



# Hydration Needs When Pregnant and Breastfeeding



## Why is water important when pregnant?

- You need more water to make extra blood, amniotic fluid, and to support the baby's growth.
- As body weight increases, fluid needs also increase to keep up with metabolic demands.
- Water aids in transporting nutrients to mother and baby.
- Water helps manage the mother's body temperature which is important for the development of a healthy baby.
- Adequate water intake helps reduce fluid retention and constipation.
- Many concerns of pregnancy such as fatigue, nausea, and dry lips, mouth, or skin may be made worse by dehydration.
- Staying well hydrated keeps your minerals in balance which is important for you and your baby's health and well-being.

## How much more water do you need when pregnant?

- Add an additional 1/2 oz per pound of weight gain to the usual 1/2 oz per pound daily hydration requirement.
- The average woman gains 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy which means she needs an additional 12 to 18 ounces of water per day.

## Why water?

- No caffeine
- No calories
- Inexpensive
- Convenient

## Caution:

- These recommendations do not take into account additional water needs due to exercise, perspiration losses, and increased heat production.
- Some medical conditions have special hydration needs. Be sure to consult with your physician.

## Why do you need more water when breastfeeding?

- Breast milk is 87% water.
- If water used for breast milk is not replaced by drinking extra water, it can cause fatigue and irritability for the mother.

## How much water do you need when breastfeeding?

- 1/2 oz water per pound of body weight + 2 to 4 cups per day for optimal breast milk production.
- Water needs are related to the amount of breast milk being made. For example, in the first months of exclusive breastfeeding, a mother usually makes about 2 cups of breast milk per day; while she makes about 4 cups breast milk per day by 6 months.
- Exercise: drink 2/3 to 1 cup per 15 minutes of exercise in addition to water before and after physical activity.

## What if you decide to formula-feed your baby?

- Choose Nursery Water to mix formula—although not sterile, it has a distilled water base so it can be mixed directly with formula or put into a bottle (refer to formula label for instructions or consult your physician). It also contains the precise amount of fluoride to start children off with good dental protection.
- Nursery Water is sold in one-gallon jugs and diaper bag sized individual-serve bottles for convenience. Find Nursery Water at grocery and discount stores.