



TEACHER GUIDE

Letters from Your Unborn Baby My First Month



Dear MOM,

You are my mom. I am your baby. You may not even know yet that I am here. In about eight months, I will be born. Did you miss your monthly period? When you miss your period, you may be pregnant. This is the best way to know I am growing. The doctor will ask when your last period was. Did you mark the calendar? That helps the doctor determine my birthday.

ABOUT ME

The first day of my life began when dad's sperm fertilized an egg in your body. This single, fertilized egg divided and became an embryo. My heart is developing and my brain and lungs are forming. *All of those parts are growing and I am only the size of a grain of rice!*

ABOUT YOU

You won't have your period until after I am born. You can forget the usual body changes during your menstrual cycle, but you may feel other physical changes:

A general tired and sleepy feeling,
nausea and vomiting,
heartburn and indigestion, and
food cravings.

Luckily, you can make some of these problems go away by having a healthy lifestyle. Not all women experience these changes. You may not feel any different at all. I have some tips to help you during pregnancy. I want you to have a safe and happy pregnancy Mom. I like calling you Mom!

Now that you are pregnant it is important that you see a doctor as soon as possible. To find out about health care for pregnant women call Planned Parenthood, the local health department (WIC), or your doctor.

DO YOU EAT RIGHT, MOM?

What you eat is important to both of us. At every meal, you need to eat foods to help us grow. We can find healthy foods that you like to eat. Try to follow these guidelines for healthy eating:

1. Eat a variety of foods.
2. Aim for a healthy weight by staying within your calorie needs of your pregnancy.
3. Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
4. Include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts in your eating plan.
5. Choose foods low in *trans* fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
6. Be physically active each day.

There are three more guidelines for healthy living for the two of us:

7. Limit foods with caffeine, like coffee, sodas, and chocolate.
8. Practice living an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle.
9. Breastfeed me.

MyPyramid.gov

MyPyramid.gov (<http://www.mypyramid.gov>) provides nutrition information based on the 2005 dietary guidelines that can help you plan a healthy diet.

It is important to eat food from all five food groups (Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk, and Meat & Beans) every day. This is so our bodies will grow and stay healthy. Grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat foods give you energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Choose low-fat, low sugar, and whole grain foods. I will grow best if you eat a variety of foods from the five food groups.

Note: Folic acid, found in some fruits, vegetables, dried beans and fortified grains, is important for the normal development of my brain and spinal cord. Talk to your doctor about making sure we get enough folic acid in our diet. The best way to prevent brain and spinal cord defects is to have adequate folic acid in your diet before you become pregnant.



GO FOODS: Grain Group

Bread, pasta, rice, hot and cold cereal, tortillas and crackers give you energy. These **GO FOODS** keep your body running all day and night. You need to eat about 6 ounces of foods from this group every day and half of those choices should be whole grain foods. That sounds like a lot but the servings are not big. A one ounce serving is one slice of bread, 1/2 cup of pasta or rice, four crackers, or 1/2 of a bagel.

Good Sources of folic acid: Fortified cereals and enriched breads and pasta.

GLOW FOODS: Fruit and Vegetable Groups

Raw and cooked fruits and vegetables and juices will give you energy, vitamins, minerals and fiber. Vitamins and minerals in your diet will make you healthy and glowing. You should eat at least 2 cups of fruit and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables every day. One serving (1/2 cup) a day should be high in vitamin A, and two servings (1 cup) a day should be high in vitamin C.

Good Food Sources of VITAMIN A

Carrots
Apricots
Cantaloupe
Spinach
Pumpkin/Squash

Good Food Sources of VITAMIN C

Citrus fruits
Broccoli
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Green pepper

Good Food Sources of FOLIC ACID

Asparagus
Spinach
Orange juice
Broccoli
Romaine lettuce

GROW FOODS: Milk Group

Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, ice cream, and pudding provide you with energy, minerals and protein. Protein is needed for you to **GROW**. Calcium is needed to make your bones and muscles work. Milk has a lot of calcium. If you don't like milk, or if you can't drink it, there are other ways to get protein and calcium. You can also try low-lactose versions of your favorite dairy products, or try Lactaid™ drops in your milk. You need to have 3-4 servings (1 serving = 1 cup milk, 1 cup yogurt, 2 oz. cheese) each day of foods from this food group. Tell your doctor if you are not eating dairy foods. He may recommend you take calcium supplements.

GROW FOODS: Meat & Beans Group

Meat, poultry, fish, legumes, eggs, cheese, peanut butter, nuts, and tofu are foods that provide minerals and protein in your diet. Protein foods are very important to help us **GROW** strong. Did you know that our muscles, hair, skin, blood and bones are all made from protein? You will need to eat **at least** 5 1/2 ounces each day of foods from this food group. ***If you do not include 3 cups of milk (or milk equivalent) in your diet everyday then you will need to eat more foods from the Meat & Bean Group each day.*** Note: One-fourth cup of cooked dry beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or 1/2 oz. of nuts and seeds count as 1 ounce of meat. **Caution:** Hot dogs and luncheon meats should be reheated until steaming hot to reduce your risk of getting listeriosis which is a bacteria infection that can be harmful to me and you. Eating fish twice a week is probably safe for me but check with your doctor because there are some fish (shark, swordfish, tilefish and king mackerel) you should never eat while pregnant with me or breastfeeding me because they may contain too much mercury. ***Good Sources of folic acid are cooked dried beans, lentils, and peanuts.***

PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT

Are you tired a lot? Do you feel sick in the morning? Do you have an upset stomach? Lots of pregnant women have some of these discomforts, usually during the first trimester (3 months) of pregnancy. Some of your discomforts may lessen or go away after the first trimester.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT:

Fatigue

You may be tired and that is expected. Even if you eat nutritious foods, your body is still working extra hard to get ready for me. If you are tired, do not fight it. Take a nap or go to bed early. Slow down if you are not feeling your best. Others can help with your chores and responsibilities. You will feel like yourself again soon. When you feel tired, a nice walk in fresh air may make you feel better.

Nausea and Vomiting (Morning Sickness)

Many pregnant women have morning sickness in the first trimester. You may feel sick to your stomach and may not feel like eating. Many women have morning sickness in the morning but others have it in the afternoon or evening. There is no cure for morning sickness, but there are ways to control it.

WAYS TO CONTROL “MORNING SICKNESS”

- 1. Get out of bed slowly. Sudden movement can make you feel sicker.*
- 2. Eat dry crackers, toast or popcorn in the morning. Keep these by your bed to eat when you wake up.*
- 3. Eat small meals throughout the day so your tummy is never empty.*
- 4. When cooking, open windows or use a fan to get rid of strong smells.*
- 5. Stay away from greasy, fried or spicy foods or any foods that upset your stomach.*
- 6. Have a sour snack like a piece of hard candy or lemonade to get rid of a queasy/nauseous stomach.*

SEE A DOCTOR SOON!

While you are pregnant the doctor will take care of us. You can talk to our doctor about questions, or problems you have. Write down questions you think of so you don't forget them. A doctor will ask you questions to determine if you need vitamin supplements and give you information about what could be harmful to me.

TELL YOUR DOCTOR WHEN:

You are nauseous or vomiting more than twice a day.
Water or blood is leaking from your vagina.
You have a fever over 100°F or you have bad headaches.
You have pain in your belly.
Your hands or feet swell.
Your vision becomes blurry or you see double.

Remember, Mom, please see a doctor.

I am so glad that you care about me mom. I can't wait to meet you. Thank you for taking care of yourself.

Love,

Your Baby

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