

Healthy Pregnancy to Healthy Family

Nutrition During Pregnancy

A healthy, balanced diet will help provide the nutrients you and your baby need during pregnancy and after birth. It is important for you to eat a healthy, balanced diet to reduce your risk of health problems and to make sure you gain a healthy amount of weight.

For more information visit the Government of Canada's [Healthy Eating and Pregnancy](#) webpage and Best Start's [Healthy Eating for a Healthy Baby](#) booklet.

If you have questions or concerns about your nutrition during or after pregnancy, contact

- your health care provider
- Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000
- EatRight Ontario at 1-877-510-510-2

Physical Activity and Pregnancy

Physical activity has many physical and mental health benefits during pregnancy. Being active during your pregnancy can help increase energy levels, reduce stress and can help speed up your recovery after birth. Plan some time each day to be active. It can be as simple as taking the stairs or going for walks, or it can be more formal - like swimming or yoga.

For information on being physically active during pregnancy visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's [Physical Activity and Pregnancy](#) webpage or the Physical Activity Resource Centre's [Active Pregnancy](#) booklet.

Speak to your health care provider before becoming active or changing your physical activity level. Have your health care provider complete a [PARmed-X for Pregnancy](#) form with you.



Pregnancy is a great time to think about your lifestyle and to make positive, healthy choices. Making healthy changes to your lifestyle and habits will improve your health, the health of your baby, and will benefit you and your family in the future.

Healthy Weight Gain

Weight gain is normal and healthy during pregnancy. The amount of weight you gain includes the weight of your baby, your uterus, the amniotic fluid and more. Your recommended weight gain is based on your body mass index (BMI) before pregnancy. You can use the [Pregnancy Weight Gain Calculator](#) to determine your pre-pregnancy BMI and how much weight to gain during your pregnancy.

Visit Health Canada's [Healthy Weight Gain During Pregnancy](#) webpage and The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada's [Weight Gain During Pregnancy](#) webpage for more information.

Oral Health in Pregnancy

Eating well is important for your oral health and also helps build strong teeth and bones in your growing baby. Changes in your hormones during pregnancy can make your gums more sensitive. With proper care, your teeth and gums can stay healthy during pregnancy. This may also help reduce the risk of giving birth to a premature or low birth weight baby.

Visit [The Sensible Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy](#) and the [Start Right: Oral Health for Moms-to-be and Baby](#) pamphlet for tips to keep your teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy.

Preterm Labour

Labour is the natural process where the uterus contracts causing the cervix to thin out and open so your baby can be born. This normally happens between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm labour is labour that starts before the 37th week of pregnancy. Preterm labour can lead to preterm birth. Infants born prematurely can require special care after birth and can experience health complications after birth. Be alert for the [Signs & Symptoms of Preterm Labour](#). If you think you may be in preterm labour, go to the hospital or see your health care provider right away.



Substances – Prescription, Over-the-Counter & Street Drugs

Prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and street drugs can pass through the placenta, into your growing baby's bloodstream. The potential harmful effects of medications and drugs on pregnant women or babies are not always known or studied. Discuss any medication or drug use with your health care provider, and **always** speak to your health care provider before taking any kind of medication or drug.

For more information visit The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada's [Health Before and During Pregnancy](#) webpage, or call the [Motherisk](#) Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline at 1-877-327-4636.

Pregnant? Zero is safest.

If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant or about to breastfeed, the safest choice is to drink no alcohol at all.

After pregnancy, if you choose to drink, follow [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) to reduce the risks to your long-term health. The importance of breastfeeding outweighs the risks of occasional, light alcohol consumption. When you drink alcohol it is transferred to your breastmilk. Visit the [Mixing Alcohol and Breastfeeding](#) handout for information on reducing your baby's exposure to alcohol.

If you have questions or concerns about alcohol use during pregnancy, talk to your health care provider or call the [Motherisk](#) Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline at 1-877-327-4636.

Smoke-Free Families

Quitting smoking is a healthy choice for you and your baby. Being smoke-free before becoming pregnant or early in pregnancy is best, but quitting at any stage of pregnancy can help improve your health and the health of your baby.

Help is available if you want to quit smoking or cut down. Contact Public Health's [Tobacco Talk Line](#) at 613-966-5500 or toll free at 1-800-267-2803, extension 600 for information about the We Can Quit Prenatal/Postnatal program.

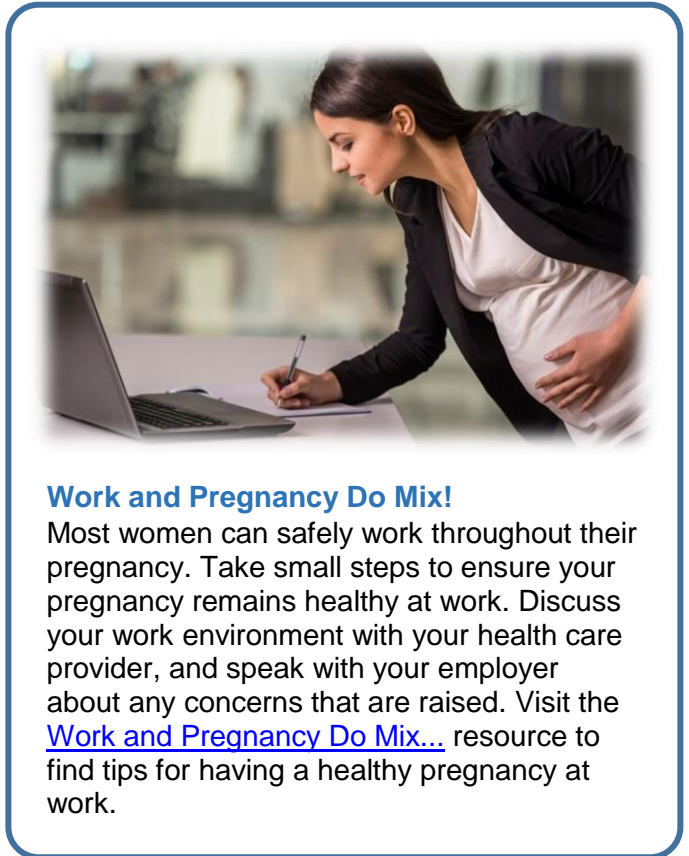
Smoke-Free Environments

Making your home and car smoke-free can protect your child from second-hand smoke, and can help protect your child from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), ear infections and breathing problems. Visit the [Smoke Free Environment for Your Children](#) resource for tips to make your home and car smoke-free.

Emotional Changes

It is normal to experience a lot of different emotions during pregnancy. "Mood swings" happen as your hormones change throughout pregnancy. However, it is possible to become depressed or anxious during pregnancy. Take care of your emotional health and seek help from your health care provider if you feel unwell.

Visit the [Pregnancy is Not Always What You Expect](#) resource for ways to take care of your mental health during and after pregnancy.



Work and Pregnancy Do Mix!

Most women can safely work throughout their pregnancy. Take small steps to ensure your pregnancy remains healthy at work. Discuss your work environment with your health care provider, and speak with your employer about any concerns that are raised. Visit the [Work and Pregnancy Do Mix...](#) resource to find tips for having a healthy pregnancy at work.

The Flu Shot

Pregnant women are more likely to develop complications from getting the flu (influenza). The annual influenza vaccine (flu shot) is safe and is recommended for women at any stage of pregnancy. Receiving your flu shot can help you have a healthy pregnancy, and provides protection for your growing baby.

For more information see the Government of Canada's [Flu \(Influenza\)](#) webpage or call Public Health's Vaccine Preventable Disease program at 613-966-5500 or toll free at 1-800-267-2803, extension 313.

Morning Sickness

Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy (NVP) or "morning sickness" is a very common condition during early pregnancy. Symptoms like nausea, retching and vomiting can range from mild to severe. Some women will experience symptoms only in the morning, while others have symptoms all day and night.

You can speak with your health care provider or call the Motherisk Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy (Morning Sickness) Helpline at 1-866-436-8477 for more information on morning sickness and tips for coping with symptoms.

Environmental Risks to Prenatal Health

Exposure to certain substances in the environment during pregnancy can cause serious and long-term risks to your health and the health of your baby. It's important for you to be aware of the substances in your environment that may affect you or your pregnancy.

Read the brochure [Creating Healthy Environments for Kids](#) from the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health & Environment for more information.



Breastfeeding

In order to make an informed decision about how to feed your baby, it is important that you get good quality information about breastfeeding early in your pregnancy. Visit [Breastfeeding Matters](#) to learn about the importance of breastfeeding and the risks of breastmilk substitutes (formula). Once you've selected your health care provider, it's important to let them know what your breastfeeding goals are. Complete a [Breastfeeding Birth Plan](#) with your family and share it with anyone who will be involved in your baby's birth. Your *Breastfeeding Birth Plan* can help you to identify what is important to you and your family, and communicate these things to your caregivers. If you are planning to breastfeed, learn about resources available in your community so you can get the support you need to feel confident breastfeeding your baby.