Nutritional Guide for Multiple Birth Pregnancy

### Food Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Number of Daily Servings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk &amp; Milk products</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breads and cereals</td>
<td>8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, fish, poultry and alternates</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please refer to Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating for information on portion sizes.*

**Use in moderation:** Fats and oils (example: butter, margarine, salad oils). This food guide will provide you with about 2000-2600 calories. It meets the nutrient needs for the second and third trimesters of the average, healthy woman expecting twins or triplets. The foods listed here are to guide you only, as the needs of each individual will vary. If this is not enough food for you, more servings can be selected from the food groups. Small, frequent meals, with snacks, may help you eat the larger volume of food and aid with the control of heartburn.

Following is a sample menu that incorporates foods from the Food Guide for a Multiple Pregnancy.

#### Breakfast

- 1/2 grapefruit
- Shreddies and Milk
- Whole wheat toast with margarine

#### Lunch

- Baked beans or chicken leg and bread, margarine
- Spinach & Tomato Salad with dressing
- Banana
- Milk

#### Snack

- Yogurt
- Bran muffin
- Cheese & crackers
- Hard boiled egg
- Fresh fruit
- Carrot & turnip sticks

#### Supper

- Pasta
- Tomato meat sauce
- Grated cheese
- Steamed zucchini or broccoli
- Milk Pudding

#### Alcohol should be avoided and caffeine consumed in moderation. (E.g. coffee, tea, chocolate, soft drinks such as colas)

You will need an iron and folic acid supplement for your multiple pregnancy and your doctor prescribes these. Your doctor or dietitian can advise if there is a need for further vitamin supplementation and if so, which ones. Salt (sodium) should not be restricted. Moderate amounts may be used at the table or in cooking.

### Weight Gain For Multiple Pregnancies

Studies have shown women who gain 35-50 pounds (16-21 kg) with their twin pregnancies, have healthier babies. The weight gain pattern for twins and a singleton in the first trimester is the same. In the second and third trimesters, you can expect to gain about 1.5 lbs. per week (0.75kg). By 24 weeks gestation, you will likely have gained 24 pounds and by 32-36 weeks, 32-40 pounds.

**Reminder:** All weights noted are suggested amounts recommended for the average, healthy woman.

**Triplets and Quadruplets:** A suggested weight gain for a triplet or quadruplet pregnancy has not been documented. However, one could deduce that a triplet suggested weight gain should slightly exceed that of a twin pregnancy while a quadruplet weight gain should be slightly more than the triplet pregnancy.

**Note:** When weight gain is too low, it could negatively affect the outcome of a pregnancy. Low weight gain affects the hormonal response to the pregnancy and therefore limits intrauterine growth. It is recommended that if at any point in your multiple pregnancy you should feel that you are unable to eat one of the food groups, or are not sure whether you are eating properly, whether you have sufficient vitamin supplements or are unable to gain the recommended weight, ask your doctor for a referral to a dietitian.

Adequate fluids are important and 6-8 glasses of fluids per day are recommended.
References

- Canada Food Guide To Healthy Eating
- Nutritional Guidelines for a Multiple Pregnancy, by Pauline Brazeau-Gravelle and Julia Watson-Blasioli, printed by the Ottawa General Hospital; May 1997
- Calgary Foothills Hospital, Clinical Nutrition Services

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