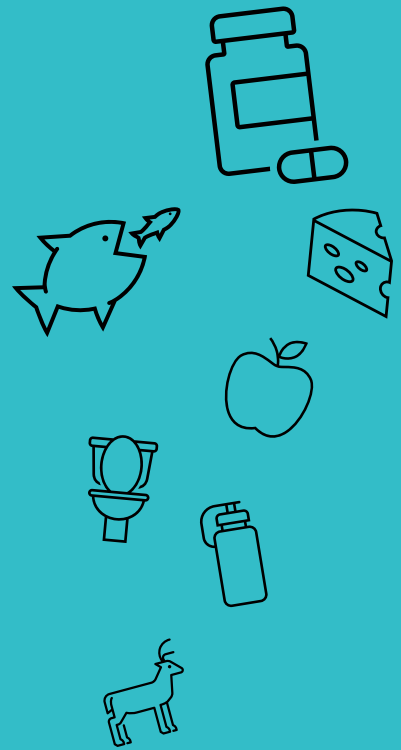


Let's Talk Prenatal Nutrition

How to use the topic card



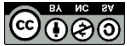
Jun 2024

Contact and acknowledgements

Jun 2024

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For more information, please contact: publichealthnutrition@ahs.ca

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Starting the conversation

Client-led conversations are an important piece of providing client- or person-centred care. When conversations are focused on the client's interests, they are more likely to make successful health changes.¹ This User Guide may help you use the **Let's Talk Prenatal Nutrition: Topic Card** with your clients who are pregnant.

How to use the Topic Card

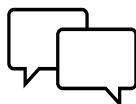
1. Show your client the Topic Card.
2. Invite them to **pick one or more topics** that they want to learn more about by asking questions such as:
 - “What would you like to talk about today?”
 - “Would you like to go through the topic titles together?”
3. With the first topic, start with a general question, such as:
 - “What about this topic interests you?”
 - “Can you tell me what you know about _____?”
4. Use your client's responses to guide the conversation.
 - What does **your client** want to talk about?
 - Do **they** have specific nutrition goals?
5. Small goals can help your client make meaningful behaviour changes.
 - “If you feel ready to make a change, what changes would you like to make?”

Prompting questions, key points, and resources to assist you in your conversation are available within this guide. If your client is unsure of what to discuss, any of the first four topics in the User Guide is a good place to start the conversation. See [Appendix A](#) for more information on client-centered conversations with individuals. Also, see [Appendix B](#) for tips on facilitating client-centred conversations in group visits.

In this User Guide, you will find:



Questions to start a conversation



Key points for you to consider



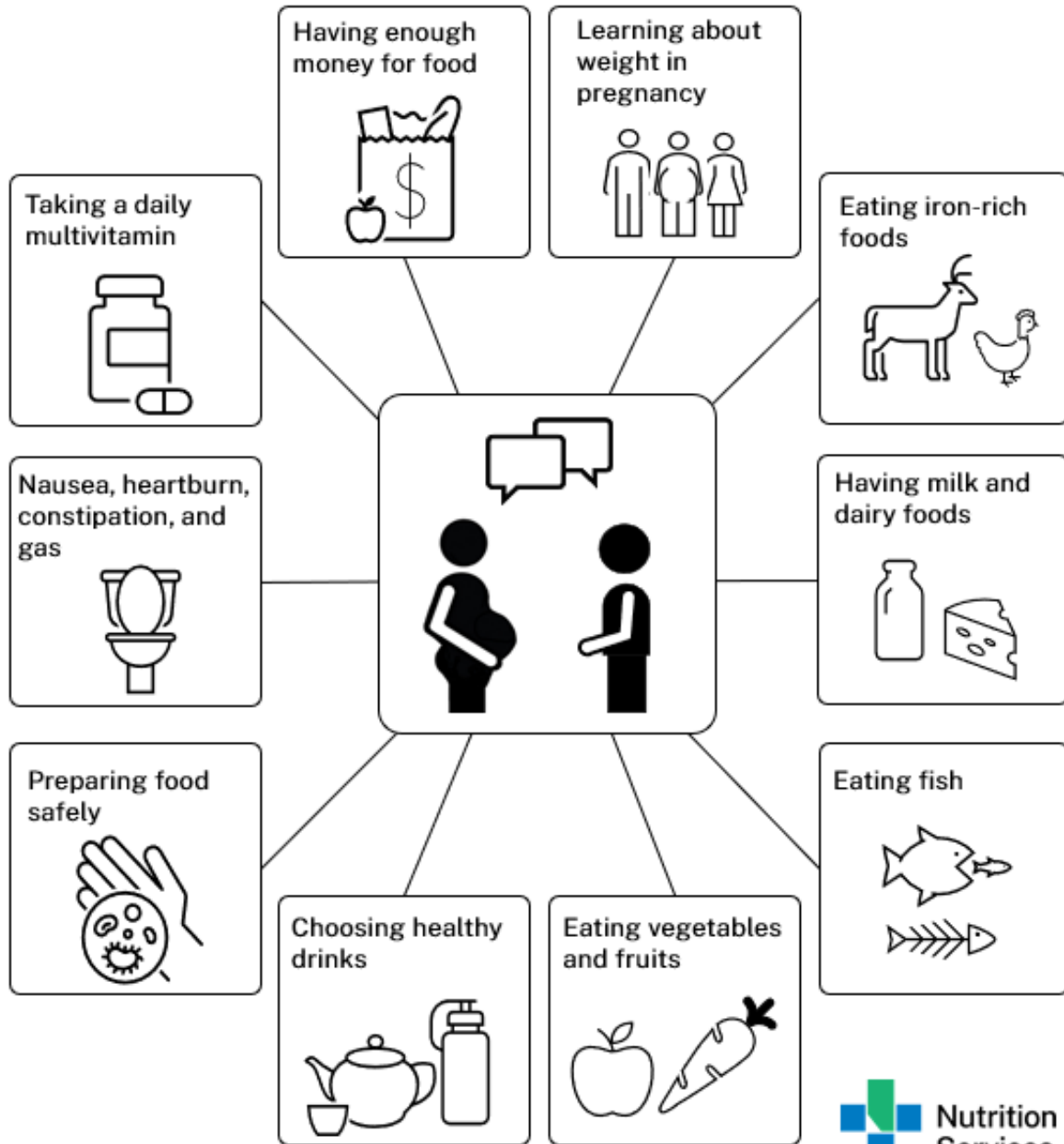
Resources to offer your client – scan and search by title

This User Guide is not a script. Instead, it cues you to engage with your client to support:

- your client's healthy eating journey
- what your client wants to learn about
- your client's ability to make change

Let's Talk Prenatal Nutrition: Topics

What would you like to talk about today?



When to refer to a dietitian

Dietitians are available to support you and your client. If your client agrees, refer to a dietitian if your client:

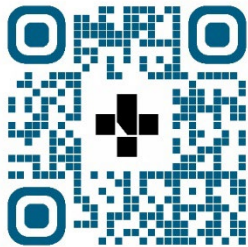
- had a low body weight (based on body mass index) before becoming pregnant
- has concerns about weight during pregnancy
- is less than 19 years old and pregnant
- has a limited diet and you're worried they aren't getting enough nutrition. This may be due to:
 - food allergies
 - food aversions
 - cultural limitations
 - having enough money for food
- would like to learn about 'special diet' funding

You can refer your client to a dietitian:

- [Referring Patients for Nutrition Services: Information for Health Professionals](#)

If your client has a nutrition question or would like to see a dietitian, they can self-refer to a dietitian through Health Link:

- ahs.ca/811 > Click on "Nutrition Information," or ask your client to scan the QR code:



Having enough money for food



Questions to start a conversation

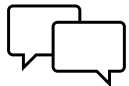
What made you choose this topic?

Do you ever have trouble getting enough food?

Would you like to talk about ways to help you have enough money for food?

Keep in mind:

- This is often a sensitive topic for clients.
- You can offer resources and community supports but may not be able to fix your client's concerns.
- Offer resources they can access to get help.
- Offer a referral to a social worker or other provider who can also help.
- See the additional provider resources in [Appendix C](#).



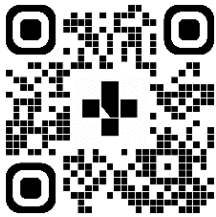
Key conversation points

- What supports have you accessed already? I can tell you of others in the community.
- Have you spoken to a community support worker? They can help find out what benefits you qualify for.
- Are you taking a prenatal vitamin? I can help you access one.
- Is transportation an issue? Let's talk about some other ways to get food.

To offer clients

[MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca)

Learning About Food Insecurity:
Not having enough money for food



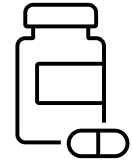
Add contact information to the note below for important community resources. Share this information with your client.

Contact information for community support

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Taking a daily multivitamin

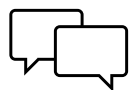


Questions to start a conversation

What questions do you have about taking a multivitamin?

How often do you take a multivitamin?

What challenges are you having with your multivitamin?



Key conversation points

- It sounds like you are doing well taking your prenatal vitamin every day. Is there anything else you would like to know about this?
- Prenatal clients can get some multivitamin supplements for free.
- More is not better. One dose daily is enough for most pregnant people. If you suspect the client needs more, refer to a dietitian or doctor.
- Choose a multivitamin with the recommended amounts of folic acid, iron, and vitamin D.

To offer clients

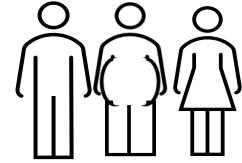
[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout:

Take a Multivitamin When Pregnant



Learning about weight in pregnancy



Questions to start a conversation

What questions do you have about weight in pregnancy?

What do you already know about weight in pregnancy?

Would you like to learn more about weight in pregnancy?



Key conversation points

- Gaining a healthy amount of weight helps your baby develop and grow.
- Eating well and moving your body during pregnancy will help you have a healthy weight gain.
- Not much extra food is required in the first trimester.
- During your second and third trimesters, you need more energy to support the growth of your baby. Most of your weight gain happens in the second and third trimesters.
- You may gain weight a little faster or slower each week.
- You do not need to be weighed at every appointment if you do not want to be. Talk about weight gain in pregnancy with a healthcare provider you trust.

To offer clients

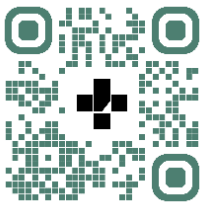
[Healthyparentshealthychildren.ca](https://healthyparentshealthychildren.ca)

Search for “pregnancy weight gain” or “weight gain calculator”

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout: Nutrition when Pregnant with Twins, Triplets, or More

HealthyParentsHealthyChildren



Nutrition when Pregnant with Twins, Triplets, or More

Planning and starting your pregnancy will help you have the healthiest babies possible. Healthy eating helps you provide your babies with the nutrients and help you receive from your babies.

Where can I get information on healthy eating?

A registered dietitian working with you understand how much food you may need. Ask for a referral as early in your pregnancy as possible. This is especially important if you:

- are not eating many kinds of foods
- are not getting enough energy
- are having problems or are losing weight
- are having problems with your blood sugar
- are under 18 years old
- have other medical conditions that may affect your nutrition.

The general pregnancy advice on this conversation card may not apply to you.

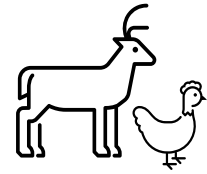
Why is weight gain important when expecting a baby?

Good weight gain in pregnancy helps you and your babies stay healthy. It also helps you have the length of your pregnancy you were hoping for.

Recommended amount of weight gain for twins:
How much weight you need to gain depends on your pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI).

Pre-pregnancy BMI	Total weight of weight gain
<18.5	Varies with your healthcare team
18.5-24.9	27-29 kg (60-64 lbs)
25-29.9	14-23 kg (31-50 lbs)
≥30 or more	11-16 kg (24-35 lbs)

Talk with your healthcare team about how much weight you need to gain for twins or more.



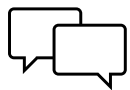
Eating iron-rich foods

Questions to start a conversation

Do you know what kinds of foods you eat already that have iron?

Are you having trouble getting enough foods with iron?

Would you like to talk about how to include some other foods with iron?



Key conversation points

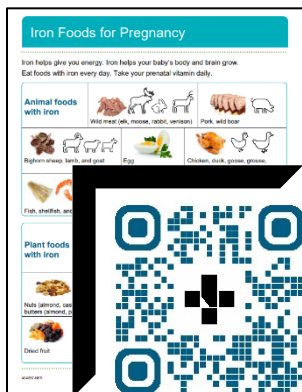
- You are already doing well choosing foods with iron. Would you like to hear about other foods that have iron?
- Iron helps give you energy and helps your baby's body and brain grow.
- If someone has anemia during pregnancy, they may need an iron supplement.
- Eat every 2–4 hours while you're awake to make sure you and your growing baby get the important nutrients you need.

To offer clients

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout:

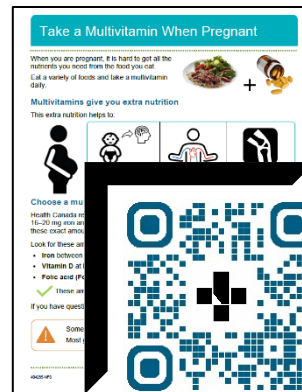
Iron Foods for Pregnancy



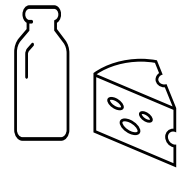
[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout:

Take a Multivitamin When Pregnant



Having milk and dairy foods

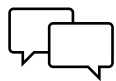


Questions to start a conversation

What would you like to know about dairy foods in pregnancy?

Do you eat any dairy foods?

Would you like to talk about how to include milk and dairy foods?



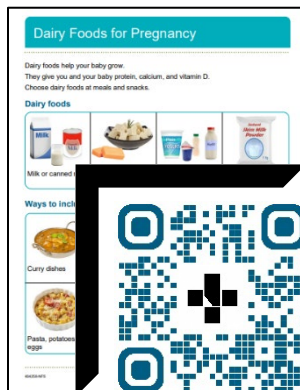
Key conversation points

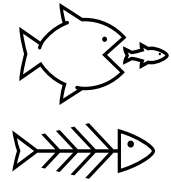
- You might already be eating these foods, but there might be a few you haven't thought of.
- Milk and dairy foods help your baby grow.
- Milk and dairy foods give you and your baby many nutrients including protein, calcium, and vitamin D.
- Eat every 2–4 hours while you're awake to make sure you and your growing baby get the important nutrients you need.

To offer clients

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout: Dairy Foods for Pregnancy





Eating fish

Questions to start a conversation

What would you like to know about eating fish in pregnancy?

Do you enjoy eating fish?

Would you like to talk about how to include more fish?



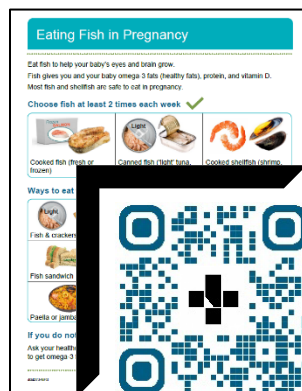
Key conversation points

- If you would like to continue eating fish, I can tell you about more strategies to try.
- Eat fish to help your baby's eyes and brain grow.
- Fish gives your baby omega-3 fats (healthy fats), protein, and vitamin D.
- Most fish and shellfish are safe to eat in pregnancy.

To offer clients

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout: Eating Fish in Pregnancy





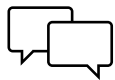
Eating vegetables and fruits

Questions to start a conversation

What would you like to know about eating vegetables and fruits in pregnancy?

What vegetables and fruits do you enjoy?

Would you like to talk about how to include more vegetables and fruits?



Key conversation points

- Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables and fruits are all good choices.
- Try making half of your plate vegetables and fruits.
- Eat every 2–4 hours while you're awake to make sure you and your growing baby get the important nutrients you need.

To offer clients

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for handout: Eat More Vegetables and Fruits

[Canada's food guide](#)

Eat More Vegetables and Fruits

Did you know...?

- Vegetables and fruits have fiber and potassium. These help lower blood pressure and lower risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Eating plenty of vegetables and fruit can help lower your risk for some types of cancer.
- Canada's Food Guide encourages eating plenty of vegetables and fruits every day. Choose different textures, colors, and shapes to try each time.
- Frozen and canned vegetables and fruits can be just as healthy as fresh, and they're easy to use.
- Choose whole or cut vegetables and fruits instead of juice. Read your label that some concentrates are high in sugar.

Cooking tips

- Try cooking vegetables like baking or roasting.
- Mix dry vegetables using a small amount of oil or butter. Add nuts or seeds for extra crunch.
- Avoid deep-frying.

Shopping tips

- Buy fresh, frozen, or canned.
- Wash thoroughly with an edible oil and avoid eating.
- If you are buying organic, look for the organic label.
- Buy more vegetables that are in peak season for the best quality.

Alberta Health Services

Canada's food guide **Eat well. Live well.**

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

Have plenty of vegetables and fruits

Canada's food guide **Healthy eating recommendations**

Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat. It is also about where, when, why and how you eat.

Be mindful of your eating habits:

- Eat more often
- Reduce portion sizes
- Cook more often
- Plan what you eat
- Listen to your body

Enjoy your food

- Eat slowly
- Eat with others

Make it a habit

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits every day

- Choose 50% plant-based meals
- Choose 100% whole grains
- Choose 100% fat-free dairy products
- Choose 100% lean meats
- Choose 100% low-sodium products
- Choose 100% low-sugar products

Discover your Canada.ca



Choosing healthy drinks

Questions to start a conversation

Can you tell me what you already know about healthy drinks?

What kind of drinks do you enjoy?

Do you know how much water you need during pregnancy?



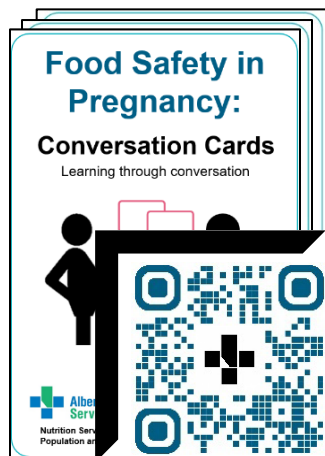
Key conversation points

- Small steps can add to big results. You may already be doing a lot of these and that is great.
- A person who is pregnant needs about 10 cups (2.5 L) of fluid daily. This amount includes foods with high-water content (fruit, soups, and smoothies).
- Water is the best choice.
- Cow's milk or fortified soy beverage can provide calcium, vitamin D, and protein.
- Getting enough to drink each day can help with constipation.
- Nausea, vomiting, gas, heartburn, and feeling full quickly can make it difficult to get enough to drink when pregnant.
- Refer to the food safety conversation cards if clients have questions about caffeine or alcohol.

To offer clients

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for: Food Safety in Pregnancy Conversation Cards





Preparing food safely

Questions to start a conversation

What questions do you have about food safety in pregnancy?

What do you already know about food safety?

Would you like to talk about what foods and drinks to avoid in pregnancy?



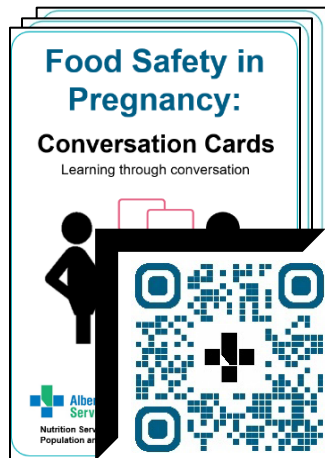
Key conversation points

- Some of this information might be new to you, and some may be a refresher.
- Your immune system is weaker while you are pregnant. This makes it easier to get sick from the bacteria in certain foods.
- Some substances are passed onto your baby through the placenta.

To offer clients

[Nutrition Education](#)

Search for: Food Safety in Pregnancy Conversation Cards



References

1. McMillan SS, Kendall E, Sav A, King MA, Whitty JA, Kelly F, et al. Patient-Centered Approaches to Health Care: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Med Care Res Rev* [Internet]. 2013;70(6):567–96. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077558713496318>
2. Santana MJ, Manalili K, Jolley RJ, Zelinsky S, Quan H, Lu M. How to practice person-centred care: A conceptual framework. *Heal Expect* [Internet]. 2018;21(2):429–40. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/hex.12640>
3. Ekman I, Swedberg K, Taft C, Lindseth A, Norberg A, Brink E, et al. Person-Centered Care — Ready for Prime Time. *Eur J Cardiovasc Nurs* [Internet]. 2011;10(4):248–51. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejcnurse.2011.06.008>

Appendix A: Client-centred conversations

Client- or person-centred care is an approach where the client plays an active role in their own healthcare.^{2,3} There are different tactics you can use to support client-led conversations. If you are new to this approach, try some of the tips below:

Listen to understand

When we listen to understand what the client is saying, we can better support their learning goals. When we listen to respond, we might miss what the client is trying to tell us.

- Ask for more details on what they are saying.
- Summarize what they have said to ensure you understand.
- Show empathy by validating what your client is telling you. Recognize that how they feel is valid or reasonable given their circumstances.

Seek to understand

- What the client already knows
- What they want to learn
- If they have any misinformation
- What are they already doing? **Emphasize your client's strengths, and what they are already doing well.**

Watch to understand

Clients can communicate with their actions and reactions (verbal and nonverbal communication). Different cultural practices and different personalities can also change how clients respond. Check-in with your clients often to see if they understand, if they'd like to continue, or if they'd like to wrap up.

Appendix B: Client-centred group visits

Client- or person-centred care is an approach where the client plays an active role in their own healthcare.^{2,3} There are different tactics you can use to support client-led conversations during group visits. If you are new to this approach, try some of the tips below:

Listen to understand

Share the Topic Card with participants by passing around a few copies, or bringing it up on a screen. Ask participants what topics they are interested in.

Seek to understand

Find out more about your participants. Inquire how far along each participant is, if this is their first pregnancy, or if they have other children at home. Many participants may have knowledge to share.

Ask about:

- What clients already know.
- What they don't know.
- If they have any misinformation.
- What are they already doing.

Watch to understand

Clients can communicate with their actions and reactions (verbal and nonverbal communication). Different cultural practices and different personalities can also change how clients respond. Check-in with your clients often to see if they understand, if they'd like to continue, or if they'd like to wrap up.

Appendix C: Health provider resources

Nutrition in Pregnancy

The [Let's Talk Prenatal Nutrition](#) has information to help you support your pregnant clients.

Nutrition for Pregnancy & Lactation: Information for Health Professionals (ahs.ca/PrenatalNutritionHP)

- Here you can find: Nutrition guidelines
- Client resources
- Tools to support your practice

Learn more about household food insecurity:

Household Food Insecurity: Actions in Healthcare (ahs.ca/FoodInsecurity)

Here you can find:

- Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products (includes information on prenatal multivitamin funding)
- Nutrition Guideline: Household Food Insecurity
- Client resources: Access to Food