

## Chapter 8: The Mothers Nutrition

Research on the different types of food materials is not in the scope of this book nor can we enumerate the qualities of each because it is a subject that requires consideration at length. Nor is the author an expert on the subject of nutrition. Luckily many useful books have been published on the subject and the readers interested in a more detailed study may refer to such books. But it will not be out of place if we have a cursory look on the subject.

Although the nutrition intake requirement of pregnant women increases, it is a matter of worry that their appetite generally reduces in this condition. Many of them feel listless and dull. In such a state they need to plan to consume concentrates which are foods with lesser bulk and more nutritive value. The nutrients required by the human body are contained in different types of food materials. Therefore keeping variety in the ration of a pregnant woman gives scope for designing ideal feeding program for her.

The experts in this field write:

“To keep the body fit not only food intake is necessary but also it should be a planned mix of food materials taken at planned intervals.”<sup>1</sup>

The mother should ensure that she takes supplemental vitamins and minerals with the morning and evening meals that will help the foetus in the seventh month. This will not only help in the proper growth of the teeth and the gums but also some other important bones of the body.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Giasuddin Jazairi writes:

“Consumption of yoghurt and cheese during pregnancy provides vitamins and fats to the woman and prevents her from consuming many other unnecessary things which she might otherwise be inclined to eat. She should however avoid taking sour yoghurt. Stale cheese may also not taste well. At breakfast she should take a glass of milk and a broth of oats. Vitamin B is present plentifully in liver, kidneys, intestines that are useful foods and should form a part of the pregnant woman’s diet.<sup>3</sup>

It is better that the pregnant women should take milk at regular intervals. This is a complete food and the Prophets in the past were very fond of this food.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says:

"Milk is the food of the Prophets."4

Dr. Giasuddin Jazairi writes:

"Most women feel pain in the limbs and the back due to deficiency of calcium during pregnancy. They also find their nails breaking during this period. They are therefore advised to consume fruits and vegetables that are rich in calcium. They have also to be particular to regularly take soup made from bones of sheep and lemon juice." 5

Generally for people and in particular for the pregnant women the raw and cooked vegetables and fruits are considered good food. The plants derive the nutrients from the soil, water, air and sunlight and store the food for us. All the fruits have good nutritive value but particularly apples, quince, pears, dates are very useful.

Likewise every vegetable has its own nutritive value. Different vitamins and minerals are provided to the body by different food grains, fruits and vegetables. A person who wants to take good care of his nutrition should take a mix of fruits and vegetables and try to eat all the seasons fruits, even if occasionally. Particularly, the pregnant women should make a careful mix of different food materials in their diet. Islam exhorts its people and the pregnant womenfolk to eat fruits and vegetables. A few quotations are given here to prove our point:

Imam as-Sadiq says:

"Everything adorns some place or other and similarly the vegetables adorn the dining area." 6

One day when Imam Ridha' sat for his meal he found the vegetable salad missing from the fare. He told to his servant, "You know that I don't eat food without the salads. Please bring the salads for me." When the salads were brought the Imam commenced his meal.

The Holy Prophet is on record saying,

"Eat quince because it enhances your intelligence, removes worries and makes the child gentle."7

The Prophet also said:

"Eat quinces and present its good fruits to your friends because it improves the eyesight and makes the hearts mellow. The pregnant women too draw lots of benefit from this fruit and their new born children are pretty and healthy."8

"During the last months of pregnancy the women should eat the dates that their children have forbearing natures."9

‘Ali, The Commander of the Faithful, says:

“Eat the dates that they are the cure of all pains.”<sup>10</sup>

There are innumerable traditions of the Prophet and his Infallible Descendants that throw light on the high nutritive value of different fruits and vegetables. Nutritionists can devise ideal diet schedule including appropriate quantities of these fruits and vegetables for various requirements. Consulting a nutritionist or a specialist medical practitioner will be very useful.

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1. Ilm o zindagi, p 462
  2. Biography Pesh uz tawallud, p. 80
  3. Aijaz khurakia, p.223
  4. Bihar al-anwar
  5. Aijaz khurakia
  6. Mustadrak al-wasail, v 3, p. 148
  7. Makarim al akhlaq, v 1, p. 196
  8. Makarim al akhlaq, v 2, p. 116
  9. Makarim al akhlaq, v 3, p. 113
  10. Makarim al akhlaq, v 3, p. 112

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