

## TIPS FOR POSTPARTUM HEALTH: NUTRITION

Now that your new baby has arrived, it may be a challenge to find the time to buy and prepare healthy, nutritious food. But maintaining a healthy diet is more important than ever. It can help your mood, keep your energy level up, maintain milk supply for breastfeeding women, and keep your immune system working well. The following tips can help.

- When visitors ask if they can bring anything, suggest they bring healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese or other foods that are ready to eat.
- Prepare foods in large batches that can be stored in the refrigerator or freezer for convenience.
- Keep some canned low-sodium foods such as soups and tuna in the cupboard.
- Eat small, frequent meals rather than a few large meals.
- If you are breastfeeding, expect your appetite and thirst to increase—your body needs these nutrients to produce milk for your baby.
- Avoid eating too much sugar, which tends to spike blood sugar levels and affect mood and energy levels. If you drink fruit juice, look for ones with no added sugar.
- Watch caffeine intake—it's a stimulant and can disrupt sleep or worsen anxiety. Breastfed babies may react to too much caffeine in a mother's diet. Limit coffee to less than two cups per day.
- Healthy snacks to have on hand include fruit, raw vegetables, low-fat yogurt, whole-wheat crackers, hard-boiled eggs, low-fat popcorn, pretzels (look for low-fat, whole grain), nuts and peanut butter.
- Don't skip meals. If you have no appetite, try to take in small amounts of food every two hours, choosing from the four food groups.
- If you are struggling with overeating, eat more slowly and pay attention to what your body is telling you. If you need to snack, have only healthy snacks available; if you don't have junk food in your home, you can't eat it.

### Now is not the time to diet

Pregnancy and childbirth have caused many changes in your body. You need time to heal and restore. Eating well in healthy portions will help your body rejuvenate itself over the next few months.

While it's important to set good nutrition as a goal, there is no benefit to feeling guilty when you don't meet that goal. Just be aware that what you eat can have a big impact on how you feel, and try to make good food choices *most* of the time. It's OK to have a treat once in a while—what's important is your overall intake. Some change in appetite is normal but if you are losing or gaining a lot of weight or are having stomach problems speak to your healthcare provider.



Winnipeg Regional  
Health Authority  
Caring for Health

Office régional de la  
santé de Winnipeg  
À l'écoute de notre santé