Eating for a healthy baby

By Dani Ryan, D.O.

Whether you just found out you are pregnant, or you are planning on expanding your family, the thought of how to eat nutritious foods for your growing baby can raise many questions. What prenatal vitamins are good? What foods help with nausea? No matter where you are on your path to parenthood, keep these tips in mind to help with nutrition.

Vitamins and greens for folic acid

Before and during the first 3 months, the best thing you can do is to take a prenatal vitamin every day. This will support your baby's growth during this time. There are many different brands of prenatal vitamins to choose from, so which one should you get? The most important part of these vitamins is folic acid. If you look at the ingredients, make sure that the vitamin you choose has 400 micrograms of folic acid. This helps support the growth of baby's brain and nerves.

Prenatal vitamins are huge pills, so if you find it difficult to swallow, there are gummy vitamin options that have the recommended amount of folic acid. Let your doctor know what kind you are taking, so they can make sure your care is right for you.

Leafy green vegetables like spinach and kale are other great sources of folic acid. You can easily add a handful of spinach to a fruit smoothie. Spinach does not change the taste, and you can get the folic acid benefits from eating it this way.

Fruits and veggies packed with nutrients

Instead of trying to change your diet 100%, small changes can make a big impact over time to help with healthy eating before and during pregnancy. Adding something simple like an apple can help you achieve daily fruit goals, while also providing strength from food. Apples do not need to be refrigerated, pair easily with nut butter, and are a great source of vitamin C, A, K, folate, and even B6, which helps with nausea.

If apples are not your thing, cucumbers are another great option. They contain very similar vitamins and minerals to apples, help you stay hydrated, and are easy to digest.

To help with nausea, eat often and try to add ginger-based foods and plain fruits and vegetables. Simple foods that are easy to digest help you get important nutrients and are easy to eat with an upset stomach.

The best home treatment that helps with nausea is adding ginger to your diet. If you enjoy tea, consider sipping on an herbal ginger tea. If candy is your thing, consider trying some ginger candies. Keeping the nausea at bay will allow you to eat healthy foods and keep taking your vitamins every day.

There are many important foods that will help your growing baby and keep you healthy during pregnancy. Small changes over time help support healthy eating for your own body while your baby is growing big and strong. Remember that different things work for different women. The journey of motherhood is a beautiful thing, and hopefully a couple of these tips will help you along your path.

Dr. Dani Ryan, D.O., is a family medicine physician at RiverStone Health Clinic. To schedule an appointment, call 406-247-3350.