The Wellness Family

Dr. Gerken Keeps You Informed

Preparing for Two

It is rare for great nutritional advice to be provided to women considering becoming pregnant; since our western lifestyle typically leads to unhealthy and out of balance choices. Your Family Wellness Chiropractor can often provide nutritional and healthy lifestyle information to his or her patients and if you're considering becoming pregnant, you're an ideal candidate for such advice.

The first question to ask your Chiropractor is: what does the body require to have a healthy pregnancy? The answer would be: the whole food concept. To eat a balanced diet you need to understand that living a "whole foods" rather than "processed foods" lifestyle is best for you and your future baby.

Balanced Whole Food Diet

Living a "whole food" lifestyle isn't as difficult as it may sound. The most important thing to remember is that living food is healthy food. Some areas to focus on would be the following:

- Proteins and Iron – These can be found in organic, grass fed or hormone and antibiotic free beef, lamb and poultry. Eggs will give additional Vitamin A. Additional sources of Iron can be found in wheat germ, bran, nuts, parsley and molasses
- Essential Fatty Acids and Protein – These can be found in fatty fish (salmon, black cod, etc.), and fish oil supplements should be a part of any health conscious woman's diet
- Dairy Products – These are a great source of calcium and protein, however, your diet should be balanced with other healthy calcium sources, such as: soy products, nuts, seaweed products, wheat germ or wheat bran
- Beans, Legumes and Green Leafy Vegetables – These will provide you with fiber, protein and other essential vitamins for a healthy balanced diet
- Folic Acid and Vitamin B – These are found in a diet containing whole grains, nuts and diary products; and mono-unsaturated fats can also be found in nuts and avocados. Berries will provide you with valuable antioxidants as well as additional vitamins and phytonutrients

When considering dietary changes for your health and the health of your unborn child, remember that living foods do not come in boxes or packages. They will not be found in the aisles of your grocery store, but in the meat, dairy and produce section.

Pre-Conception Lifestyle Changes

A wellness pregnancy doesn't start while you're pregnant, but four to twelve months prior to conceiving. One of the first things you should do, after deciding to have a baby, is speak with your Family Wellness Chiropractor about healthy nutritional advice. The vital first step in having this discussion will be to provide your Chiropractor with a nutritional journal for one week so that he or she can review your lifestyle of eating and drinking. Often it's not how much you're consuming that will concern your doctor, but rather what you're eating.

"…It's important to make the right choices now, not after you're pregnant."

When reviewing your diet journal, your Doctor of Chiropractic is going to be looking for the following specific areas of concern:

- Missed meals (usually breakfast)
- High carbohydrates
- Low proteins
- Unhealthy fats
- Processed foods
- High caffeine
- Other chemicals

The average busy woman is going to have several, if not all, of the above concerns evident in her dietary

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journal and your Chiropractor will take at least a few months to alter your eating habits. Remember that there are several reasons behind these necessary changes and your unborn child's health and wellness is at the core.

Dietary Changes

One of the most popular dietary "problems" is a high intake of caffeine, known to decrease the opportunity of conceiving and slightly increase the likelihood of miscarriage in the first trimester. With the specialty coffee craze not going away, and the high consumption of diet drinks, we are living in a caffeine-driven society.

If you're one of the many women with an addiction to caffeine, your Doctor of Chiropractic is going to encourage you to slowly eliminate this habit; but no one will expect you to stop cold-turkey. If you are currently consuming five cups of coffee a day, it would be wise to immediately reduce that to four cups of coffee a day. By reducing your coffee intake by just one cup a day every two weeks, you could easily have your coffee or green tea consumption down to just one cup a day within a few short months.

Many women who drink diet sodas for caffeine are equally addicted to the carbonation. As you slowly reduce your intake of diet soda you can increase your intake of carbonated water to satisfy your fizz need. Like coffee drinkers, it's important to follow your Family Wellness Chiropractor's advice, and try to reduce your intake of these chemicals. Pre-conception, a soda or two per month will not be a problem, but as you get closer to your conception window you will eventually want to eliminate this from your diet completely until after you have your baby.

Eating Whole Foods

The saying is true: breakfast is the most important meal of the day. A great start will contain protein (eggs), vegetables and legumes. For example, a scrambled egg with light steamed spinach and black beans wrapped in a whole grain tortilla can be an easy way to fuel your body.

Throughout the day, you're going to want healthy snacks to keep your energy up; these should include raw fruits and nuts, dairy and soy products. These could include a handful of raw almonds and a sliced apple or a slice of avocado mixed with black beans. These choices will be much healthier than a diet soda and a few cookies or crackers.

Whether you're eating at home or going out to lunch or dinner, you can make healthy choices with a few simple substitutions.

- For meat – choose broiled chicken or fish
- Instead of rice, potatoes and other white starches – choose green vegetables
- Instead of soda or coffee – have a glass of water
- Instead of desserts high in fat and processed sugar – choose fresh berries and yogurt

In Summary

Changing your eating and drinking lifestyle is vital for the health of you and your future baby. With all the unhealthy choices out there, it's important to make the right choices now, not after you're pregnant. In reality, implementing a healthier eating lifestyle and making it part of your everyday living could have a huge impact on how you feed your entire family in the future.

For more information visit:

www.mothering.com
www.fitpregnancy.com

Dear Patient,

Dr. Gerken is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. Take a moment today to ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor any questions you may have regarding your pregnancy or prenatal dietary health choices.

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