

Here to help

PREGNANCY



Q Since getting pregnant I have been craving red meat, although I've been a vegetarian for years. What should I do?

LAURA PEARSON, AMERSHAM

Your cravings might be telling you that your body needs more iron. For the next two weeks, try eating an iron-rich, balanced diet, with small healthy snacks in between your meals. This will help to balance your blood sugar levels, as well as delivering a good dose of iron. There are many iron-rich foods aside from red meat, including lentils, soya beans, tofu, quinoa, leafy greens, pumpkin seeds, cashews and brown rice. Have your meals with a small glass of orange juice, or squeeze lemon juice over your food – the vitamin C will help the iron be absorbed more easily. If this doesn't reduce your cravings, have a chat with your GP to discuss your concerns. **AM**

Q When do I need to inform my employer that I am expecting?

SARAH CARR, CEREDIGION

If you're planning to take maternity leave from your current job, or claim statutory maternity pay, then you need to inform your employer of your pregnancy at least 15 weeks before your baby's due date, or before you reach 25 weeks of pregnancy. There are benefits to telling your workplace sooner than this, though, as you're entitled to paid time off for antenatal appointments and classes, pregnancy-related sickness is recorded separately, and you'll have more time to plan your maternity cover. **AM**

Q I'm having lower back and hip pain at 34 weeks pregnant. Would a pregnancy support band help?

KELLY FISHER, HARROGATE

Lower back and hip pain are common in later pregnancy, and a pregnancy support band can help ease this by reducing the weight of the baby on your over-stretched ligaments and muscles. To get to the specific cause of your pain, though, I'd recommend seeing an osteopath who specialises in women's health. He or she will offer you a 'pelvic MOT' to identify any misalignment, then prescribe some gentle exercises. You might still choose to wear a support band, but do make sure everything's in the right place first! **AM**



MOTHER & BABY PROMOTION

PREGNACARE BREAST-FEEDING

It's just as important to safeguard your nutritional intake after your baby is born as it is during pregnancy. Try Vitabiotics Pregnacare Breast-Feeding, a comprehensive formulation

of nutrients to provide the recommended level of 10mcg vitamin D, the full RDA of 700mg calcium, and 300mg DHA, as recommended by the Department of Health for all breastfeeding women. Maternal intake of DHA contributes to the normal brain and eye development of breastfed infants.



*A DAILY INTAKE OF 200MG DHA IS REQUIRED IN ADDITION TO THE RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE OF 250MG DHA FOR ADULTS. A BENEFICIAL EFFECT IS OBTAINED WITH A DAILY INTAKE OF 200MG DHA IN ADDITION TO THE RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE OF OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS FOR ADULTS.

Here to help

EATING



Q Is it ok to give bedtime snacks? My 18-month-old often gets hungry just before he goes to sleep.

CAROLINE BARRY, COLCHESTER

It's very normal for toddlers to prefer grazing, rather than eating fewer, larger meals – they have small tummies but quite high calorie needs for their size, because they're growing so fast. A bedtime snack is fine as long as your tot is genuinely hungry and not using it as a tactic to delay bedtime! It may even help him sleep better if he normally wakes from hunger or low blood sugar levels.

Snacks rich in protein and fat will help keep hunger at bay until breakfast. Try smooth peanut butter on an oatcake, full-fat Greek yoghurt, or porridge made with whole milk. **PH**



Q My two-month-old breastfeeds on demand. Will she always do this, or will she get herself into a pattern of feeding as she gets a bit older?

PENNY TINSLEY, STEVENAGE

Your daughter will probably start to settle into some sort of a pattern very soon, and this will help make planning your days easier, though breastfeeding is at least the ultimate portable meal! But be prepared

for these feeding routines to fluctuate and change over time, depending on her growth rates, the weather (she'll be more thirsty when it's hot), illness and even what mood she's in! **PH**



Q How much solid food does a ten-month-old need? Some days my child eats loads, and others she's barely interested.

VANESSA JAGGER, WOKINGHAM

The brilliant thing about small children and babies is that they still listen to their bodies – something most of us adults have stopped doing, unfortunately! As long as your daughter is healthy and growing well, and the food she's eating is nutritious, let her guide you with her own appetite. Start thinking about how much she's eating

over a whole week, rather than day by day, and you'll probably notice she makes up for not eating much one day with eating double the next. And remember that, when she's sitting in on family meals, she's learning valuable skills by watching and interacting with everyone – whether she actually eats the food or not. **PH**