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Think of stretch
marks as
pregnancy
service stripes.

Joyce Armor

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DEB CARUANA'S...

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Why It's Important to Eat Well When You're Pregnant

To eat well during pregnancy you must do more than simply increase how much you eat. You must also consider **what** you eat. Although you need about 300 extra calories a day - especially later in your pregnancy, when your baby grows quickly - those calories should come from nutritious foods so they can contribute to your baby's growth and development. Do you wonder how it's reasonable to gain 25 to 35 pounds (on average) during your [pregnancy](#) when a newborn baby weighs only a fraction of that? Although it varies from woman to woman, this is how those pounds may add up:

- 7.5 pounds - average baby's weight
- 7 pounds - your body's extra stored protein, fat, and other nutrients
- 4 pounds - your extra blood
- 4 pounds - your other extra body fluids
- 2 pounds - breast enlargement
- 2 pounds - enlargement of your uterus
- 2 pounds - amniotic fluid surrounding your baby
- 1.5 pounds - the placenta

Of course, patterns of [weight gain during pregnancy](#) vary. It's normal to gain less if you start out heavier and more if you're having twins or triplets - or if you were underweight before becoming pregnant. More important than how much weight you gain is what makes up those extra pounds.

When you're pregnant, what you eat and drink is the main source of nourishment for your baby. In fact, the link between what you consume and the health of your baby is much stronger than once thought. That's why doctors now say, for example, that **no** amount of alcohol consumption should be considered safe during pregnancy.

The extra food you eat shouldn't just be empty calories - it should provide the nutrients your growing baby needs. For example, calcium helps make and keep bones and teeth strong. While you're pregnant, you still need calcium for your body, **plus** extra calcium for your developing baby. Similarly, you

IF MEN GOT PREGNANT...

There would be no over population problem

Men would be eager to talk about commitment

All methods of birth control would be 100% effective

"Morning After" pills would automatically be dispensed with coffee

Maternity leave would begin at the third month of pregnancy

Maternity leave would last two years -- with full pay

They'd stay mostly in bed during the entire pregnancy

Mood swings would be limited to grouchy and "*go away*"

Morning sickness would rank as the nation's #1 health problem

Weight gain would be limited to 180 pounds

The normal pregnancy "*glow*" would most likely be a "*buzz*"

Baby showers would be hosted by strippers

Men wouldn't think twins were so cute

Paternity suits would be a fashion line of clothes

Super wide ties would probably make a comeback

Restaurants would include pickles and ice cream as main entrees

Natural childbirth would become obsolete

The duration of maternity stays in the hospital would be unlimited

require more of all the essential nutrients than you did before you became pregnant.

A Nutrition Primer for Expectant Mothers

Whether or not you're pregnant, a healthy diet includes proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and plenty of water. The U.S. government publishes dietary guidelines that can help you determine how many servings of each kind of food to eat every day. Eating a variety of foods in the proportions indicated is a good step toward staying healthy.

Avoiding Some Common Problems

Because the iron in prenatal vitamins and other factors may cause constipation during pregnancy, it's a good idea to consume more fiber than you did before you became pregnant. Try to eat about 20 to 30 grams of fiber a day. Your best sources are fresh fruits and vegetables and whole-grain breads, cereals, or muffins.

Some people also use fiber tablets or drinks or other high-fiber products available at your pharmacy, but check with your doctor before trying them. (Don't use laxatives while you're pregnant unless your doctor advises you to do so. And avoid the old wives' remedy - castor oil - because it can actually interfere with your body's ability to absorb nutrients.)

If constipation is a problem for you, your doctor may prescribe a stool softener. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids, especially water, when increasing fiber intake, or you can make your constipation worse. One of the best ways to avoid constipation is to get more exercise. You should also drink plenty of water between meals each day to help soften your stools and move food through your digestive system. Sometimes hot tea, soups, or broth can help. Also, keep dried fruits handy for snacking.

Some pregnant women find that broccoli, spinach, cauliflower, and fried foods give them heartburn or gas. You can plan a balanced diet to avoid these foods. Carbonated drinks also cause gas or heartburn for some women, although others find they calm the digestive system.

If you're frequently nauseated, eat small amounts of bland foods, like toast or crackers, throughout the day. If nothing else sounds good, try cereal with milk or a sweet piece of fruit. To help combat nausea, you can also:

- Take your prenatal vitamin before going to bed after you've eaten a snack - not on an empty stomach.
- Eat a small snack when you get up to go to the bathroom early in the morning.
- Suck on a hard candy

The Pregnancy Dictionary

Afterbirth: When the hard part begins.

Cravings: An excuse to gluttonize your way through pregnancy.

Dilation: One of those things a pregnant woman has to take her doctor's word for.

Elastiphobia: Fear of making it into the Guinness Book of World Records for "Most Stretch Marks."

First trimester: The first three months of pregnancy when you wonder, "Is it too late to hire a surrogate mother?"

Maternity clothes: What a pregnant woman wears to show people there's a reason she's fat.

Miracle: 1. The birth of a baby. 2. The fact that you lived to tell about it.

Obstetrician: The doctor who tells you you're doing fine when you think you're caught in the jaws of death.

Pregnant pause: The amount of time it takes for a nine- month pregnant woman to get out of a chair.

Prenatal: When your life was still your own.

Pushing: The final effort to get a ten-pound baby through an opening the size of a dime.

Second trimester: The time when you ask the question, "Will my husband notice if I eat this gallon of ice cream and side of beef before he gets home?"

Third trimester: The final months of pregnancy when you wonder, "How much longer can I keep from waddling?"

How Can You Know If You're Eating Well During Pregnancy?

The key is to eat foods from the different food groups in approximately the recommended proportions. If nausea or lack of appetite cause you to eat less at times, don't worry - it's unlikely to cause fetal harm because your baby gets first crack at the nutrients you consume. And although it's generally recommended that a woman of normal weight gain approximately 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy (most gain 4 to 6 pounds during the first trimester and 1 pound a week during the 2nd and 3rd trimesters), don't fixate on the scale. Instead, focus on eating a good variety and balance of nutritious foods to keep both you and your baby healthy.

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Most Important Exercises:

Pelvic floor exercises

The pelvic floor muscles are tightly slung between the tailbone (coccyx) and the pubic bone, and support the bladder, uterus, vagina and bowel. Weak pelvic floor muscles can't adequately support these organs, which could cause problems including incontinence and prolapsed uterus.

The weight of the growing baby puts excessive strain on the pelvic floor muscles, but you can perform simple exercises to help avoid future problems. Urethral muscles are those that stop urine in mid-flow, and the anal sphincter is responsible for 'holding on' when you need to pass a bowel motion. You can feel the muscles around your vagina by inserting a finger and squeezing or practice stopping your urine mid-flow.

Exercises include:

- Squeeze your muscles slowly and hold for up to 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.
- Perform quick, strong squeezes. Repeat 10 times.
- Squeeze the muscles whenever you sneeze, cough or clear your throat.

Abdominal exercises

Strong abdominal muscles support your spine. It is important to keep your abdominal muscles strong, particularly during the third trimester when the size and weight of your baby are rapidly increasing. Suggestions include:

- Concentrate on drawing your belly button towards your spine.
- Breathe out while pulling in your belly.
- Hold the position and count to 10. Relax, and breathe in.

- Repeat 10 times, as many times per day as you are capable.
- You can perform this exercise sitting, standing, or on your hands and knees.
- Consider doing your abdominal exercises and pelvic floor exercises at the same time.
- Avoid conventional 'crunches' or sit-ups that involve lying on your back and drawing your ribcage and pelvis together.

I'd Love To Hear From YOU!

Whether your goal is to lose weight, get in the best shape of your life, perform even better in all your sports or anything in between, I can help you.

I'd love to hear from you – even if you just want to say “Hi!”

I'm full of energy, and people tell me – a pretty fun person to talk to. So please don't hesitate to call me up with any questions you have about health and fitness related issues. There's never any pressure and no obligation. I'm a resource...and a friend!

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Are You My Client Of The Month?

Every month I choose a very special *Client Of The Month*. It's my way of acknowledging good friends and saying “thanks” to those who support me and my business with referrals, word of mouth and repeat business.

This month's *Client Of The Month* is **Lori Gottbetter** who when I first started with her, Max her second child was 2 years old and now he is almost 5. Her recovery from her last pregnancy with Max was slow because of so many problems including a paralysis of her right and left lower body. As we worked together her progress was very gradual but constant as the nerve innervation through her lower limbs became stronger. Prior to pregnancy Lori had always been slim and fit. The culmination of 2 pregnancies and complications with Max, left Lori with 15 extra lbs. After working out together for 1&1/2 years Lori was getting stronger but frustrated, with no weight loss. Her frustration propelled her finally to do the cardio that I constantly reminded her of and in 2 weeks the pounds just fell off. After a cardio stint and working so hard the kids food no longer tempts her and Lori gained back her will power instead of pounds. Over the holidays she gained a couple pounds but no serious damage. She's back and on track and looking and feeling 10 years younger. Congratulations Lori! And thanks for the referrals!! **You might be my next *Client Of The Month*. Wait for your name here in an upcoming month!**

Do You Have A Health Or Fitness Question You Want Answered?

I love hearing from all of my good friends and clients who enjoy reading my monthly newsletter. And I'm always looking to answer pressing questions you might have about anything related to health and fitness. If you have a question, tip or idea, please feel free to call me at 212-677-3185. Perhaps I'll feature you in a future issue!

What is the Kegel exercise?Dr. Kegel was a urologist who noticed that weak pelvic floor muscles as a result of childbirth caused women to experience leaking of urine when they coughed or sneezed. He developed an exercise to help prevent and treat urinary incontinence in these women.

Strengthening these muscles during and after pregnancy will help prevent urinary incontinence as well as improve blood flow to the perineum. After delivery, performing the Kegel exercises will help the pelvic floor muscles regain their elastic tone and help heal episiotomies. It can also enhance the lovemaking experience. Now, that's motivation! To perform Kegel exercises, sit comfortably on a chair and lean forward to feel your sit bones on the chair. Take a breath. As you exhale, imagine touching your vaginal opening to the inside of your belly button. Inhale and relax. Repeat for a total of 100 Kegels a day. It sounds like a lot, but try to practice at convenient times like when you are stopped at a red light, watching TV or during love-making.