

## Water For The Both of You

Proper nutrition during pregnancy or while breast-feeding is an everyday challenge that can have profound effects on you and your baby. Although you may already know what to eat, you may not think of water as a nutrient. But water is essential for good health- both yours and your baby's. So if you are...

- Learning about the critical role of fluids during pregnancy and breast-feeding,
- Finding it difficult to meet your daily quota of fluids, or
- Curious about which fluids are best,

...then this handout is for you.

With this common sense approach, you'll receive practical ideas for getting enough of the fluids you need, especially water. And if water sounds tasteless and boring to you, there's good news. Adding lemon to water can help you enjoy more of a good thing- and perhaps settle your stomach if you feel a little queasy.

If you are dealing with morning sickness, you'll appreciate real-life tips from Miriam Erick, M.S., R.D., a leading authority and award-winning expert who has helped countless women relieve the miseries of morning sickness. She is the author of *No More Morning Sickness* and *Take Two Crackers and Call Me in the Morning*, and has years of clinical experience as an obstetric nutritionist at a major Boston teaching hospital.

### **Why Are Fluids So Important?**

Water makes up 55 to 75 percent of adult body weight- that's about 10 to 12 gallons- so it's no wonder that it's an essential nutrient that must be consumed daily. All body tissues- blood, lean muscle, body fat and bones- contain water. Even a tiny deficit, such as losing just 2 to 5 percent of your water weight, can affect your well being, especially during pregnancy or breast-feeding.

### **How Much Is Enough?**

During pregnancy, your blood's volume can increase up to 50 percent. Add heightened metabolism, production of amniotic fluid and other bodily changes, and you can see why you need more fluids. While pregnant or breastfeeding, it's absolutely essential that you meet your daily requirement of **8 to 12 cups of fluid a day**- or even more if you feeling thirsty. Keep in mind that smaller women might need a little less fluid, while larger women and those expecting multiple births **or living in warmer climates might need a little more.**

### **Why Do You Feel Thirsty?**

Thirst is an important regulator of fluid intake. When your body's fluid levels are low, your body concentrates and fluid is drawn from the salivary glands into the bloodstream. The result: your mouth feels dry, which prompts you to drink. But you shouldn't rely on thirst to tell you to drink. By the time your mouth is parched, you've probably lost two or more cups of your total body water. The key is to drink often because thirst is satisfied long before you have replenished lost fluids. Excessive thirst, or drinking lots of water and still feeling thirsty, may be signs of gestational diabetes. Be sure to speak to your midwife.

## Water...It's Your Best Bet

Because water is naturally low in sodium, has no fat, cholesterol or caffeine, and is quickly absorbed by your body, it should be your top choice in helping you reach your daily fluid intake. Milk and 100% fruit juices are good choices too, since they supply other important nutrients besides water. They should count toward part of your daily goal. Foods high in water like fruits and vegetables (especially melons, citrus fruits and salad greens) can also help. Limit your intake of caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea and certain carbonated drinks which can have a diuretic effect. Avoid beer, wine and liquor altogether.

## Real Essentials

Bottled lemon juice is an easy, convenient way to add refreshing flavor to water because it's ready to use with no messy or time-consuming squeezing. And once opened it stays fresh in your refrigerator for months. Bottled lemon juice is more consistent than fresh lemon juice, so you know exactly how much flavor you are adding every time- important if your stomach is easily upset. Just remember that three tablespoons of bottled lemon juice is equal to the juice of one lemon.

## Just a Splash of Lemon Juice Adds a Lemony Sparkle To...

Plain water  
Club soda  
Seltzer

Mineral water  
Ice Chips

...and can help get you well on your way to drinking your essential 8 to 12 cups of fluid each day.

## Variety Helps Too

Sometimes a little variety can help you get those extra few cups of fluid you need. Enjoying these refreshing, quick-to-fix lemon recipes can be just the trick. Of course, feel free to vary the sugar and lemon juice as well as serving temperature to meet your personal taste and tolerance.

### Lemony Iced Tea

(Makes about 7 cups)  
6 c. unsweetened decaf tea  
¾ cup sugar  
1/3 c. bottled lemon juice

### Apricot Cooler

(Makes about 6 cups)  
2 c. apricot nectar  
2 c. unsweetened pineapple juice  
1/3 c. bottled lemon juice  
1 (12 ounce) can Ginger Ale  
(add Ginger Ale just before serving)

### Lemonade

(Makes about 2 quarts)  
1 c. sugar  
1 c. bottled lemon juice  
6-1/2 c. cold water

Mix well and serve over ice, or partially freeze, then whirl in a blender for a delightful slushy drink!

## How Fluids Can Help

You should always be aware of the warning signs of dehydration, which are gradual and progressive. They include:

- \* Thirst
- \* Fatigue
- \* Weakness
- \* Dizziness
- \* Intolerance to cold

It's important that you heed these signs and rehydrate with plenty of fluids. If you have not been able to eat or drink anything for 24 hours, inform your midwife immediately. You may also experience a variety of discomforts while pregnant, such as constipation, heartburn or fluid retention. Getting enough of the right kinds of fluid may help to alleviate these symptoms.

## Constipation:

You may experience a natural slowing of your digestive tract, which can lead to constipation. The best advice is to eat generous portions of fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, and to drink

plenty of water. Some women get relief from the natural laxative effects of prunes and figs. Others find that warm water or hot water, enlivened with bottled lemon juice, helps.

### **Heartburn:**

Caffeine can cause heartburn flare-ups, as can too much food. If you suffer from heartburn, try avoiding caffeinated foods like chocolate and coffee, and do not overeat.

### **Fluid retention:**

Moderate swelling in the ankles, hands, and wrists is to be expected while pregnant. Experts recommend drinking more, rather than less, water to help reduce fluid retention and maintain normal body functions for electrolyte and fluid balance.

## **Helping To Relieve Morning Sickness**

As you may already know, the miseries of “morning sickness” can strike at any time, day or night. No one knows for sure what causes morning sickness, but current thinking suggests a surge in pregnancy hormones which multiply rapidly during the first few weeks after conception.

Morning sickness often subsides after the first trimester, but not always. The good news is that it’s usually a sign of healthy pregnancy. If you suffer from morning sickness, you are not alone. Fifty to 90 percent of moms-to-be suffer from some degree of morning sickness. Symptoms range from minor queasiness to severe vomiting that can put you at risk for dehydration and weight loss.

Unfortunately, traditional remedies don’t always work. Some women respond well to the age-old practice of “cracker therapy.” Eating solid foods and drinking liquids separately is another common tactic, but it’s not a cure-all. The important thing is to find what works for you.

### **Try these strategies to relieve morning sickness:**

- Identify smells that trigger nausea. A heightened sense of smell can make normally pleasing odors offensive.
- Become a food sleuth. You may be especially sensitive to a food’s texture, flavor, temperature or aroma. Discover what foods make you feel good and eat more of them.
- Drink fluids to avoid dehydration. Though it’s difficult to get enough fluids when you are nauseated, that’s when you need them the most. Experiment to find what works best for you. We often recommend adding a splash of lemon to water because for many it has an appealing flavor and soothing fragrance.