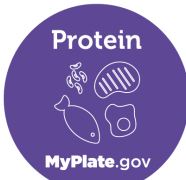
#### What counts as 1 cup?



- 1 cup of milk
- 8 ounces yogurt
- 1½ ounces of natural cheese
- 2 cups cottage cheese

### Protein 5½ - 6½ ounces/day

#### What counts as 1 ounce?



- 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry or seafood
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup cooked beans, peas or tofu
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- ½ ounce nuts

## Sample Menu

Eat regular meals throughout the day. Five or six small meals may work better for you than two or three large meals daily.

### Breakfast

- Eggs
- Banana
- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter
- 100% Juice

### Morning Snack

- Yogurt with blueberries

### Lunch

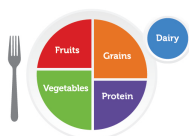
- Chili made with beans
- Cornbread or tortilla
- Broccoli
- Sliced cheese
- Water

### Afternoon Snack

- Graham Crackers
- Handful of nuts
- Strawberries

### Dinner

- Baked chicken breast
- Brown rice
- Carrots
- Side salad
- Milk



**Start simple**  
with **MyPlate**

For a personalized meal plan, tools, and recipes  
visit [www.MyPlate.gov](http://www.MyPlate.gov)



## Make Healthy Snack Choices

Hungry between meals? Snack smart for a healthy weight gain!

- Fresh fruit
- Slices of apple or banana with peanut butter
- Pudding made with low-fat milk
- Cheese slice on whole wheat toast
- Raw veggies and dip
- Nuts and dried fruit
- Yogurt
- Hard cooked egg
- Dry cereal

## Get Good Food On the Go

Try to limit fast food, but if you find yourself at a fast food restaurant try some of these healthier options:

- Grilled chicken sandwich
- Small hamburger/cheeseburger
- Pizza topped with vegetables
- Baked potato topped with vegetables and cheese
- Salad
- Fruit cup
- Water or milk



## Aim for a Healthy Weight Gain

Gaining weight is important during pregnancy to make sure your baby grows. Talk to your doctor or WIC nutritionist if you have concerns about gaining weight. You can also refer to the chart below.

### To keep a steady weight gain:



- Eat only when you feel hungry.
- Choose healthy foods to eat.
- Drink water when you get thirsty.
- Keep active by walking.

## How much weight should you gain?

Pre-Pregnancy BMI	Weight Status	Total Weight Gain (pounds)
Less than 18.5	Underweight	28 - 40
18.5 - 24.9	Healthy Weight	25 - 35
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight	15 - 25
More than 30	Obese	11- 20



## Try Mini Meals

For some people, mini meals throughout the day work well, especially if you are experiencing nausea and do not feel like eating. Pick a food from each group to make a mini meal.

### Choose One From Each Group

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	If you like
Bagel	Cheese	Apple	Butter
Baked Potato	Cottage Cheese	Banana	Fruit Spread ✓
Bread ✓	Yogurt ✓	Grapes	Cream Cheese
Cold Cereal	Milk	Melon	Jelly
Crackers	Pudding	Orange	Hummus
English Muffin	Cooked Beans	Pineapple ✓	Avocado
Graham Crackers	Cooked Chicken	Dried Fruit	
Hamburger Bun	Egg, hard cooked	Strawberries	
Whole Grain Pasta	Egg Salad	Green Peppers	
Oatmeal	Egg, scrambled	Carrots	
Grits	Hamburger	Spinach	
Brown Rice	Nuts	Tomato Soup	



## Food Safety Tips



- Wash your hands with soap and water before you eat or make food.
- Wash vegetables and fruit with water before eating or cooking.
- Cook meat, chicken, turkey, fish, and seafood to the well-done stage – use a meat thermometer if needed.
- Cook hot dogs, cold cuts and deli meats until steaming hot before eating.
- Limit fish to 8-12 ounces per week. Do not eat tilefish, shark, king mackerel and swordfish due to high mercury levels.

## Foods To Avoid While Pregnant

- Raw or soft-cooked eggs
- Rare or raw meat, chicken or turkey
- Raw oysters or fish like sushi sashimi
- Crab mustard
- Cheese made from raw milk like: feta, blue-veined, brie or Mexican-style cheeses (queso blanco or queso fresco)
- Raw sprouts like alfalfa sprouts
- Unpasteurized (raw) milk
- Unpasteurized juice or cider
- Deli meat spreads or patés



## Keep Your Teeth and Gums Healthy

Oral health care is safe and important during pregnancy. Hormonal changes during pregnancy can cause swelling and bleeding gums.

### Tips to keep your teeth and gums healthy:

- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day.
- Floss daily.
- Rinse with water if you throw up to wash away the acid that causes tooth erosion.
- Drink water instead of sugar sweetened drinks.
- Visit a dentist for a checkup every 6 months.

If you don't have a dentist, WIC can help you find one.



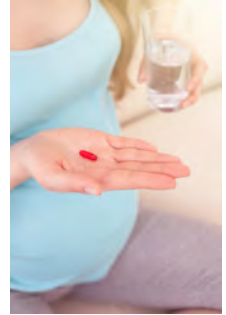


## Take a Prenatal Vitamin

Eating healthy foods and taking a prenatal vitamin daily helps you get all the nutrients you and your baby need during pregnancy. Prenatal vitamins are multivitamins made for pregnant women that contain extra iron and folic acid to help your baby develop and grow. Your doctor may prescribe a prenatal vitamin at your first visit.

### Tips for taking a prenatal vitamin:

- Take it at the same time every day.
- Take it with a snack or before bed if it makes you nauseous.
- Talk with your doctor if you have trouble taking your prenatal vitamin.



## Stay Active

Your body stays healthy and fit when you move it. If your doctor says it is okay, try to be active for 30 minutes most or all days of the week. Staying active during pregnancy will help you:

- have more energy and feel less tired
- relieve common pregnancy discomforts
- gain the right amount of weight
- reduce your risk of complications
- tone your muscles
- have better posture
- build strong bones
- work off stress
- sleep better

If you didn't exercise before you were pregnant, now is a great time to start. Work up to it! Start with 10 minutes of activity and work up to 30 minutes. Walking is a great way to stay active when you're pregnant. Avoid activities with a high risk of falling or injury. Check with your doctor about what activities are right for you!



### Tips for staying active:

- Walk 10 minutes after breakfast
- Walk 10 minutes after lunch
- Walk 10 minutes after dinner



## Manage Pregnancy Discomforts

Your body changes when you are pregnant. You might feel sick to your stomach the first 3 or 4 months. Some smells and foods might make you feel nauseous or throw up.

### Morning Sickness

If you feel nauseous or dehydrated or experience rapid heartbeat or headaches:

- Open the window to let fresh air in and stale air out.
- Get up slowly when you wake up.
- Stay away from smells that make you sick.
- Eat cold foods if the smell of food makes you sick.
- Eat small amounts of food every one or two hours.
- Drink liquids, but take small sips.

### Indigestion

If you have abdominal pain, belching and gas, acidic taste or a growling stomach:

- Eat 5 or 6 small meals, instead of 2 or 3 large ones.
- Eat less fried, less greasy and less spicy foods.
- Drink small sips of water with your meals.
- Avoid sodas, coffee or tea with caffeine.
- Walk after you eat.
- Do not lie down immediately after eating.

### Constipation

If you have few or straining bowel movements, or hard or small stools, drink plenty of water and eat high fiber foods like:

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Beans
- Whole grain cereal
- Whole wheat bread and crackers
- Whole wheat pasta
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat and corn tortillas

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Talk with your doctor about any discomforts you are experiencing before taking over the counter medications. Ask your doctor if the medicine is safe before you take it. Any medicine, even aspirin, laxatives or cold tablets could hurt your baby.



## Keep Your Baby Safe

When you're pregnant, everything you put into your body goes into your baby's body. Keep your baby safe by not smoking, drinking or using drugs.

### Quit Smoking

Smoking during pregnancy is bad for you and your baby. Women that smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have:

- miscarriage
- preterm labor
- vaginal bleeding
- complications with the placenta
- babies at risk for crib death (SIDS)
- babies at risk for asthma
- babies born with birth defects



### What about e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes, often called "e-cigs," "vapes," "mods" or "JUULS," are considered to be tobacco products. They contain nicotine which is known to be harmful to babies. Other chemicals in e-cigarettes could also be harmful.

Quitting can be hard— but if you're pregnant, quitting all forms of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, is best for you and your baby. Get help to quit or at least to cut back.

### Tips to Quit Smoking:

- Write down your reasons for quitting.
- Set a quit date.
- Get rid of smoking reminders like cigarettes, lighters, ashtrays, etc. and wash your clothes and clean your car.
- Avoid triggers that urge you to smoke.
- Prepare to fight cravings.
- Reward yourself for your progress.
- Talk to friends and family for support.
- Talk with your health care provider about help to quit.

Call the **NC Tobacco Use Quitline: (1-800-784-8669) 1-800-QUIT-NOW** for free smoking cessation services.

Sign up for **SmokefreeMOM**, a free text message program for pregnant women who are trying to quit. **Text MOM to 222888** or visit **[www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)**.

## Avoid Alcohol

Drinking beer, wine, liquor or mixed drinks during pregnancy increases your baby's chances of:

- being born with birth defects or brain damage
- being born too early
- having health or learning problems for life
- being stillborn or miscarried



Even one drink once in a while could hurt your baby.

## Stay Off Drugs

Anything that gets you high can harm your baby. Using illegal drugs and misusing prescription drugs during pregnancy increases your baby's chances of:

- being born too small, too early or stillborn
- being born addicted to drugs
- having a birth defect, deformities or trouble breathing
- having learning, behavioral or other health problems throughout life
- having Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). NAS is a group of conditions caused when a baby withdraws from certain drugs exposed to in the womb before birth.

### These illegal drugs can hurt you and your baby:

- ⊗ Speed, Methamphetamines or Crystal Meth
- ⊗ Crack or Cocaine
- ⊗ Marijuana or Weed
- ⊗ Opiates
- ⊗ Heroin or Dope
- ⊗ PCP or Angel Dust
- ⊗ LSD or Acid
- ⊗ Ecstasy or Molly
- ⊗ Mushrooms

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Stopping drugs like heroin or prescription opioids suddenly without a doctor's help can cause serious withdrawal and health problems for you and your baby. Talk about your opioid use and develop a treatment plan with your doctor.

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**Get help** to quit drinking alcohol or using drugs. Talk to your doctor or call an **NC Perinatal Substance Use Specialist** at **1-800-688-4232** for information and referrals to alcohol and drug treatment. WIC can also provide you with information about treatment services in your community.



## Breastfeed: Give Your Baby the Right Start

### Breastmilk is the perfect food for your baby.

- Breastmilk has the right ingredients in the right amounts to give your baby a healthy start.
- It is all your baby needs for the first 6 months.
- At 6 months, you can start to add solid foods and continue to breastfeed as long as you and your baby want to do so.
- Breastmilk is easy to digest, so baby has soft, easy to pass bowel movements.

### Breastfeeding is convenient .

Breastmilk is always ready and at the right temperature.

Moms that breastfeed find that:

- Nighttime feedings are easier.
- It saves time – there is no mixing formula or cleaning bottles.
- There is less to pack when you go out.
- It saves money – you don't have to buy formula or bottles.



### Breastfeeding helps you form a special bond with your baby.

- It helps you relax and feel close to your baby.
- Moms feel proud that their babies grow because of something only they can do!

#### Did you know?

##### **Babies who are breastfed may have:**

- fewer allergies • fewer illnesses and hospital stays • fewer earaches  
less diarrhea and constipation • lower risk of SIDS  
less tooth decay • lower risk of obesity

##### **Moms who breastfeed their babies may:**

- bleed less after giving birth • get back into shape quicker  
have a lower risk of some types of cancers • have stronger bones



## Breastfeeding Basics

### **Breastfeeding should not hurt.**

You may feel tugging, pulling or pain at the start of a feeding when your baby latches on to your breast – this should only last a few seconds. Learning the right way to put the baby to the breast will help. If you have discomfort or problems with latching, ask WIC for help.



### **A mom can make all the milk her baby needs.**

How much milk you make depends on how often your baby nurses, not the size of your breasts. The more your baby nurses, the more milk you make.

### **Nursing involves the whole family.**

Family members and friends can help with the baby at bath time, diaper change and playtime. They can help with household chores. Babies need lots of love and cuddling other than at feeding time.



## **Moms who nurse can eat their favorite foods!**

Avoiding foods or following a special diet is not needed – your baby tastes many flavors from your breastmilk.

## **Babies can be nursed in public if moms choose to.**

You can breastfeed anywhere you have the right to be – it is the law in North Carolina. If you would like to nurse without anyone else knowing, place a blanket over your shoulder to cover your baby. WIC can give you other suggestions.

## **Moms can nurse if they go back to work or school.**

You can have the baby brought to you for feeding, or nurse when you and your baby are together and leave breastmilk for your baby's caregiver when apart – ask WIC about breast pumps. Talk to WIC about your concerns.

## **Most over-the-counter and prescription medications are safe to take while nursing.**

You should still tell the baby's doctor about any medicines you are taking (even birth control pills). Some medications may affect your milk production. Talk to your health care provider and WIC about your concerns.



## to do list:

- Make an appointment with my doctor*
- Start taking prenatal vitamins*
- Write down questions for my doctor and WIC*
- Ask WIC about breastfeeding*
- Start eating healthy WIC foods*
- If you smoke or use tobacco products, call the Quitline*
- Make an appointment to see a dentist*
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State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Child and Family Well-Being  
Community Nutrition Services Section  
[www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-wic-cacfp](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-wic-cacfp)

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