



# What can I do?

## A guide for partners during pregnancy



**Health**



**Wellness**



**Nutrition**



**Support**

# Introduction

Nutrition plays an important role during pregnancy and our nutritional needs change at different stage. This booklet is part of a series to provide support at each stage of the journey.

Please be aware these booklets are given as guidance. Nutritional advice can be subject to change and any advice given by your midwife or a medical health professional should always be followed.

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## What can I do to help?

Your partner will experience many different symptoms during pregnancy, all of which are completely normal. This can affect the food and drink your partner eats, either because of a lack of energy, specific cravings, or feeling unwell at certain stages.

While you may think there isn't much you can do, the person supporting the expectant mother has a key role in helping them to stay healthy throughout their pregnancy and after giving birth.

This can be challenging, especially if you're trying to balance your own career and a growing family, or if you are supporting someone you do not live with all the time.

Here are some simple ways you can help your partner over the course of their pregnancy...

### Listen and be understanding

The food and drinks your partner asks for during their pregnancy may sometimes seem a little unusual. It could be they suddenly don't like a particular food or meal you make for them, or that they want something unusual for the time of day. This is completely normal, so it's important to be understanding and try and support these changes in taste where possible.

### Help to provide a healthy balanced diet

If you don't usually do the cooking, now is a perfect time to learn a few basic recipes. At several points through the pregnancy and afterwards, it may be up to you to cook and feed both you and your partner.

It may be easier to nip to the local takeaway, but this often increases the amount of sugar, salt and calories in our diets. We also miss out on key nutrients needed for the baby to grow and develop healthily, and increase the risk of excess weight gain.

If you don't already do so, speak to your partner about shopping and cooking and get involved so you're prepared when the time comes.

### Understanding morning sickness

'Morning sickness' (or hyperemesis) is a general term for nausea and vomiting and, despite its common name, can occur at any time of day. When experiencing sickness, it's harder for a pregnant woman to eat and drink as much as she may want to. Being on hand to provide water and regular nutritious snacks can be helpful to keep up her energy levels.

## Remember to look after yourself

Make sure that, while looking after your partner, you take care of yourself too. It's normal to feel overwhelmed at times, but if you are unwell then you are less likely to be able to support your partner in the way they need.

Eating well and staying active are therefore as important for you as they are for your partner. Attend groups and read any materials your partner gets given. The support and advice will help you feel involved as you can listen and support each other.

By getting involved in the details, you will likely find the pregnancy journey highly rewarding. You'll be helping your partner have a more enjoyable pregnancy by supporting her needs when it comes to food and drink. An expectant mum who has a more relaxing and supportive pregnancy is likely to have a less complicated labour and birth, and a healthier baby.

For male partners, Dad Matters can provide support for expectant dads across Greater Manchester to have the best possible relationship with their babies. You can find out more online at [dadmatters.org.uk](http://dadmatters.org.uk).

## Find out more

For more information on healthy eating during pregnancy, speak to your midwife who will be able to advise you further. You can also find a wide range of helpful information online:

### **First Steps Nutrition Trust**

[www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years)

### **Wigan Council Ante Natal Support**

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Health-Social-Care/Children-and-young-people/Health-and-wellbeing/Early-Years.aspx>

### **NHS Ante Natal Support**

<https://www.nhs.uk/antenatal-information>

### **Family Hubs**

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Education/Family-Hubs/index.aspx>

If you would like to learn more or require more information and support, please get in touch.

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