**HEALTHY NUTRITION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN ~ AN OVERVIEW**

Caloric Needs

The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of calories for women of childbearing age is 2200. An additional 300 calories, or a total of 2500 calories is recommended to reach the increased needs of pregnancy.

Protein Needs

The RDA for protein in women is 44g to 46g. During pregnancy, the intake of protein increases to 60g daily. If protein needs are met, overall nutritional needs are likely to be met as well because of the high incorporation of other nutrients with other foods.

Fat Needs

Only linoleic acid, an essential fatty acid necessary for new cell growth, cannot be manufactured in the body from other sources. Vegetable oils are a good source.

Vitamin Needs

Requirements for both fat-soluble and water-soluble vitamins increase during pregnancy to support for growth of new fetal cells. Vitamin deficiency can result in several problems.

Mineral Needs

Minerals are necessary for new cell building in the fetus. Minerals are found in many foods and because mineral absorption improves during pregnancy, mineral deficiency, with the exceptions of calcium, iodine and iron, is rare.

Fluid Needs

Extra amounts of water are needed during pregnancy to promote kidney function because the woman must excrete increased amounts of waste products.

Fiber Needs

Eating fiber-rich foods such as broccoli and green leafy vegetables is a natural way of preventing constipation, because the bulk of the fiber let in the intestine aids evacuation. It is also beneficial as it helps to lower cholesterol levels and remove cancer-causing contaminants from the intestine.