



TEACHER GUIDE

Letters from Your Unborn Baby My Fourth Month



Dear MOM,

How are you today? I hope that you are feeling good and eating healthy foods for both of us. I have a lot to tell you.

ABOUT ME

I am curled up inside you. If I stretch out, I am about 7 inches long. I weigh 3-4 ounces. My digestive system is forming and I have hair on my head and eyebrows.

Since I'm growing so much, I need a lot of food, oxygen and water. All this comes through a layer of tissue called the placenta. The placenta acts like a screen, letting in what I need and carrying out waste material. My link to the placenta is a tube called the umbilical cord.

ABOUT YOU

You probably are starting to look and feel like you are pregnant. Your clothes may be getting tight. It is time to think about getting some comfortable clothes so you feel good and can move around easily. Now is the time to buy or borrow some roomier outfits that you feel comfortable and pretty wearing. Today you can find maternity clothes that are very stylish and fun to wear. If you don't want maternity clothes, just wear anything that is big enough for you.

Be sure to get support bras to wear during pregnancy. You will feel more comfortable in a bigger size. Wear comfortable, low-heeled or flat shoes that are better for your back and easier for walking.

Sometimes you may feel down. You may not like getting bigger. You may worry about your future. These feelings are normal. Everyone has them. Don't let them get you down. Talk about your feelings with someone. It can help just to talk.

You may begin to feel me move this month. This movement is called "quickening". It is very faint, and I am excited that you can feel that I am really here.

PROTEIN

Your appetite may be getting bigger, because I am growing so fast now. You need protein mom, for you and for me too. We both need protein to grow. You need protein for the normal growth of your uterus (womb), breasts, placenta (afterbirth) and for making more blood cells. The

amount of blood you have will increase 50% during your pregnancy. There are a lot of new blood cells to make. All of these new tissues are made with protein.

I need protein too. My skin and hair are made with protein. My brain and muscles are too. Mom, please eat enough protein to make my brain grow as big as it needs to grow. I want to be strong and smart.

Since we both need protein please remember to eat **at least** 5 1/2 ounces of foods from the Meat & Bean Group and 3 cups of milk or milk equivalents (1 cup yogurt, 2 ounces cheese) every day. ***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.***

HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU NEED EACH DAY?

5 1/2 ounces of meat, fish or poultry

OR these count as 1 ounce of meat:

- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup of dry beans or peas, cooked
- 1/2 ounce of nuts
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

3-4 cups of milk

Note: Teen moms need 4 servings of calcium-rich foods.

Some protein foods come from animals. Some come from plants. Animal foods include beef, pork, chicken, milk, cottage cheese, eggs, and ice cream. Plant foods are dry beans, dry peas, peanut butter, and also bread and cereal foods. Try to eat protein foods from both animals and plants.

OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

Drugs you buy in the store without a prescription can hurt me. If you take aspirin, antacids, laxatives, cough syrup or high doses of some vitamins, I may be born with birth defects.

Ask your doctor before you take any medicine or drug. Sometimes there are safe drugs that you can take that help you and don't hurt me.

As a general rule, only take medication that your doctor knows about. If you get sick, talk to your doctor to learn about a safe treatment. Ask the doctor to tell you which medicines are okay for me. This is important. Some medicines you take can hurt me and I want to be all right. Be sure to ask the doctor before you take anything, even aspirin tablets.

CAFFEINE

Caffeine is often found in “empty-calorie” beverages and food like coffee, tea, soda and chocolate. There is also caffeine in some over-the-counter drugs. Caffeine is a stimulant. Caffeine makes you feel alert and stay awake. Caffeine can be addictive. If caffeine can do that much to your body mom, think what it can do to my little body!

Please try to avoid those “empty-calorie” foods and beverages that have caffeine. Replace the caffeinated beverages you drink with nutrient-rich choices such as milk and 100% fruit juices that are good for me. While you are pregnant, try one of these beverages:

Water with a lemon twist	Cranapple juice
Cranberry juice	Tomato juice
Cherry juice	Decaffeinated drinks
Berry juice	Milk shakes (not chocolate)

It is sometimes hard to cut down the amount of caffeine you have. If you have difficulty going without caffeine talk to your doctor for advice.

Here's a recipe for a quick banana shake:

QUICK BANANA SHAKE

Yield: 2 servings

1 overripe banana	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup skim milk	dash of ground cinnamon
1/3 cup nonfat dry milk	

1. The night before, peel, wrap in plastic, and freeze an overripe banana.
2. Combine in a blender: milk, nonfat dry milk, vanilla, and cinnamon.
3. Cut frozen banana into chunks and add to the blender.
4. Puree until smooth.
5. Serve right away.

ORANGE SMOOTHIE

Yield: 6 servings

1 1/2 cups milk (reconstituted non-fat dry milk may be used)
6 ounce can frozen orange juice concentrate, softened
1 1/2 cups water
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
1 teaspoon sugar

1. Pour the milk into a large bowl.
2. Add the other ingredients.
3. Using a hand beater or mixer, mix well until the mixture is foamy.
4. Serve at once.

DRINKING WATER

Throughout the day it is important to drink plenty of liquids. You should drink 8 glasses of liquid a day. Water is best, but fruit juices, milk, soups, and decaffeinated beverages count. Some neighborhoods have unsafe drinking water. The water may have high levels of nitrates (chemicals) or lead (a mineral).

Nitrates or lead are a risk to your health and my health if too much gets in your body. Nitrates and lead can build up in your body and damage the brain, blood cells and kidneys. I am much smaller than you and small amounts of nitrate and lead will harm me.

If you are not sure about your drinking water, call the local health department or call the water company in your area.

ARE YOU GETTING READY?

Are you getting ready for my arrival? Do you know how much it will cost? The doctor and the hospital stay will be separate bills. Do you have hospital insurance? This helps pay for my birth and our hospital care. Can you save the money before I arrive? Then, you can pay the bills right away. You can enjoy playing with me, instead of worrying about bills. Won't that be fun?

Are you working now, Mom? You probably can work through your whole pregnancy. Ask the doctor for sure. Light work will not hurt us. Exercise won't hurt us either. Let's go for a walk today!

I have many other things to tell you. I have some more growing to do. Eating protein foods will help me grow better, Mom. I will talk to you again next month.

Love,

Your baby

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