

Nutrition and Substance Use in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Nutrition is an important aspect of a healthy pregnancy. Using substances during pregnancy or when breastfeeding can impact your ability to eat regularly or eat a diet incorporating fruits, vegetables, and enough fat, protein, and fibre.

If you are pregnant, substances can also make it harder to absorb the nutrients your body needs for the baby. If you are breastfeeding, substances can impact your milk supply. Substances can also enter the breast milk. While some substances can be broken down in the body within a few hours, others will take much longer.

Why Good Nutrition Matters During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:

- **Supports Your Healing:** Good nutrition helps your body recover from substance use and stay strong.
- **Improves Your Mood:** Healthy foods help reduce stress and stabilize your emotions.
- **Reduces Substance Cravings:** Foods rich in vitamin B6, high protein foods, and antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables can help support your brain health and lower cravings for substances.
- **Keeps You and Your Baby Healthy:** Proper nutrition supports your health and your baby's growth.
- **Promotes Self-Care:** Taking care of your nutrition helps you make healthier choices including choices about substance use.

Some Tips to Improve Nutrition:

- **Eat a Variety of Foods:** Try to include fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, lean protein, and complex carbohydrates for a more balanced diet.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.
- **Eat Regularly:** Make sure to have regular meals and snacks.
- **Take a Multivitamin:** Ensure you get all the essential nutrients. Multivitamins with folic acid and choline can help reduce the effects from prenatal substance use exposure.
- **Get Food Support if Needed:** Don't hesitate to seek help if you need assistance with food access.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- » Suicide Crisis Helpline
- » Kids Help Phone
- » Hope for Wellness Hotline

SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT

- » Services Available Across Canada
- » Taking Care: A Short Guide to Breastfeeding and Substance Use
- » Thinking About Pregnancy

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

- » ShelterSafe
- » iHEAL App
- » Local Crisis Lines

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

- » Food Banks Canada
- » Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program & Community Action Program for Children
- » Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from 6 to 24 Months

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:

[pregnancyinfo.ca/
substance-use-in-pregnancy](http://pregnancyinfo.ca/substance-use-in-pregnancy)

