



# Holistic Pregnancy Nourishment

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## DISCLAIMER

*This is my own diet, my opinion, and my experience. Find your own truth. Please consult your own qualified professional for individual advice. What follows is appropriate for a healthy, low risk mom with a single pregnancy.*

## Introduction

Pregnancy is a unique and special time; your body is growing another body. Although this can be accomplished without too much worry and accommodation by the mama, there is also the potential for what I call "optimal pregnancy nutrition."

In other words, woman have been creating and growing babies for millennia, and it is only relatively recently that we have access to all the empirical knowledge and information about vitamins, minerals, food sources, etc. So, although this information may not be vital to the process itself, with this information, we can provide the body (and the baby) with the best possible chance at growth, birth and even health and well-being later in life.

Really paying attention to the many facets of nutrition in pregnancy will benefit mom and baby and help ensure an easier transition to birth, motherhood and beyond.

"Nourishment" is not only physical, but emotional and spiritual as well.

## Rethinking Food

First of all, I encourage you to think about the role food plays in your life; how you approach eating and what purpose it serves you. Now, I ask you to possibly re-arrange your thinking and imagine food as the energy you are able to transfer to your growing baby. Time to let go of eating and food being empty, mindless activities... time to open to the idea of food being what IS you and what IS your baby. Ask your body to desire fresh, whole foods that will give you energy, and not take it away. Feel the

way certain foods enter your body and light it up; and the way other foods drag you down.

It is important to start to notice that what you put into yourself matters. On another level, it is important and empowering to understand that YOU are responsible! That doesn't mean you need to be an extremist and become rigid about food. It also doesn't mean that you can't indulge occasionally; this is not a way to make anyone feel guilty about food or eating. The average American woman has had enough of that in the course of her life! This is encouragement to look at food and eating in pregnancy in a different light; and to realize that YOU hold the power.

Whole nourishment during pregnancy is THE most important thing you can do to grow and create a healthy baby, a healthy pregnancy, an uncomplicated birth and even successful

breastfeeding. Starting right now, YOU hold the keys to health by listening to yourself, and reading and incorporating this knowledge. Most "care providers" spend very little if any time on nutritional counseling, and when it IS mentioned, it is more discussion of how much weight a woman has gained, rather than a real inquiry into what she eating, how much, and when and where the food came from.

Food is energy, food creates life. We are what we eat.

## Food Is Important

I have experienced that paying attention to what a pregnant woman is eating is an invaluable tool. This real-life experience surpasses, for me, any amount of inapplicable textbook study. As a midwife, it gives me insight into her life; it

shows me more about her and her lifestyle than you would imagine. On a purely clinical note, I have seen food both make and break pregnancies. Meaning, I have seen women totally on the verge of a major pregnancy health problem; specifically pre-eclampsia/toxemia- that are able to reverse the process with attention to what goes in their mouths.

Whereas the medical world sees "no solution" to problems such as toxemia (except delivery of the baby), midwives see a limited window of intense nutritional counseling that can indeed solve the problem. It is true that we can prevent most pregnancy complications with decent nourishment. Pre-term labor, gestational diabetes, toxemia, placental abruption, low birth weight babies—there is power and prevention in pregnancy nourishment.

When I offer nutritional counseling to my own clients, I try to meet them where they already are. Eating and food are very personal. It is not my intention to criticize anyone's way of eating, or to deprive them of their most favorite foods, or to change what is part of their culture and heritage with food.

My intention is to take your way of eating and infuse it with a few basic principles. These principles may severely alter what and how you eat, or they may simply be a helpful reminder that you are on the right track. I personally am an omnivore—meaning I eat meat and dairy along with all the whole, fresh foods I can find. I have experimented with vegetarianism, veganism, and even bits of a raw food diet.

More importantly, I have counseled women of every nutritional type, and so to absorb and put this practice into being, it is not a requirement

that you eat meat, or don't eat meat, etc. The principles of holistic pregnancy can be applied no matter what you eat. It's only required that you be willing to learn, be willing to take responsibility and be willing to apply these principles to your regimen.

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