

Nutrition Newsletter

Cayuga County Health & Human Services WIC Program Fall 2006

Prenatal Health Care



Pregnancy is a big responsibility. Even before you get pregnant your nutritional habits and health can greatly affect the health of your baby. Underweight women may have more complications during pregnancy and give birth to more premature infants than do women of normal weight. On the other hand, obese women have a higher risk of hypertension, diabetes, and large birth weight babies. Try to reach a healthy weight before you are pregnant. Plan for your health before you are pregnant by choosing foods wisely, getting regular exercise and avoid the use of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. Keep in mind that the health of your baby begins at the moment of conception.

Listeriosis and Pregnancy

What is your risk? Food contamination by harmful bacteria can cause serious illness. One type of bacteria, *Listeria monocytogenes* can cause an illness called Listeriosis. In pregnant women, Listeriosis may cause flu-like symptoms with the sudden onset of fever, chills, muscle aches and sometimes diarrhea or upset stomach. According to the CDC pregnant women are 20 times more likely to be affected by this bacteria. Listeriosis when transmitted to the fetus through the placenta can lead to premature delivery, stillbirth or serious health problems to the newborn.

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provide the following advice for pregnant women:

- **Do not eat** hot dogs, luncheon meats, or deli meats **unless they are reheated** until steaming hot.
- **Do not eat** soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined cheeses, and Mexican style cheeses such as "queso blanco fresco".
- **Do not eat** refrigerated pate' or meat spreads. Canned pate' and meat spreads are OK.
- **Do not eat** refrigerated smoked seafood **unless** it is an ingredient in a **cooked** dish such as a casserole.
- **Do not drink** raw (unpasteurized) milk **or eat** foods that contain unpasteurized milk.



When preparing meals for it is important to remember four basic guidelines to help keep your food safe from harmful bacteria.

1. **Clean** - Wash hands and surfaces often.
2. **Separate** – Don't allow cross contamination between raw and cooked foods.
3. **Cook** – Cook to proper temperatures – use a food thermometer.
4. **Chill** – Refrigerate or freeze promptly.

Source: AWHONN,USDHHS, USDA September 2001

Your Birthing Plan

The birth of your baby is one of the most memorable, life changing, exciting experiences of your life. You will want to spend some time thinking through your hopes and wishes for this special day. Create your birthing plan – a birth plan is a simple, clear one-page statement of your preferences for the delivery of your baby. Try to remember to be flexible, because deviations may be necessary. You will want to remember the goal: a safe delivery of your little bundle of joy.

Here are some questions that will help you develop your plan. Who do you want to be there? Do you want a Doula? Will there be children/siblings present? What will you do for pain relief? How do you feel about fetal monitoring? Would you like an episiotomy? Do you want to listen to music and have focal points? What are your preferences for your baby's care?

During childbirth, many women feel like they are losing control. A birth plan helps you to feel confident, in control as much as possible and helps you feel a part of the decision-making even when unexpected events occur. Try to have your birth plan focus on the positive. Use words like, "We hope to" or "We plan to" or "We anticipate". An example – Immediately following the birth, I plan to breastfeed.

Source: American Pregnancy Association

Breastfeeding

The American Academy of Pediatrics Section of Breastfeeding, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund and many other health organizations recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. Why is breastfeeding so important? There are many reasons why breastfeeding is best.

- Breast milk helps keep babies healthy. Breast milk protects against many types of illness like colds, flu, diarrhea and ear infections.
- Breast milk is ready day or night, anytime your baby is hungry. It is always the right temperature.
- Breast milk is easy for your baby to digest, since your body makes it for your baby.
- Breast milk is naturally clean. It passes from the breast to the baby's mouth and cannot go bad or spoil.
- Breast milk helps prevent diaper rash.
- Breast fed babies are less likely to be overweight later in life. They learn to stop eating when they are full, instead of when the bottle is empty.
- Babies fully breastfed for six months or longer are smarter than formula fed babies when given IQ tests at school age.
- For every year a mother spends breastfeeding, her risk for developing type 2 diabetes drops ~15%.
- Breastfeeding burns about 500 calories a day, so moms get back into their prepregnancy shape quicker.



Source: Breastfeedingpartners.org

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