Good start to life
Healthy pregnancy. Healthy Baby.
The pattern used in this booklet and described below has been developed in consultation with elders and leaders of their respective communities. It is only a symbol of each community and is not a representation of the vast, diverse and rich cultures, languages and values of Maori and Pacific Islander nations.

Healthy pregnancy. Healthy Baby is the second of four booklets in Good Start to Life series. It outlines important information for Maori and Pacific Islander Mums and Dads to plan for a healthy pregnancy.

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COOK ISLANDER
The circle of fifteen stars, found in the national flag, represent the unity between all fifteen Cook Island nations. These nations are Tongareva, Rakahanga, Manihiki, Pukapuka, Nassau, Suwarrow, Palmerston, Aitutaki, Manuae, Takutea, Aitu, Mitiaro, Mauke, Rarotonga and Mangaia.

MAORI
Kowhaiwhai patterning is often used to enhance the original creator’s story. Inspired by nature, this patterning may be interpreted to represent growth and new beginnings.

FIJIAN
Masi cloths are deeply embedded in Fijian culture. The distinctive floral decorative patterning can help pinpoint exactly where in Fiji the Masi was created. The cloth itself contains the spirit of the land it comes from and the essence of the people who created it.

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN (PNG)
The distinctive Bird of Paradise features on the PNG flag, representing the country’s independence. In full flight, this beautiful bird suggests freedom.

FIJIAN INDIAN
Indian heritage and Island living come together through intricate Henna (Mehandi) patterning. The rounded ‘mango’ shape (Ambi) represents Indian origins and is known as the national fruit of India. Mangoes represent abundance, as trees become laden when they come to fruit. Embedded within the Ambi is a shell, representing island life.

SAMOAN
The Sennit and talking stick bring with them power, wisdom and blessing from all of the high chiefs across Samoa. Only a high chief (Matai) or their appointed orator have the authority to use them when speaking.

TONGAN
The Manulua symbol has many permutations across Tonga. All are abstract symbolisations of either two birds in flight or the frangipani flower. Both are potent natural symbols in Tongan culture.
You are pregnant, congratulations!

This is an exciting time for you and your family.

Key tips to remember:

» Eat good food

» Gain a healthy weight, but not too much

» Mum needs extra vitamins and minerals like iron, folate and iodine

» Get your body moving and be active most days of the week

» Stop smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs

» Morning sickness, heartburn and constipation can be part of a normal healthy pregnancy

» Think about breastfeeding. It’s best for Mum and Baby

» Every pregnancy is different

» Dad can help and support Mum in a lot of ways
Eat good food

Everything Mum eats and drinks will affect how Baby grows.

Healthy eating tips

- Eat different types and colours of fruit and vegetables every day
- Choose wholegrain breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- Choose lean meat if you can or cut off the fatty parts
- Choose reduced fat milk, yoghurts and cheese
- Drink lots of water – tap water is cheap, safe and freely available
- Cut down on sugary drinks like soft drink, fruit juice, energy drinks, and sports drinks
- Don't eat junk food like chips, biscuits, coconut buns, fried bread, island donuts and takeaway foods
- Cut down on the starchy veggies like taro, yam, and cassava
- Use less coconut cream
- Avoid alcohol
Foods to watch out for

Mum needs to be extra careful about what food she eats. If not she might get food poisoning which could hurt Baby.

Foods Mum shouldn’t eat when she is pregnant:

- Ready-to-eat cold foods bought from a shop like salads, cold meats and cold chicken
- Soft cheeses like brie, camembert and feta
- Raw or undercooked eggs
- Raw seafood

Food is safe for Mum and Baby if you cook it and serve it hot.

- Don’t leave foods on the stove or bench. Put them in the fridge after the steam has gone
- Reheat leftovers so they are steaming hot and make sure Mum eats it while it is hot
Healthy weight gain

It is normal for Mum to gain some weight during pregnancy for Baby to grow well and be a healthy size. It is important for Mum not to put on too much weight.

If Mum puts on too much weight, she can have problems like:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Being overweight or obese in the future
- Needing to have a caesarean section instead of a natural birth
- Having a large baby
- Difficulty breastfeeding

The heavier Mum is before falling pregnant, the less weight she will need to gain.

Talk to your doctor or midwife about a healthy weight gain for Mum during pregnancy.
What will help to gain a healthy amount of weight?

- Eat whole foods like fruits and lots of veggies
- Be active on most days of the week
- Cut out the sugary drinks
- Cut out the junk foods
- Cut down how much you put on your plate
- Don’t go back for another serve
- Don’t drink, smoke or use drugs

When Mum is pregnant, she needs to eat healthy but it is important not to ‘eat for two’. Mum doesn’t need to eat twice as much.
Extra vitamins and minerals Mum needs

**Iron**

Mum and Baby need iron for strong blood. If Mum doesn’t have enough iron, she might feel very tired.

These foods are very high in iron. If you can, choose from this list first.

- Beef, lamb, pork
- Fish (no bones)
- Chicken (no skin)

Other foods which have some iron are:

- Green leafy veggies like taro leaves, pele/aibika, kapisi/cabbage and watercress
- Baked beans
- Eggs
- Peanut butter

Talk to your doctor or midwife for more information
Folate

Folate helps Mum and Baby to have strong blood. Baby also needs folate to help their spinal cord and brain grow well.

Mum should have folate even before she finds out she is pregnant.

You can get folate from:
- Green leafy veggies like taro leaves, pele/aibika, kapisi/cabbage and watercress
- Breads and cereals (with folate added)
- Broccoli
- Avocado
- Oranges, pawpaw and bananas

Health experts suggest all pregnant women take folate tablets. Talk with your doctor or midwife for more information.
Iodine

Mum and Baby both need iodine to help Baby’s brain grow well.

If Mum doesn’t have enough iodine:

- Baby can have problems with learning
- She may have a miscarriage or stillbirth (not born alive)
- Baby might be born too early

Good foods for iodine:

- Cooked seafood
- Bread (with iodine added)
- Cheddar cheese
- Cooked eggs

Health experts suggest all pregnant women take iodine tablets. Ask your doctor or midwife for more information.
Get your body moving

Mum should exercise and move her body to help:

- Cope with labour and recover more quickly after childbirth
- Return to pre-pregnancy weight and fitness level after Baby is born
- To stay happy and be less stressed

Check with the doctor or midwife to make sure it is okay for Mum to be active, especially if she:

- Has high blood pressure
- Is expecting twins
- Might have baby early
- Has not exercised for a while

Tips:

- Drink lots of water before, during and after exercise
- Wear comfy shoes instead of jandals or slippers
- Be active in the cooler parts of the day or in air conditioning
- Mum’s joints are more flexible during pregnancy, so make sure to stretch, warm-up and cool down
Get your body moving

If Mum hasn’t done much exercise for a while, start slowly and build up to more.

Health experts say Mum should do 30 minutes of exercise on most days.

Good exercises for Mum while she is pregnant:

- Walking
- Swimming and water aerobics (exercise in water)
- Yoga or gentle stretching
- Some types of exercise classes like Zumba and dancing (let your instructor know you are pregnant)
- Pelvic floor exercises (ask your health expert for more information)

It's important for Mum to be active and to rest

Mum - don’t push yourself if you feel tired or unwell.
Mum should stop exercising if she feels:

- Pain in lower belly area
- Any strange ‘gush’ of fluid or blood stains on her undies
- Swelling or pain in lower legs
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Shortness of breath

Mum – pay special attention to your body. If it hurts, STOP! Then make sure you see the doctor or midwife straight away.
Don't smoke. Don't drink.

If Mum smokes while she’s pregnant then Baby is more likely to:

- Be born too early or too small
- Be stillborn (not born alive)
- Get very sick a lot

Kids are more likely to get sick with chest infections, asthma and ear infections if adults smoke around them.

There are people that can help you quit. Call Quitline 13 78 48 or talk to your doctor.

Alcohol is a poison and can hurt Mum and Baby.

If Mum drinks during pregnancy then Baby might have learning and behaviour problems.

There are people that can help you stop drinking. Call Alcohol and Drug Information Service on 1800 177 833.

There is no safe level of alcohol in pregnancy, so Mum should not drink at all.
If Mum smokes marijuana and other drugs while she is pregnant, it can really hurt Baby.

Baby could:

- Have trouble sleeping and eating
- Not be able to stop crying, shaking, vomiting or sweating
- Have the runs or a fever
- Have problems with their memory
- Have problems learning to talk or learning at school
- Be born hooked on drugs and have lifelong problems

Medicines and cultural practices like drinking kava and chewing betel nut can hurt Baby too. Mum should ask the doctor before taking any medicine.
Mental and emotional wellbeing

Pregnancy is an exciting time but sometimes it can be scary and stressful.

There are lots of changes that happen to Mum's body and to Mum and Dad's life. It is important for Mum and Dad to look after their mental health and emotions before and after Baby is born to help cope with these changes.

Signs that Mum or Dad might need support:

- Feeling sad, ashamed or guilty
- Feeling scared or angry
- Feeling like you want to cry all the time
- Don’t want to hang out with family and friends anymore
- Loss of appetite or eating too much
- Much less or much more sleep than usual
- Have headaches, sweaty hands, your heart beats fast and you start shaking
- Thoughts of hurting yourself

What might help?

- Get into a routine – do things around the same time everyday
- Eat healthy meals and snacks
- Be active
- Make sure you find time to rest
- Talk to your partner, family, friends and church groups

There are people that can help you get through tough times. Talk to the doctor, call 13 HEALTH or the PANDA Helpline on 1300 726 306.
Morning sickness

Morning sickness is when Mum is feeling sick and vomiting. This usually happens at the start of her pregnancy and can happen at any time of the day. It may last a few weeks or go on for a lot longer but it will get better.

What might help?

- Eat small meals and healthy snacks
- Have drinks at different times to food and drink water. Other drinks will make you feel worse
- Try to eat foods like dry crackers, plain toast, cheese and crackers, ginger or fruit
- If you vomit, rinse your mouth out with water or milk. Don’t brush your teeth until later
- Fatty and spicy foods will make you feel worse
- Smoking can make morning sickness worse. When you are pregnant, it’s a good time to quit

If Mum can’t keep food or drinks down, talk to your doctor or midwife for help.
Heartburn

Heartburn is when you feel a burning pain in your chest. When Mum is pregnant, Baby can push up against her stomach and give her that burning pain in her chest.

What might help?

• Eating small meals and healthy snacks
• Try not to eat big meals, fatty foods and spicy foods
• Try not to drink tea, coffee and soft drinks
• Do not drink alcohol. It can make heartburn worse and hurt baby
• Do not lie down straight after eating

Mum might need to go to the hospital if she has heartburn plus headaches, spots before her eyes or swollen feet
Constipation

Constipation is when it is hard to do a poo. Your poo might be hard and dry and you may not be able to do a poo very often.

What might help?

• Eat foods that have lots of fibre like:
  - Veggies, fruits, and nuts
  - Baked beans and other beans
  - Grainy breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles

• Drink lots of water

• Be active

If Mum has tried making changes in her diet and it’s not getting better, talk to the doctor
Diabetes in pregnancy

Diabetes that happens during pregnancy is called gestational diabetes. It is when Mum has high sugar levels in her blood.

Mum will need to have a test done one or more times during pregnancy to see if she has it. Maori and Pacific Islander women are much more likely to get this type of diabetes.

It is more common in women who:
- Have type 2 diabetes in the family
- Have had gestational diabetes before
- Are overweight
- Have already had a big baby

High blood sugar levels can make Mum and Baby sick.

Baby can grow too big and have problems during and after the birth.

Have regular check-ups with your doctor or midwife.
Think about breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is best for Baby and Mum. The longer Mum breastfeeds, the better it is for her and Baby.

Breastfeeding can help:

- Keep Baby from becoming overweight and getting diabetes when they are older
- Protect Baby from getting sick from infections
- Keep Mum from getting type 2 diabetes later on
- Protect Mum from breast and ovarian cancer

Breastfeeding is easier when both Mum and Dad know why it’s good
How can Dad help?

To be a good partner and Dad, find out as much as you can about pregnancy.

While Mum is pregnant:
- Read up on pregnancy and talk to other dads
- Go with Mum to antenatal classes and appointments
- Eat healthy and be active with Mum
- Help around the house so Mum can rest up
- Take care of the other kids
- Be patient with Mum – her moods will get better
- Talk to Mum about what help she may need

Mum needs all the help and support that Dad can give.
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CALL 13 HEALTH
(13 43 25 84)

ALCOHOL AND DRUG
Information Service (ADIS)
1800 177 833

These services are confidential with experienced professionals. They can be contacted 24 hours a day 7 days a week.