

# TwoHearts Study - Participant Handbook

## PREGNANCY



### Session 3

Welcome to your final session of this program during pregnancy! This session aims to prepare and empower you with the knowledge and tools to continue to live a heart healthy lifestyle after your baby is born.



As part of this study you were asked to monitor your weight. **Before your next health coaching appointment, please log on to your personalised [Pregnancy Weight Progress Calculator](#) and update your weekly weight (if this is something you are your health coach has discussed doing).** Use the scale weight that you recorded from your Bluetooth Scales, record it in the App.

#### Topic 1. Looking after your Health after Pregnancy and into the Future

Women who experience gestational diabetes or high blood pressure during pregnancy are more likely to develop these conditions again in their next pregnancy, and to develop diabetes or heart disease later in life.

Knowing about this risk can be helpful to plan ahead and get the support (information and practical advice) to stay healthy. Eating well, staying active and having regular health checks can help to reduce the risks of developing pregnancy complications, or diabetes and heart disease later.

After pregnancy, there are a number of health checks recommended for both you and your baby.



[Diabetes checks after gestational diabetes](#)

[Heart disease checks after high blood pressure during pregnancy](#)

## Topic 2. Staying Healthy once your Baby arrives

It's a good idea to start planning how to eat healthily and continue to enjoy physical activity when your baby arrives. Here's some helpful and important information and advice for life with bub.

### 2.1. Supporting your Mental Health once your baby has arrived

Looking after your mental health postpartum is just as important as looking after your physical health postpartum. It will help you to better manage the life changes that will occur once your baby is born, and the positive effects will flow on to your baby.

Normalise all emotions: The first few days and weeks following giving birth are often filled with many emotions. Feelings of excitement, joy, gratitude and happiness are often accompanied by feelings of stress, uncertainty, worry and tiredness. **Your sense of who you are may have changed throughout your pregnancy and following giving birth.** You may find that you:

- Have mixed feelings about no longer being pregnant, your birthing experience, your baby and your role as a parent.
- Have a lot of energy or feel very tired.
- Have emotions that go from happy to sad and back again.
- Feel overwhelmed.
- Feel different about how you look and the changes your body has gone through.
- Feel withdrawn from talking to friends or family, and do not want to attend social commitments.

#### *Tips for a Mindful Motherhood*

During the adjustment period postpartum, it's important to:



Be patient with yourself and your emotions.

Your body has just gone through a big process – the biggest that a person's body can go through(!) – and now you have an infant that's yours to take care of. Take time for yourself when you need to, try to have fun exercising and see loved ones at your pleasure.



Practice self-care and tap into your social and community support systems.

Your maternal health service will connect you with a local mother's group and social/community support is usually provided by local councils.



[Maternal and Child Health Line](#): is a confidential, 24-hour Maternal and Child Health Line can give you information and advice about the care and health of your child (from birth to school age). They provide a telephone helpline, health information and advice, health

service information, advice or counselling, family support and health service referrals. Contact the Maternal and Child Health Line for information and advice on 13 22 29.



Parenting helplines and your GP can also help if you have questions about your baby or your own health during the first weeks at home. [ParentLine](#) is a telephone helpline you can contact on 13 22 89 (8 am to midnight, seven days a week).

## 2.2. Breastfeeding

In this section, we have summarised the breastfeeding guidelines you might like to know. Read through the health benefits of breastfeeding for you and your growing baby, including preventing future health problems.

### *The Benefits*

Breast milk is the main source of energy and nutrients for infants. It is also the main way that they are able to develop their immune, digestive and many other important bodily systems. Your health coach will now discuss the many health benefits that breastfeeding can provide to both you and your baby at each timepoint presented in the image below.

### *How much should I be feeding my baby?*

Young babies will commonly feed 8 -12 times (or sometimes more) in 24 hours. You should feed them whenever they seem hungry or fussy. Feeding times and durations may change as they grow, it is okay to change feeding patterns as your baby needs.

Some babies may 'cluster feed'. **Cluster feeding** is when a baby's feeds are very frequent or *clustered* together. It may happen in the mornings or evenings, but is usually not linked to supply.

### *How long should I be breastfeeding?*

The guidelines recommend you to start breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth, to exclusively breastfeed (if possible) for the first 6 months of life, and then to introduce nutritionally-adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months - together with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond.

See **Resource 1** for the Benefits of Breastfeeding for you and your baby over the first 6 months.

### *What if I am having trouble or find it hard to breastfeed?*

It is important to acknowledge that that exclusive breastfeeding may **not** always be possible for all women. In this case, you should work with your doctor, midwife, lactation consultant and family to create an alternative plan if needed. There are safe, nutritious options such as partial breastfeeding or formula feeding. Be guided by details and resources from the [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#).

### 2.3. Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle After Birth

After your baby is born, you may need to eat more serves of food to get enough nutrients to help your body recover and support your baby. These amounts will vary depending on whether you are breastfeeding or not. The recommended serving sizes for each food group (per day) for women aged 19–50 years who are or are not breastfeeding are listed in the figure below.

Women aged 19–50 years	Fruit	Vegetables, Legumes/ Beans	Grain and/or Cereal	Dairy and/or alternatives (eg. soy, oat or others fortified with calcium)	Lean meats and/or alternatives (eg. eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, legumes)
Breastfeeding (serves per day)	2 serves	7.5 serves	9 serves	2.5 serves	2.5 serves
Not breastfeeding (serves per day)	2 serves	5 serves	6 serves	2.5 serves	2.5 serves

Heart healthy diet principles are equally as important after your baby arrives. Here are some tips and strategies to eat well and stay physically active once your baby has been born, including postpartum nutrition and a safe return to exercise.

#### Let's get SMART!

In this week's goal setting, we will set SMART goals for remainder of your pregnancy. We will also be looking ahead to goals that will help you to create easy, healthful habits for you and your baby after they arrive.

#### Session Resources

**Resource 1** – Benefits of Breastfeeding for you and baby in the first 6mo

#### Resources for After Baby is Born

- Eating and Your Environment
- Getting Organised
- Sleep Postpartum
- Pelvic Floor

#### Quick Access Glossary

<https://mchri.org.au/2hearts/glossary/>