

Dr. Tom Brewer's

# Blue Ribbon Baby Pages

## **PREGNANT?...and want a healthy child?**

by Thomas Brewer, M.D.

### **Introduction**

You are one of over 3 million women who have a baby in the United States every year.

In recent years pregnant women in our country have been less healthy than pregnant women in many other countries. An increasing number of premature or "low birth weight" babies are being born. This is primarily caused by the failure of our doctors to recognize the role of nutrition in pregnancy.

Instead of emphasizing *good diet*, many American doctors who care for pregnant women still prescribe low calorie, low salt diets for "weight control". Many doctors also still depend on drugs such as diuretics (water pills) and amphetamines (diet pills) to try to prevent diseases during pregnancy. High blood pressure is typically treated with a low salt diet and bed rest. Some doctors are even using calcium and aspirin for toxemia prevention, but it's not proving as helpful as they'd hoped.

This kind of treatment is often dangerous to both mother and baby. But you can avoid danger by *good nutrition* throughout your pregnancy. We now know that most pregnancy diseases and complications are caused by poor diets - by lack of enough good foods during pregnancy.

The methods of diet described in the following pages were used with success by over 25,000 women in my practice over a 12 year period in the prenatal clinics of Contra Costa County in Richmond, California, USA. And they are used today by many more informed and educated women, with equally excellent results.

When you understand what a good pregnancy diet is and how important good foods really are, you will be able to protect yourself and your baby from many complications.

[Home](#)

[Next](#)

Dr. Tom Brewer's

# Blue Ribbon Baby Pages

## The Dangers of Bad Diet

Forty years of medical research has proved that bad diets during pregnancy cause:

1. Stillborn babies.
2. Low birth weight or premature babies.
3. Brain damaged babies with less intelligence.
4. Hyperactive babies with more irritability.
5. Infection-prone babies with more illness.

**A good diet will protect your baby from these troubles.**

Bad diets cause diseases in mothers too:

1. Metabolic Toxemia of Late Pregnancy (MTLP) - a disease caused by not enough good quality proteins and vitamins in the diet. Women with MTLP suffer convulsions or "fits", coma, heart failure, shock, fat in their livers, bleeding into their livers, and often death for both mother and baby. It is estimated that in the United States 30,000 babies die each year of MTLP and thousands more live with damage to their brains. They suffer cerebral epilepsy and other nervous system disorders.

**A good diet will protect you and your baby from MTLP.**

2. Anemias ("low blood") - caused by not enough iron, vitamins and/or proteins in the diet.

**A good diet will protect you from anemias.**

3. Abruption of the Placenta - a disease in which the placenta (or "afterbirth") breaks loose inside the mother's womb, often before labor begins. The mother bleeds, and the baby dies in 50% of the cases.

**A good diet will protect you and your baby from Abruption of the Placenta.**

4. Severe infections of the lungs, kidneys and liver.

**A good diet will protect you and your baby from severe infections.**

5. Miscarriage - if the mother does not have a good diet, the placenta grows imperfectly and cannot meet the needs of the developing baby, and a miscarriage results.

**A good diet will protect you and your baby from miscarriages.**

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# *Blue Ribbon Baby Pages*



## **What Is A Good, Nutritious, Balanced Diet?**

Every day of the week, you and your baby must have:

1. One quart (4 cups) of milk. Any kind will do: whole milk, low fat, skim, powdered, or buttermilk. If you do not like milk, you can substitute one cup of yogurt for each cup of milk.
2. Two eggs.
3. One or two servings of fish, shellfish, chicken or turkey, lean beef, veal, lamb, pork, liver or kidney.  
Alternative combinations include:
  - Rice with beans, cheese, sesame, milk
  - Cornmeal with beans, cheese, tofu, milk.
  - Beans with rice, bulgur, cornmeal, wheat noodles sesame seeds, milk.
  - Peanuts with: sunflower seeds, milk.
  - Whole wheat bread or noodles with: beans, cheese, peanut butter, milk, tofu.

For each serving of meat, you can substitute these quantities of cheese:

Brick	4 oz.	Longhorn	3 oz.
<u>Camembert</u>	6 oz.	Muenster	4 oz.
Cheddar	3 oz.	Monterey Jack	4 oz.
Cottage	6 oz.	Swiss	3 oz.

4. One or two servings of fresh, green, leafy vegetables: mustard, beet, collard, dandelion or turnip greens, spinach, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, kale, Swiss chard.
5. Five servings of whole grain breads, rolls, cereals or pancakes: wheatena, 100% bran flakes, granola, shredded wheat, wheat germ, oatmeal, buckwheat or whole wheat pancakes, corn bread, corn tortillas, corn or bran or whole wheat muffins, waffles, brown rice.
6. Two choices from: a whole potato (any style), large green pepper, grapefruit, lemon, lime, papaya, tomato (one piece of fruit, or one large glass of juice).
7. Three pats of butter.

Also include in your diet, in addition to the above (i.e., don't count one food in two categories):

1. A yellow- or orange-colored vegetable or fruit five times a week.
2. Liver once a week, if you like it.

3. Table salt: SALT YOUR FOOD TO TASTE
4. Water: Drink to thirst.

**It is not healthy for you and your unborn baby to go even 24 hours without good food!**

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

Dr. Tom Brewer's

# Blue Ribbon Baby Pages

## **Certain Things May Prevent You From Having A Good Diet**

A good diet sounds simple, doesn't it? But it isn't so simple in our society. Many things may happen to keep you from eating and digesting a good diet each day throughout pregnancy.

You may believe that the foods you see widely advertised on TV and in magazines give you and your baby the proteins, vitamins and minerals you need. Foods such as: boxed cereals, enriched white bread, potato chips, soft drinks, candy, french fries, commercial cakes and cookies, provide expensive, useless "empty" calories. When you spend money on these foods, you are not getting your money's worth of good nutrition. The first items to put in your shopping cart are the foods on the good diet list!

Another situation which may interfere with your good diet is the nausea and vomiting, or heartburn, indigestion and loss of appetite which many women experience in pregnancy. This problem must be corrected quickly, with the help of your doctor, so that you can resume your good eating habits.

If you if you are overweight at the beginning of your pregnancy, you may think that now is a good time to try to lose some of that extra weight. Pregnancy is not the time to go on a low-calorie diet. There is evidence that your baby's brain is growing at it's most rapid rate during the last two months of pregnancy. Mothers who follow low-calorie diets risk stunting the growth of their babies' brains.

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

Dr. Tom Brewer's

# Blue Ribbon Baby Pages

## The Doctor May Stand Between You And Good Nutrition

### Misinformation about diet:

You will often meet a doctor, in a private office or in a clinic, who doesn't really understand the life-and-death importance of a good diet for you and your baby.

You may not be told anything about the need for a good diet for you and your baby.

You may be told that diet "isn't too important" for your health and for the health of your unborn child. **Don't believe it.**

You may be told that salt, ordinary table salt, is harmful for you and your baby. **Don't believe it.**

### Misinformation about weight gain:

You may be told to go on a starvation-type diet if you "gain too much weight". Don't go on a starvation diet! The food you eat every day while you are pregnant builds up the bones, muscle and brain of your baby. Pounds gained you are on a good diet protect and prepare you for labor and breastfeeding.

If you gain a few extra pounds during this pregnancy from eating a *nutritious, balanced diet*, it won't hurt you or the baby, even if you gain 50 or 60 pounds. **Worry if you don't gain enough weight.**

### Dangerous drugs:

You may be given "diet pills" to take away your appetite, drugs like Dexedrine or "speed" (amphetamines). Don't take them!

These drugs are not healthy for you. They are not healthy for your unborn baby. Who would give an unborn "speed"? Every drug you take passes quickly into the placenta, then into the baby's bloodstream and body.

Some doctors still prescribe amphetamines to kill the hungry mother's appetite. they also give her an *unnatural* boost. They relieve depression, make her work smoother, and make her feel that she is living a healthier life, even though she is not getting enough to eat. In this way, "speed"

covers her problem of poor nutrition.

You may be given diuretics or "water pills" during your pregnancy. The immediate effect of these pills is to cause your body to eliminate water excessively. They dry you up. Don't take them!

These drugs are *not* needed to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

These water pills have done a lot of harm to pregnant women and their unborn babies. The drugs cause many undesirable, dangerous side effects, including:

1. Loss of appetite
2. Stomach irritation
3. Nausea and Vomiting
4. Cramping
5. Diarrhea
6. Constipation
7. Muscle spasm
8. Jaundice
9. Pancreatitis
10. High blood pressure
11. Dizziness
12. Headache
13. Thrombocytopenia
14. Glycosuria
15. Aplastic anemia
16. Skin rash
17. Weakness
18. Restlessness
19. Photosensitivity

The doctor often prescribes these drugs to "treat" the normal swelling that occurs during pregnancy.

When your feet begin to swell or the ring on your finger gets tight, it is normal *if* you have been eating a good, nutritious, well-balanced diet.

Don't panic. If the swelling is a bother, lie down a few minutes on the sofa and raise your feet above your head. This will usually help. You can do it several times a day if needed.

**Remember: it is not healthy for you and your unborn baby to go even 24 hours without good food!**

[Previous](#)

[Home](#)