



PRENATAL & POSTPARTUM CARE

A Guide for Expecting Parents



THE BIPOC WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK

About Us



The BIPOC Women's Health Network

We are a network of medical trainees, professionals & allied healthcare workers that create resources to support and improve the healthcare experiences of Black, Indigenous & People of Colour (BIPOC). This guide is specifically catered for BIPOC communities and will provide you with information to help supplement your prenatal classes and have a healthy pregnancy journey! This guide was developed in conjunction with professionals and experienced healthcare providers from Women's Health in Women's Hands.

Created by: Claire Dong BMSc.*, Dilini Kekulawala BMSc.*, & Brintha Sivajohan HBSc.*

Based on guide by: *Ishita Aggarwal HBSc., MPH*, Carly Alfano BSc.*, Balsam Arwini BSc.*, Elizabeth Dayo BHSc.*, Claire Dong BMSc., Zahra Juma MPH, RN., Dilini Kekulawala BMSc.*, Kimya Manouchehri BSc.*, Avika Misra BHSc.*, Vaishvi Patel BSc.*, Hannah Roberts BSc., MSc.* & Brintha Sivajohan HBSc.*
*these authors are also MD Candidates in Canada

Edited by: Daisy Guerrero RD, Zahra Juma MPH, RN, & Carolina Luengo RN, Director of Primary Health Care Services at Women's Health in Women's Hands

How to Use a QR Code

1. Turn on your phone's camera
2. Point your camera at the QR code
3. Your phone will automatically recognize the QR code and give you a notification.
4. Click on the notification to go to our website and access the resources link!



This QR code contains:

- A list of food banks in Ottawa
- Community resources, helplines, & support groups
- Our feedback survey. We would love to hear from you, please fill out the survey if you can to help us improve this kit!

Table of Contents

Prenatal Nutrition	1
Canada's Food Guide	2
Snacks & Food Preparation	3
Food Safety	4
Vitamins	7
Postpartum Nutrition	8
Food Banks in the GTA	9
Pregnancy & Labour	10
Contraception	12
Breastfeeding	13
Intimate Partner Violence	15
Mental Health During and After Pregnancy	16
Social Work FAQs	18
Recipe Ideas	20

The Pregnancy Care Kit contains:

- This information guide on prenatal & postpartum care
- Essential prenatal care items, such as prenatal vitamins, pads for any postpartum bleeding or spotting
- Items for your baby, such as baby wipes, vitamin D drops, baby diapers.
- Grocery gift card (you can use this to buy groceries, baby items, etc.)



Prenatal Nutrition

Fruits & Vegetables

They are packed with vitamins & minerals and are important for your health and baby's growth. Try to add brightly coloured fruits and green leafy vegetables into meals.

- Include vegetables like: okra, eggplant, carrots, broccoli, or leafy greens such as callaloo, kale, collards, spinach, and Swiss chard.
- Incorporate starchy vegetables like maize, cassava, yam, green banana, and plantains.
- Add fruits like: guava, sapodilla, pomegranate, oranges, mango, banana, pineapple, apples, & berries.

Try grilling eggplant or dry roasting it in the oven for a side dish! Add vegetables like okra, to curries and stews!



Grains

Grain products are a healthy source of carbohydrates and energy. Add grains into your diet and choose whole grain options whenever you can.

- Include carbohydrates like brown rice, whole roti, chappati, oats, or barley



During pregnancy, you'll need some extra calories to support the growth of your baby. One extra healthy snack or larger portions is often enough!

Milk and Milk Alternatives

These are important for strong bones and provide minerals for your baby. Choose the low-fat variety, which will give you protein, calcium and Vitamin D but with less fat and calories.

Select skim, 1% or 2% milk and choose lower fat varieties of yogurt (<2% MF) and cheese (<20% MF). If you do not drink milk, you can drink fortified soy beverages.



High Protein Foods

Eating meat & alternatives each day will allow you to incorporate more protein in your diet and help your baby stay healthy. Include protein such as eggs, chicken, beef, turkey and legumes (beans & lentils)

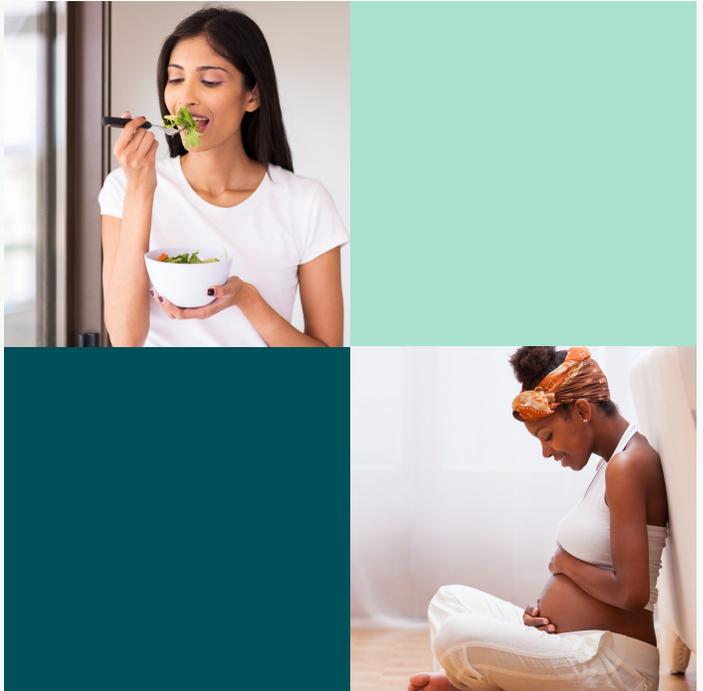
Consider fortifying your meals with protein! This can look like:



- Adding kidney beans, lentils, pigeon
- peas, chickpeas and/or cowpeas to soups, stews and curries
 - *Red peas pair well with salads. Black eyed peas are great with rice!*
 - *Include peanut or groundnut sauces to meat and vegetable dishes (if you are not allergic!)*
- Adding snacks like unsalted nuts, coconut peanuts, or nuts & seeds

Canada's Food Guide

You can adapt this food guide with some of the foods your family normally eats to make sure you have a balanced diet during pregnancy.



Check out some recipes at the end of this guide that you can make!

Snack & Food Preparation

Have snacks between meals to get the extra nutrients you need!

There are a lot of healthy snacks that you can get! Try pre-washed vegetables (like baby carrots, cauliflower, and broccoli), low-fat yogurt (<2%MF), and trail mix (raisins, dried fruits, nuts and seeds). Don't forget to drink plenty of water!

My cultural diet involves a lot of food preparation. What can I do if I don't have the energy, time, or resources to make complicated meals?

For a quick meal, take advantage of canned and frozen food.

- Rinse canned vegetables to decrease the salt content or look for cans that say "no added salt"
- Add yogurt to canned fruits, and look for canned fruit packed in water or with "no sugar added"
- Add oats to yogurts to increase grain intake
- Frozen fruits, vegetables and beans are a great option to get in your daily servings! They last longer than fresh produce and are easier to prepare. Frozen foods also have less salt than canned foods!

- Make sure to always remove the packaging and place the rice or pasta in a BPA-free container or bowl before heating on the stove
- Add grains like lentils or barley to soups

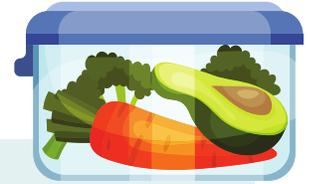
Use pre-cooked packs of rice or pasta and heat on the stove to have with stew.

Plan your meals ahead of time!

- Making a menu is a great strategy to save time in the kitchen
- Prepare meals in advance & freeze them
- Pre-prepare meals on the weekends or whenever you are free
- Coordinate with relatives and close friends to help with cooking homemade or frozen meals if you can!



Food Safety



Why is food poisoning more dangerous during pregnancy?

Food poisoning is caused by eating contaminated foods. During your pregnancy, your immune system is weakened. That means some bacteria can pass onto your baby.

Food Tips

Tips for Cleanliness

- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water but avoid soaking them in a sink because sinks can have bacteria
- Use different cutting boards for ready-to-eat foods and raw meats

Tips for Grocery Shopping

- Avoid spreading bacteria from raw meat, poultry, and fish by placing raw foods in individual plastic bags and keeping raw foods away from ready-to-eat foods in your shopping cart
- Freeze or refrigerate raw foods and seafood as soon as you get home—dangerous bacteria can grow if they are left out for more than 1 hour at summer temperatures or more than 2 hours at room temperature

Tips for Storing Food

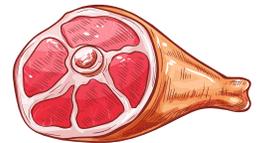
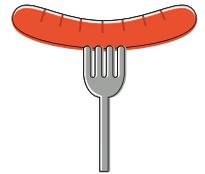
- **You can't always tell if food is safe by how it looks, smells or tastes**
 - Cook raw foods by the “best before” date or freeze if you don't plan on cooking before that date
- Place raw meat, poultry, and fish on the bottom shelf of the fridge to prevent raw juices from dripping on other foods
- Avoid refreezing thawed food
- Refrigerate or freeze your leftovers within two hours. Make sure that you reheat your leftovers thoroughly, and try to eat them as soon as possible (preferably within 2-4 days)



Food Safety

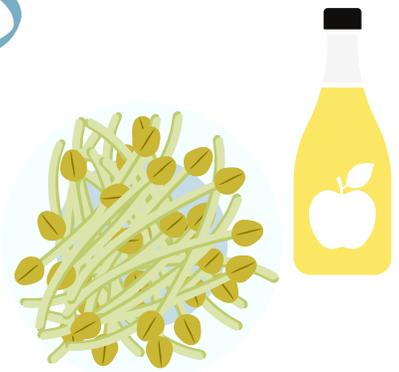
What should I not eat while pregnant?

- Avoid eating uncooked hot dogs straight from the package. Hot dogs must be well-cooked.
- Avoid deli meats (ie. bologna, roast beef and turkey breast). If you eat deli meats, make sure they are heated until steaming hot.
- Avoid raw or undercooked meat, such as steak tartar. Use a meat thermometer to make sure that meat is cooked to a safe internal temperature. Chicken pieces must be at 74°C (165.2°F) and whole chicken at 82°C (179.6°F).
- Avoid refrigerated pâtés and meat spreads. Use pâtés and meat spreads sold in cans, or that don't have to be refrigerated until they are opened.

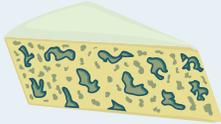


- You can eat canned, frozen, or fresh seafood. Make sure seafood is cooked to a safe internal temperature of 74°C (165.2°F).
- Fish are a great source of nutrients but some fish are not safe to eat in pregnancy because they have high levels of mercury.
 - Safe fish include tilapia, salmon, pollock, and basa. They are high in protein, and omega-3 fatty acids that you and your baby need.

- Avoid unpasteurized fruit juices and use pasteurized juices instead.
- Water and low-fat milk are the best drinks.
- Avoid raw sprouts, such as alfalfa, clover, radish, and mung beans. Use thoroughly cooked sprouts.



Food Safety



What should I not eat while pregnant?

- Avoid raw or unpasteurized dairy products. Use pasteurized dairy products and any dairy products that are cooked.
- Avoid soft cheeses, such as Brie and Camembert. Use pasteurized cheeses such as cheese curds, cheddar, and cottage cheese.
- Avoid semi-soft cheeses such as Havarti. Use pasteurized processed/spreadable cheeses, such as cream cheese.
- Avoid all blue-veined cheeses. Use hard cheeses instead such as Cheddar, Romano, and Parmesan.

Alcohol, Smoking & Caffeine



- **Alcohol and pregnancy do not mix.** There is no safe amount or safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. If you drink alcohol while you are pregnant, it may interfere with your baby's development.
- **Smoking and pregnancy do not mix.** Smoking during pregnancy can affect the baby's development and cause labour complications. Avoiding smoking is best for your health and baby's health.
- **Cannabis and pregnancy do not mix .** Avoiding cannabis use is the safest option when you are pregnant because it can affect your baby's growth and brain development.
- **Caffeine.** Caffeine should also be avoided during pregnancy. Try to drink beverages that have none, or little caffeine such as water, decaffeinated coffee, and juice. Maximum daily caffeine intake should be less than 300mg.



If you need help stopping alcohol, smoking, cannabis, or drug use, ask your healthcare provider for advice, supports, & resources in your area

Vitamins in Pregnancy

1 What is Folic Acid?

Folic acid is very important for the growth of your baby's spine and brain development. This is why it is so important to eat a folate rich diet and to take a prenatal vitamin daily!

2 Do I Need Vitamin D?



Many Canadians don't get enough Vitamin D, and people with darker skin are even more likely to have low Vitamin D. Taking a prenatal vitamin along with eating foods rich in Vitamin D can help you get the nutrition you need.

3 What are Prenatal Vitamins?

Prenatal vitamins include the vitamin supplements you need for a healthy pregnancy in one tablet. These can include folic acid, iron, calcium, vitamin A, B, C, D, E, zinc and iodine. Take your prenatal vitamins before pregnancy or as soon as you are able to and take them daily.



Folic Acid

Important for baby's brain & spinal cord. Found in **fortified cereals, dark leafy greens (broccoli, lentils, edamame), & prenatal vitamins.**

Vitamin C

Important for healthy gums, teeth & bones. Found in **citrus fruits, guava, pineapple, mango, kiwi & veggies (bell pepper, broccoli, tomato).**

Iron

Important for healthy skin & eyesight. Found in **dried beans and peas, chicken, fish, red meat, dried fruit.**

Vitamin A

Important for healthy skin & eyesight. Found in **carrot, sweet potato, green leafy veggies, & eggs.**

Vitamin B12

Important for baby's brain development & blood supply. Found in **beef, chicken, eggs, & milk.**

Vitamin B6

Important for baby's blood. Found in **beef, chicken, peanuts, oats, bananas & milk.**

Vitamin D

Important for healthy bones, teeth & eyesight. Found in **fortified milk, fatty fish (salmon).**

Calcium

Important for strong bones & teeth. Found in **milk, yogurt, beans and legumes, dark leafy greens (broccoli), & turnip greens**

Post-Partum Nutrition



After delivery, many changes occur to your body! As a new parent, your body is beginning to heal, readjust, and prepare for lactation. During this time, nutrition is important both for you and your baby.

Breastfeeding

DID YOU KNOW?

- Breastfeeding means your body needs an extra 500 calories per day for milk production! This means breastfeeding people should be consuming overall 2300 to 2500 calories per day to maintain energy and milk supply
- Breast milk is mainly made of water, so your body will need more water and it's why you might feel more thirsty!
- When you are breastfeeding, your body also needs more calcium, iron, and vitamin B12.



Helpful Tips

- Continue taking prenatal vitamins if you can—it will help you meet your nutritional requirements!
- During breastfeeding, calcium is needed to make breast milk!
- Making sure you have enough iron will also help your body to recover from labour and childbirth.



What To Avoid?

- **Limit caffeine** to less than 3 cups of coffee per day
- **Avoiding cannabis use is the safest option if you are breastfeeding.** Cannabis passes through breast milk and it takes much longer for your body to get rid of cannabis. If you need help stopping cannabis use, ask your doctor about what supports & services are available. If you are unable to stop completely, use less and less often.
- **Avoiding alcohol use is the safest option if you are breastfeeding** because alcohol can pass through breast milk and affect your baby's development.



1 standard drink is equal to

- 340ml of beer OR
- 142ml of wine OR
- 43ml of any drink with alcohol content of 40%

If you are drinking alcohol for a special occasion, follow these rules to reduce risks to your baby:

- Limit alcohol to 1-2 standard drinks per occasion.
- Wait 2 hours after having 1 standard drink before breastfeeding again. Wait up to 6 hours after 3 drinks.
- Pump and throw out breastmilk to help with any discomfort from engorgement.
- Plan ahead! Breastfeed before drinking. Store your breastmilk ahead of time for times when you plan on drinking alcohol.

Food Banks in Ottawa



For immediate info:

Check out our QR code with a list of food banks in the Ottawa region!



Food Bank	Address	Distance to SWCHC	Hours
Emergency Food Centre	507 Bank Street	1.9 KM	Open during COVID Mon, Tue, Fri 12:00–1:30PM
Heron Emergency Food Centre	1480 Heron Road	7 KM	Open during COVID Tue, Thu 1:30PM–3:30PM Wed 6–8PM, Fri 9:30–11:30AM
Dalhousie Food Cupboard	211 Bronson Ave, Unit#107	1.3 KM	Open during COVID Wed, Thurs 10:30AM–1PM
Parkdale Food Centre	30 Rosemount Ave., Unit#2	1.7 KM	Open during COVID Mon–Fri 9AM–3PM
Deborah Dynes Family House	955 Deborah Ave., Suite 85	5.7 KM	Open during COVID Mon, Wed–Fri 9AM–12PM, 1–3PM Tue 1–3PM
Dalhousie Food Action Group Inc	399 Arlington Ave.	0.65 KM	Open during COVID Wed, Thurs 10:30AM–1PM
Lowertown Good Neighbors	145 Beausoleil Drive	4.1 KM	 Please call: 613–562–2925
All Saints Anglican Church Westboro	347 Richmond Road	4.8 KM	 Please call: 613–725–9487
Care Centre Ottawa	500 Viewmount Drive	7.0 KM	Open during COVID Mon–Thurs 10AM–3PM



Pregnancy & Labour

How can I have a positive birthing experience?

There are many different options for how you choose to deliver your child & different health care providers available to support you.

Find a care team that understands your wishes, needs, & concerns!

Location	Providers	Benefits	Added Features
Hospital	- Physician and nursing staff - Midwife	Ideal for high-risk pregnancies, planned C-sections, and/or if medical procedures are needed	Most women choose to give birth here
Home	- Midwife	Ideal for low-risk pregnancies	Deliver in the comfort of your own home
Birthing Centers	- Midwife	Comfortable, low-tech option if you want more privacy and freedom	Family-centered and culturally safe; you're encouraged to incorporate your wishes and traditions

- **Create a Birthing and Postpartum Plan**

- Let the healthcare team know your preferences, wishes, and goals
- Anticipate and plan for the support you will need as you recover (for example, preparing meals that you can freeze ahead of time, having a friend or family member that you can talk to or can help with housework)

- Consider hiring a **Doula**

- A doula is a trained companion to provide constant support/guidance, advocate for your best interests, and provide basic information on the birthing process
- *Connect with a doula: Toronto Doula Group, Helping Hands Doula, Toronto Family Doulas*

- Connect with a **Midwife**

- <https://www.ontariomidwives.ca/find-midwife>



When do I call my doctor or go to the hospital?

- 5-1-1 Rule (contractions 5min apart, last 1min, occur for 1hr)
- If your water breaks
- If you have heavy bleeding
- If you don't feel the baby moving



How can I manage pain and discomfort?

Non-Medical:

- **Relaxation techniques:** sitting on an exercise ball, position changes, breathing techniques, music, hot/cold packs, massage, warm shower/bath, birthing tubs
- **Having a supportive birthing partner,** such as doula, partner, family member, friend

Medical:

- **Nitrous Oxide 'Laughing Gas':** a gas given with an oxygen mask to reduce the pain felt during labor/delivery
- **Opioids:** a strong pain reliever delivered through a needle to decrease the pain felt during labor and delivery
- **Epidural:** medication given through a needle in the lower back to numb everything from the waist down



Having Your Baby at the Hospital

What should I expect when I arrive at the hospital?

- **Waiting for a room:**

- You will be taken to a temporary room (“triage”) to be examined
- The healthcare team will decide if you should be admitted for delivery
- **What to expect:** Monitors placed on your belly to track the baby’s heart rate and your contractions. A vaginal exam may be done to check the size of your cervix



- **Once admitted:**

- You will be taken to your labour room and be given a hospital gown
- Make yourself at home: settle in and have someone from your birth support team unpack any things you might need, set up music, find out where linens/pillows and water stations are so you can focus on labor
- **What to expect:** Occasional monitoring of the baby’s heart rate and your contractions. An IV put into your arm or hand for fluids or medication



What should I bring with me?

Personal Care

- Comb, body lotion, deodorant/soap
- Sanitary pads
- Toothpaste & toothbrush
- Tissues

Clothing

- Bathrobe, socks
- Nightgown to wear after birth
- Supportive or nursing bra; Nursing pad
- Clothing to wear home from hospital

Things to Help with Labour

- Pillow
- Special object/picture
- Ice pack; hot water bottle
- Tennis balls
- Music; Magazine/book



For the Baby

- Diapers
- Set of clothing
- Safety approved infant car seat

I've had my baby
... now what?



There are a lot of changes that can come after giving birth!

- **Physical changes:** belly cramps, vaginal discharge (may have blood clots), constipation, breast swelling, pain with peeing, tiredness, weight loss, skin and hair changes
- **Emotional changes:** joy, fear, exhaustion, confusion, stress, crying



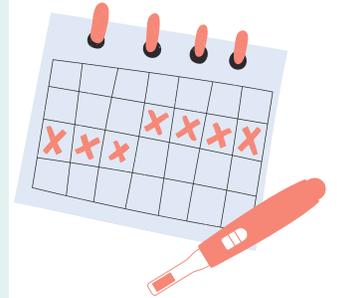
Remember to attend all follow-up appointments with your care provider!

Contraception

When will I start ovulating again?

This can be very difficult to predict!

- Some people who are breastfeeding can ovulate and become pregnant as early as **4 weeks after childbirth**, OR you may not ovulate for **months**.
- If you are not breastfeeding, you may ovulate even earlier than this

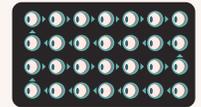


Therefore, it's very important to use contraception if you don't want another pregnancy at this time.

What are my contraception options after childbirth?

Hormonal Contraception:

- There are different methods available, including the pill, patch, ring, and shot.
- If you are not breastfeeding, you can use a hormonal contraception 3-4 weeks after delivering your baby.
- If you are breastfeeding, some forms of hormonal contraception can reduce milk production and may not be ideal. The progestin-only pill (mini-pill) does not affect your milk supply and can be used in breastfeeding. Ask your family doctor to help determine what choice of hormonal contraception is appropriate for you!



Intrauterine Devices:

- IUDs are an effective method of contraception and can be inserted at your 6-week clinic visit after delivery. Speak to your family physician to understand how long your IUD can stay in and how soon it can be inserted!



Condoms:

- Condoms can be used after childbirth and while you are breastfeeding.



Surgery:

- Tubaligation is a permanent option for people that have decided that they are done having children. Talk to your physician for more information.

Breastfeeding



Breastfeeding is the ideal food for your baby, so try to breastfeed as much as possible!



When and how much should I feed my baby?

Babies are all different when it comes to when and how much they eat — follow what your baby wants and is asking for.

- In general, newborns will breastfeed **at least every 2 to 3 hours**, or 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- As babies get older they will start to drink more milk for a longer amount of time.
- Babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of their life with no solid foods or water
 - After 6 months, you can start to give healthy, age appropriate solid foods but continue breastfeeding if you can until your child is at least 2 years old (or longer) to give them a healthy start in life!



Did you know?

Babies use signals or cues, like cooing and crying, to let you know what they need. Responding to your baby's cues quickly and lovingly will help your baby feel close to you and secure. Talking and singing to your baby as much as possible will help your baby's brain to develop well.

What are the benefits of breastfeeding my child?

- It decreases the chance of you getting breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- It helps you lose more of your **postpartum weight**.
- It helps you feel closer to your baby and **bond with your baby**.
- Breast milk has all the energy and nutrients that your baby needs for the first few months of their life.
 - It will help with your baby's **brain development**.
 - It has components that boosts your baby's **immunity**, which will protect them from infectious diseases that can cause diarrhea and pneumonia
- There's also lots of **long-term benefits**



Breastfeeding FAQs

Please refer to our QR code for more information and other resources



What if my milk doesn't come in right away?

- Don't worry, for some it might take a few days for their milk to come in.
- You can **express breast milk yourself by hand or by pump** and keep having **skin-to-skin contact** with your baby no matter how you feed them.
- Ask your doctor or midwife to send you to a **lactation consultant** who can teach you tips and tricks about breastfeeding.
- To increase supply, you can hand express (use your hand to massage your breast and release milk) and/or breastfeed in the **first hour after you deliver**

If you need to supplement with infant formula, you can speak to your healthcare provider to see if this is appropriate for you. Remember that fed is best!

How do I know if my baby is hungry or getting enough milk?

Early Cues: I'm hungry, time to feed me

- Stirring, licking lips
- Mouth opening
- Turning head Seeking/rooting

Mid Cues: I'm really hungry, feed me now

- Stretching
- Hand to mouth
- Increasing movement

Late Cues: Calm me, then feed me

- Lots of movement
- Crying and may turn red
- Calm crying baby before feeding
Cuddling, skin-to-skin on chest.
Talking, stroking.
Feed me!

Image credit: Noodle Soup

You can tell if your baby is getting enough milk by counting their wet and dirty diapers. In the first week of their life, they should have:

DAY 1	1 wet diaper; 1 black stool  
DAY 2	2 wet diapers; 1-2 black or brown stools   
DAY 3	3 wet diapers; 2-3 lighter brown stools   
DAY 4	4 heavy* wet diapers; at least 2 yellow stools  
DAY 5	5 heavy wet diapers; at least 2 yellow stools  
DAY 6	6 heavy wet diapers; at least 2 yellow stools, may be runny and seedy  

"Heavy wet diaper" = about 3 tablespoons of water added to a dry diaper

Image credit: York Region Public Health

Some signs that your baby is hungry:

- Licks their lips, sticks out their tongue
- Moves head around to look for food
- Sucks on nearby objects
- Fussy, crying

Intimate Partner Violence

What is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

IPV refers to patterns of **physical, sexual, financial, spiritual, digital and/or emotional violence** by an intimate partner (current or former). IPV can occur regardless of whether an intimate partner lives in the same household as you.

IPV impacts people of all genders, age, socioeconomic, racial, educational, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. However, **women are impacted** by IPV at much higher rates.

What local resources are available to help with IPV?

- Local women shelters
- Local hospitals
- Local police
- Assaulted women helpline
- 24hr crisis line
- Local sexual assault/domestic violence treatment centres
- Child protection services
- Counselling service providers
- multicultural and Aboriginal service organizations

Identifying IPV:



Physical abuse: intentional or threatening use of physical force, including pushing, hitting, cutting, punching, slapping, shoving, or use of a weapon to threaten or harm. Denying access to healthcare, destroying property, or restricting assistive devices for disability.

Sexual violence: denying or forcing sexual acts without consent, use of sexually degrading language or unwanted sexual comments. Forcing someone to continue a pregnancy or to have an abortion.

Emotional/psychological abuse: insults, humiliation, intimidation, or threats of harm, threats to take away children. To harm or threats of harm to pets. Stalking or harassing behavior, and isolating from friends or family.



Financial abuse: control or misuse of money, assets or property. Control of a partner's ability to access finances, a job or education.



Spiritual abuse: using a partner's beliefs to belittle, manipulate, or control them. Forcing or restricting participation in religious activities/organizations.



Digital abuse: using technology to cause virtual or in-person harm including watching and listening to a person, tracking their location, or to scare, intimidate, or humiliate a person.

Mental Health During & After Pregnancy

Pregnancy and the period after pregnancy, also known as the **prenatal** and **perinatal** period, can be a hard time for your mental health as you are experiencing many changes in your life. Not only are there changes to your body, there are many changes to your role, identity and life.

What are the Baby Blues?

The Baby Blues are **very common**. Up to **80%** of people experience this after childbirth.

The Baby Blues may begin after childbirth for up to a few days or weeks. **What to expect?**

- feelings of sadness
- feeling tearful and crying
- sleeping and appetite problems
- feeling anxious

What to do? This is very normal and symptoms should resolve on their own within a few weeks. Get as much **rest** as you can, **accept help** from family and friends if possible, and **take care of yourself**.



if you have thoughts of hurting yourself or your child, or are thinking about suicide, get help right away.

- call 911
- go to the nearest hospital emergency room
- contact the mental health crisis line in your area (on our QR code)

Mental Health During & After Pregnancy



Please refer to our
QR code for more
information and
links to resources.



What is Postpartum Depression (PPD)?

A type of depression that can begin anytime after childbirth and can last for weeks up to a year. Depression can happen during pregnancy too.

These feelings can be scary, but remember that you are not alone. **1 in 5 women will have depression or anxiety during pregnancy or postpartum.**

Unlike baby blues, these feelings **last longer than 2 weeks** and are more severe.



If you have PPD you may:

- have little or no interest in things you used to enjoy
- feel sad, nervous, or anxious most of the time
- feel tired, irritated, hopeless, or frustrated
- have no appetite, energy, trouble sleeping, or sleep too much
- have thoughts of harming yourself or the child

What does treatment for PPD look like?

Treatment for PPD is similar to treatment for any other depression in a woman's life.

Examples of what PPD treatment may be for you:

- Psychotherapy — talk therapy, mental health counselling
- Medications — antidepressants
- Support groups; more social support from family/friends

If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider.

PPD should be treated by a professional, and it CAN get better.

What can I do to take care of my mental health?

- **Talk with people you trust** about how you are feeling.
- Consider **joining a group for new mothers** or seeing a therapist.
- **Sleep.** If you live with a partner/helper, take sleep shifts, and try to get as much sleep as you can.
- Recognize that what you are feeling is **normal**.
- Access supports around you to help you cope.



Social Work FAQs



"I am pregnant and don't have health insurance. What healthcare can I get without insurance?"

If you don't have an Ontario Health Care Plan (OHIP) or are waiting for OHIP to cover for you, you can look into the following low-cost health services:

- **Community Health Centres (CHC)** – non-profit organizations that provide primary health care for individuals, families, and communities.
- **Getting care from Midwives**– midwives services are covered for uninsured clients. Midwives can support you in planning for possible costs during your pregnancy and also help you negotiate payment plans for hospital and medical care.

"How can I get public health insurance?"

To be eligible for OHIP, you must meet some criteria outlined by the Ontario government. Please refer to the resources page for more information.

If you are ineligible for OHIP and live in Ontario, your newborn or child may still be eligible for OHIP coverage, if they are:

- Born in Canada
- A Canadian Citizen
- Physically present in Ontario for at least 153 days in any 12-month period

Note: OHIP does not cover all medical costs. We recommend checking with your doctor or hospital who can tell you if a treatment or service is covered.

Please refer to our QR code for more information and links to resources.



Social Work FAQs

"I am pregnant and working. What programs are available to assist me?"

The government of Canada offers programs and services to assist working mothers who are expecting a baby:

- **Employment insurance** - *provides maternity and parental benefits to people who are away from work because they are pregnant, have recently given birth, or have to care for a newly adopted child.*

If you are self-employed and have registered for employment insurance, you may also be eligible to receive maternity and parental benefits.



"I do not have employment insurance. Am I eligible for any baby or child benefits?"

Canada Child benefits, which offers the following:

- single-monthly payments
- tax-free benefits
- targeted at low and middle-income families

Child disability benefit, which offers the following:

- benefits for families who care for children under the age of 18 with severe and prolonged impairments in mental or physical functions
- tax-free benefits

"I am new to Canada, where can I find support for myself and my child?"

If you recently moved to Canada and don't have family support, it might be helpful to connect with communities near you who can provide support. These include:

- *Cultural & language groups or organizations*
- *Places of worship (i.e. church, mosques, temples)*
- *Drop-in programs for pregnant women*
- *Connect with a social worker*



SHORWA-E-TARKARI (MEAT & VEGETABLE SOUP)

PREP TIME

15 mins

COOK TIME

2 hours

SERVINGS

4

Ingredients

- 6 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 lb meat on the bone
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomatoes
- salt and pepper
- 8 oz potatoes
- 1 15 oz. can red kidney beans, rinsed
- 4 oz carrots
- 2 oz fresh cilantro
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- ½ tbsp ground turmeric

Directions

1. Peel, halve and roughly chop the onions. Peel and cut potatoes into ½ inch cubes. Scrape carrots and cut into slices about 1/2 inch thick. Chop garlic cloves.
2. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the onions over a medium to high heat until golden brown and soft.
3. Add the minced garlic and the meat. Mix well and cook for about 10 minutes until the meat is cooked through and a thick sauce forms.
4. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, coriander, turmeric, salt, and pepper, mix well.
5. Pepper and 3 to 4 cups of water. Bring to a boil, then turn down the heat and simmer until the meat is almost cooked about 1 to 1½ hours depending on the type of meat cooked.
6. Now add the potatoes, carrots and garbanzo beans and cook for a further 20 to 30 minutes or until the vegetables are cooked.
7. Wash the cilantro, remove the stalks, and add to the soup.
8. Cook for 5 mins or so, adding a little more water if required.
9. Serve with a fresh naan.

TORAI KI SABZI (ZUCCHINI CURRY)

PREP TIME

20 mins

COOK TIME

30 mins

SERVINGS

4

Ingredients

- ½ cup grapeseed oil
- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 5–6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 inch piece ginger, crushed
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 medium tomato, cubed
- 1 tsp salt, or more to taste
- ½ tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp black pepper powder
- ¼–½ tsp red chili powder
- 3 large green zucchini, peeled and cut into half-moons
- 1 small green chili pepper, sliced
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro, for garnish

Adapted from teaforturmeric.com

Directions

1. Heat oil in a nonstick skillet over high heat. Add the onions, and sauté until they are lightly golden (~8–10 minutes).
2. Lower heat to medium and add the garlic, ginger and cumin seeds. Sauté for ~1 min. Add the tomato, salt, coriander powder, black pepper powder, and red chili powder. Sauté for a minute, then stir in the zucchini and ¼ cup of water. Mix well, ensuring that the zucchini is well coated.
3. Cover and cook on medium heat for 7–10 mins, stirring once. Once most of the water has dried up, use a wooden spoon to break the zucchini into pieces. Add the sliced green chili pepper & turmeric and sauté for a few mins.
4. Lower the heat to the lowest setting, cover and continue to cook for 15–20 minutes, stirring half-way. If you're afraid it will stick to the pan, add a splash of water. Uncover and stir well. If needed, raise the heat to high to sauté any extra moisture for 3–5 minutes. Taste and adjust salt.
5. When the water has completely dried up and the zucchini is very well cooked, turn off the heat and garnish with cilantro, if desired. It is typically eaten with roti or naan but you can serve it with any type of bread or rice.

TEFF POLENTA WITH ETHIOPIAN CHICKEN STEW Part 1

PREP TIME

20 mins

COOK TIME

25 mins

SERVINGS

4

Ingredients

For chicken stew:

- 1 tbsp sweet paprika
- 3/4 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cardamom or 4 cardamom pods, crushed to reveal the seeds
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more for seasoning the chicken
- 3 lbs bone-in chicken parts
- Salt, to taste
- 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopping
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- about 1 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth

Adapted from oldwayspt.org

Directions

To Prepare Chicken:

1. In a small bowl, combine the paprika, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, cayenne, and pepper. Set aside.
2. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a heavy Dutch oven or saucepan wide enough to hold the chicken in one layer. Brown the chicken, skin side down, over high heat in two batches. Set the chicken aside.
3. Reduce the heat to medium-high. Stir in the onion, adding extra 1 tablespoon of oil, if needed. Cook over medium-high heat until the onion begins to soften, about 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the ground spices and cook, stirring frequently, for 20 seconds.
4. Stir in the chicken broth, taking care to release any browned bits sticking to the bottom of the pot. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat to a simmer, and return the chicken to the pot, browned side up. Cover and simmer until the chicken is tender and registers 165°F on an instant-read thermometer in the thickest part, 25-45 minutes, depending upon the size of the pieces. Add more broth or some water if the mixture becomes dry. Skim off the fat.

TEFF POLENTA WITH ETHIOPIAN CHICKEN STEW Part 2

PREP TIME

20 mins

COOK TIME

25 mins

SERVINGS

4

Ingredients

For the teff polenta:

- 1½ cups teff grain (not flour)
- 1 tsp salt, plus more to taste
- freshly ground black pepper

Directions

To Prepare Teff Polenta:

1. While the chicken is cooking, bring 4 1/2 cups water to boil in a kettle. Set a heavy 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the teff and toast it, stirring frequently, until the grains emit a mild toasty aroma and begging to pop, 3 to 6 minutes. (You will notice little white dots of popped grain but may not hear the popping.)
2. Turn off the heat. Stand back to avoid getting splattered, and gradually stir in the 4 1/2 cups boiling water and the salt. Stir well. Reduce the heat, cover, and cook at gentle boil until the grains are tender and the mixture develops a porridge-like consistency, 15 to 20 minutes. Stir every few minutes to prevent the grains from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Break up lumps by smashing them against the side of the pot. Add more salt, if needed, and pepper to taste.

YUM WOON SEN (THAI GLASS NOODLE SALAD)

PREP TIME

30 mins

COOK TIME

SERVINGS

2-3

Ingredients

- 2 oz bean thread noodles
- 3 shrimp peeled and deveined
- ½ lb ground pork mixed with 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 3 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 roma tomato, sliced
- 1 shallot, sliced thin
- 2 celery stalks, sliced thin
- 2 green onion (white parts cut small and green parts in 1 inch pieces)
- 1-2 thai birds eye chilis, chopped fine, or Red pepper flakes
- 2 tbsp roasted peanuts or cashews for garnish

Directions

1. Place dried noodles in room temperature water for 10 mins.
2. Mix 1 tbsp soy sauce with ground pork and set aside.
3. Combine fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, and chopped chili pepper together in a small bowl.
4. Once noodles have softened, drain water and cut with kitchen scissors to make them shorter.
5. Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Place softened noodles in boiling water and cook for 30 seconds. They should be soft and clear at this point. Drain and place in a mixing bowl.
6. With the same boiling water, reduce heat to a simmer and add shrimp. Cook gently for about a minute or until shrimp are pink. Remove and place in same bowl with noodles.
7. Empty the water from the pot and fill it up with fresh water until it covers a thin layer on the bottom of the pot. Have heat on medium and add ground pork to the pot with water. Break up pork and keep stirring until the pork is full cooked.
8. In the mixing bowl with the noodles and shrimp, add the cooked pork with some of the cooking liquid. This prevents the salad from being too dry.
9. Now add the dressing, sliced tomatoes, shallots, celery, and green onions. Toss to incorporate. Garnish with peanuts. **24**

