

for eating 2

In this issue we follow reader Elly Rutt's progress as she moves towards the birth of her second child and take a look at Elly's personal eating plan and the advice she has received from her No More Excuses personal trainer, **Sonja Lloyd**.

Goals

To increase knowledge of optimum nutrition, in order to help boost the immune system, increase energy levels and ensure a healthy pregnancy, whilst minimising unnecessary weight gain.

Dietary Analysis

There are some significant enhancements that can be made which will hopefully allow you to feel "brighter."

Firstly, your water intake is excellent – well done! It is very important that you

are re-hydrating your body each day and flushing out the excess toxins. The first sign of dehydration is thirst (this is 1% dehydration). Caffeine has a dehydrating effect on the body, another reason why your water intake is so important in order to replenish fluid that is being flushed out.

- The ideal type of water is either filtered water or a good quality bottled mineral water. You should be aiming for an intake of 2 litres per day.
- Dilute fruit juices with water 50/50 to slow down the glucose release.

Recommendations

Carbohydrate (CHO) intake: CHOs are made up of molecules or 'units' of sugars, which are eventually converted into glucose where they are either used directly as energy if exercising or stored as glycogen (in the muscles and liver) if at rest.

During pregnancy, you should only be increasing your calorific intake during the last three months by 200kcal per day.

In order to avoid taking in too many simple sugars, like cereal bars, sugary snacks and white pasta/rice, start your day by eating/drinking something natural with a carbohydrate and protein content, e.g. porridge. By having something sugary first thing in the morning, e.g. a banana with nothing else, your energy levels throughout the day can be depleted. This is due to your blood sugar levels acting like a rollercoaster, from sugary highs to exhausted slumps. The way in which the body responds to a sudden onslaught of sugar is to take it



out to the cells. If they don't need more fuel the excess will be stored as fat. Any sugary snack during the day will continue this effect within the body, is devoid of any vitamins and minerals and is classified as empty calories – leading to excess body fat.

Also, by not eating shortly after getting up will cause you to go hypoglycaemic straight away (low blood sugar level). It will then be difficult to control your levels throughout the day. Combine this with additional sugar in the diet and the result can be catastrophic!

You could also consume more vegetables; unprepared and/or frozen to provide the body with essential vitamins and minerals required for normal functioning and chemical reactions. The darker in colour the better, i.e. green leaf vegetables. It's interesting to see that your energy levels are frequently depleted. In addition to your blood sugar levels acting like a rollercoaster, your B vitamin levels are very low. These nutrients along with zinc are responsible for a number of vital functions; they help insulin work and release the enzymes required to turn glucose into energy within our cells. Our bodies cannot store these vitamins in any great quantity therefore we need them daily within our diets to avoid eventual deficiency.

Suggestion: Try eating an oat based meal (using water or a milk substitute like Rice Dream) for breakfast or something like a boiled egg (a great source of protein including vitamins, minerals and essential fats).

Protein intake: Your protein intake on a daily basis could be improved. It is vital for growth, development and repair. Protein is also required for energy production and is needed in the manufacture of hormones, antibodies and enzymes. If you eat protein and carbohydrates together, your blood sugar levels can also be stabilised. Sources include pulses, fish, nuts/seeds, dairy and meat. You don't need to rely on animal sources to meet your protein needs.

During pregnancy, your need for protein increases as you are not just replenishing your own body, but also providing the raw materials from which your baby is made. As a result, the UK recommended allowance goes up by 13% - from 45g per day to 51g per day (or 15% of total calories).

Nuts and seeds (unsalted or unprocessed) are an excellent snack and provide a good amount of amino acids. A lunch as simple as a jacket potato with beans is also a great way to combine different food groups, i.e. carbs, protein and fibre (as long as the beans don't have sugar or salt added to them!)

Suggestion: Try quinoa as an excellent source of protein. Known as the mother grain, it contains vitamins, minerals, iron, B vitamins and vitamin E. It is cooked like rice and tastes delicious with balsamic roasted vegetables.

Fat intake: Again, in order to help regulate cellular functions within the body, it is vital that your essential fatty acid intake be increased. Try more oily fish and nuts/seeds. No More Excuses can advise on a fantastic supplement if you find this difficult to add into your daily diet, which is perfectly safe for pregnancy.

Apart from small amount of vegetables you are consuming, fibre could appear more in your diet. It doesn't contain any nutrients, yet is vital to a healthy body and to ease constipation, especially during pregnancy. This is due to the large intestine becoming compressed giving less room for waste to move freely along. Therefore a diet high in fluid and fibre is very important. Dairy produce should be kept to a minimum as this is mucus-forming and can compact faecal matter and slow down the "passing along" process. Fibre has a number of effects upon the body:

- High fibre foods take longer to eat, cause greater distension of the stomach and help to avoid overeating,
- Aids weight management by forming a 'gel', i.e. to thicken, and slows down the absorption of sugar, giving a feeling of having more energy for longer,
- Can decrease toxins within the body and can regulate the absorption of some nutrients,
- Lowers excess cholesterol and reduces the risk of heart disease,
- 18g per day is recommended (a figure that very few people reach).

Conclusion

You are definitely on the way to achieving health benefits from your daily food intake and it appears that the amount of processed and ready prepared foods you are consuming is low. I am sure that you are aware that sugar, salt and the processed food itself has been robbed of all nutritional value. With a few small changes, you could begin to feel much brighter.

Ideas?

- Wholegrain rice and pasta instead of the white and refined varieties.
- Increase green vegetable intake to ensure that a broad spectrum of vitamins and minerals are being taken in on a daily basis, especially B vitamins and antioxidants.

- "Rice Dream" instead of soya milk to avoid taking the risk of developing a peanut allergy.
- Essential oils added to the diet in the form of nuts/seeds and cold-pressed oils.
- Mix carbohydrate and protein together during each meal and snack to slow down the glucose absorption and stabilise blood sugar.
- Buy fruit and vegetables from a local greengrocer, at a farmers market or from a home delivery organic supplier

The keys to eating for two during pregnancy

Babies demand the best and no time is more important for optimum nutrition that whilst you're pregnant. Most people who think that they eat a "well-balanced diet" fail to meet even the basic RDA level of nutrients. Pregnancy is a bodily stress and the nutritional needs are greatest during each trimester. All of your resources will be called upon and if you don't have enough nutrients in the bank, you'll most certainly go overdrawn!

Vitamins

Vitamin A

This controversial vitamin is required during pregnancy despite much belief. However not too much should be consumed.* This vitamin is vital for the proper growth of the baby and healthy skin, a strong immune system (anti-oxidant) and night vision in the mother.

*Zinc is needed to convert beta-carotene (the vegetable form of Vit A) into the active form of retinol.

Sources include; carrots, cabbage, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, broccoli, apricots.

Multi-Complex B Vitamins

Known as the energy nutrients, the B vitamins include the vital folic acid needed during pregnancy. Required for development of the baby, they also help prevent birth defects such as cleft palate and spina bifida. They also help the mother maintain a healthy hormone balance and energy production.

Sources include; mushrooms, watercress, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes, chicken, salmon, eggs, bananas, nuts/seeds, cottage cheese.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is important for so many functions within the body; collagen



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production to keep bones, skin and joints firm, prevention of stretch marks, a healthy immune system. Our need is ongoing as the body cannot store it. Therefore supplies must constantly be replenished during the day.

Sources include; peppers, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, strawberries, kiwi fruit, peas, melons, oranges and lemons.

Vitamin D

This vitamin can be made in the skin in the presence of sunlight. However in the UK our exposure to sunlight is very limited and the need it within our diets is important. During pregnancy vitamin D is responsible for bone and tooth enamel formation of the baby and helps the mother maintain strong and healthy bones by retaining calcium.

Sources include; mackerel, salmon, cottage cheese and eggs.

Vitamin E

Like vitamin C, E helps to get oxygen to the cells and protects the vital DNA from damage which could result in congenital defects for the baby. If applied externally, it can help Caesarean scars disappear.

Sources include; sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, beans, peas, sardines, salmon, sweet potatoes.

Minerals

Calcium

This is required for bones, teeth, a healthy heart and central nervous system. It also helps to relieve aching muscles!

Sources include; almonds, parsley, prunes, pumpkin seeds, cabbage, green leafy vegetables, poultry.

Chromium

Chromium along with B3 forms part of the glucose tolerance factor which is essential for balancing energy levels and helps to reduce food cravings – all key for pregnancy!

Sources include; rye bread, potatoes, green peppers, eggs, chicken, apples, parsnips.

Iodine

When you’re pregnant, iodine helps to maintain the thyroid hormones which are crucial for healthy development of your baby’s brain and nervous system. A deficiency can lead to “hypothyroidism” in your baby leading to mental retardation and spasticity.

Sources include; haddock, mackerel, cod, yoghurt (“live”), chicken.

Iron

As blood volume increase during pregnancy so does the demand for iron. It carries oxygen to every cell in the body and is vital for energy production.

Sources include; pumpkin seeds, parsley, almonds, dried prunes, raisins, brazil nuts, dates, sesame seeds, pork.

Magnesium

This mineral works with calcium and vitamin D to form the baby’s bones and teeth. It is also responsible for the development of the heart muscles and nervous system. In the mother, it helps to reduce muscle cramps (labour!).

Sources include; wheatgerm, almonds, buckwheat flour, garlic, raisins, green peas, potato skins.

Manganese

Manganese helps to form healthy bones, cartilage, tissues and nerves. It is also important for insulin production, helping to keep you balanced.

Sources include; watercress, pineapple, blackberries, raspberries, lettuce, grapes, oats, beetroot and celery.

Selenium

This is an anti-oxidant that helps protect against free-radical damage (even higher damage occurs during exercise due to the increased intake of oxygen) and cancer-causing substances. It also reduces inflammation and stimulates the immune system.

Sources include; mushrooms, herring, cottage cheese, cabbage, courgettes, cod, chicken.

Zinc

Of all the nutrients, zinc has the biggest role to play in reproduction. It is needed for hormone balance, development of sperm and egg, fertilization and for all areas of the baby’s growth. It also helps the release of constant energy!

Zinc also plays a role in helping to reduce stretch marks and avoid post-natal depression.

Sources include; ginger root, lamb chops, haddock, green peas, turnips, egg yolk, wholewheat grain, rye, oats, almonds.

NEXT TIME In part 3 we will be covering the birth of Elly’s second child and how Elly goes about getting back into shape with personal trainer Sonja.

For more information on exercise and pregnancy visit www.nomorexcuses.co.uk or email sonja@nomorexcuses.co.uk call: 0700 340 1287