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VOLUME TWO

The Banting (Tim Noakes) way



'I LOST 84KG IN 7 MONTHS'

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AND 17 OTHER QUESTIONS FOR PROF TIM NOAKES



roast leg of lamb with vine tomatoes and roasted garlic! page 71

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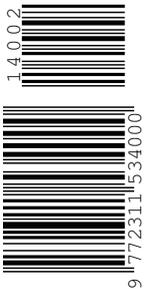
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JOHN MAYTHAM'S PILATES
Banting journey



Make your body lean and mean



PREGNANT, PRIMAL

and in peak condition

If you're concerned about eating primal while you're pregnant – don't be, says Shannon McLaughlin.

The day I found out I was pregnant marked exactly 10 months of me being completely sugar, wheat and grain free. Eating primal (LCHF with more tubers and fruit and some dairy) had changed my life. I had lost 8kg with very little exercise, cured the heartburn I'd experienced since childhood and improved my eyesight to the point of having to downgrade my spectacle prescription.

At six weeks pregnant I was still feeling amazing. I was so happy to have made the change in diet and prepared my body before falling pregnant. At this point, all I really knew about pregnancy was that three months of morning sickness awaited me. Along with that, I also expected nausea, acid reflux, constipation,

crazy emotions, weird cravings, headaches and swollen boobs.

A well-meaning friend gave me a copy of *What to Expect When You're Expecting* by Heidi Murkoff and Sharon Mazel (Workman) – every pregnant woman's bible – to read. But from the first page the tone took me aback: it made pregnancy seem like a sickness that needed to be treated.

Twenty minutes in and I was petrified, a feeling my first visit to the

gynae did nothing to allay. I sat in that waiting room staring at a wall of pamphlets offering me advice on – and products for – a myriad of pregnancy 'problems'.

In particular, the pamphlets seemed to be pushing fibre or laxatives. The reason there's so much hype around fibre during pregnancy is because of progesterone, which decreases the strength and frequency of the bowel contractions necessary to move food,

“I made the (scary) decision to ditch my prenatal supplements and take responsibility for my own pregnancy nutrition.”



My typical day on a plate

- 1 On waking:** I go straight to the kitchen and switch on the kettle for my morning cup of chai tea; I eat a citrus fruit – usually an orange or naartjie – to get some vitamin C in as early as possible.
- 2 Breakfast:** Banana pancake (mix together half a banana, one egg and a tablespoon of macadamia nut butter. Fry it in a pan. I top that with four massive tablespoons of double-cream Greek yoghurt, berries and flaxseeds. If I feel like something savoury, I fry two eggs, bacon, mushrooms and spinach in lots of butter and eat it on a bed of rocket and avo.
- 3 Midday:** Giant green smoothie (see the recipe overleaf), but only if I need an energy boost.
- 4 Lunch:** I'm usually only hungry between 2–3pm, and then I'll eat a big green salad with two hard-boiled eggs and chicken or prawns (I buy the Woolies frozen cooked prawns and keep them in my freezer. I take out about 10 prawns and thaw them in a bowl of water while I make the salad and they're ready to eat by the time I'm done). I use olive oil and balsamic vinegar as a dressing.
- 5 I drink:** 2-3 litres of water throughout the day, as well as about three cups of chai tea.
- 6 I always have:** Mixed nuts on hand as a snack. If I need to run out to a meeting, I'll take a pack with me.
- 7 Dinner:** Usually sweet potato, lots of veggies and the meat of my choice.
- 8 Dessert:** A few blocks of Cofair dark chocolate – I buy it from their shop at The Old Biscuit Mill in Cape Town; it's the best dark chocolate ever! The 95% is the business.

Great idea!

fluids and waste through the body. It's a natural way to make sure we absorb the most vitamins we possibly can to help nourish the baby and maintain the pregnancy – but at a cost. Apparently more than 50% of women suffer from some degree of constipation in pregnancy; not fun when you're carrying extra weight as it is. The basic 'pregnancy diet' recommended increasing fibre intake by eating lots of whole grains, breads, cereals, pastas and legumes – all of which had given me heartburn before I switched to a low-carb diet.

I discussed my concerns about increasing my fibre intake via whole grains with my midwife, Sister Marianne Littlejohn. She recommended two tablespoons of flaxseeds with my breakfast and a little grated beetroot with my lunch, which was priceless advice.

Pregnant women should get about 25g of dietary fibre per day, and flaxseeds pack a whopping 27g per 100g serving.

Folic acid was another hot topic; it is the most important supplement to combat neural tube defects of the baby's brain and spine, especially in the first trimester. My research told me that folic acid is synthetically produced because it doesn't occur naturally: folate is the naturally occurring form of the vitamin, and it's found in abundance in many whole foods. Avocados, for example, contain more folate than most other fruits, so I increased my intake of those.

After hours of exhaustive research I made the (scary) decision to ditch my prenatal supplements and take responsibility for my own pregnancy nutrition. The only supplements I decided to take were cod liver oil, which contains essential fatty acids that are important for your baby's brain, eye and heart development; and chelated magnesium because I discovered that signs of magnesium deficiency in the body include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite,



GIANT GREEN SMOOTHIE

- Large handful of spinach leaves (don't be scared to add lots, you won't taste it!)
- 1 banana
- 1 apple
- ¼ cucumber
- 100ml coconut milk
- 2 ice blocks

1. Mix together all ingredients in a blender until completely smooth. Decant and enjoy!

fatigue, insomnia, muscle cramping and brain fog, all of which sounded like first trimester symptoms to me.

I designed my pregnancy eating plan according to my primal diet, based on the foods I knew I needed to eat on a daily basis to make sure I absorbed as many of the required pregnancy minerals and vitamins as possible.

And I made it through my first five months without one episode of morning sickness, nausea, constipation, acid reflux, weird cravings or headaches. Maybe I'm just one of the lucky ones, but the only problem that really affected me was the extreme fatigue that characterizes that stage of pregnancy. By midday I was so exhausted I needed to take a nap. More research and experimenting with different foods at different times taught me that a giant green smoothie at midday does the trick.

My pregnancy diet is very much like a Banting diet, with a little extra fruit and a few white potatoes

thrown in. Loads of healthy fats help keep me going. I'm now 24 weeks pregnant, strong and healthy. I've gained 5kg to date, which is still less than I weighed 14 months ago, and I continue to enjoy the LCHF lifestyle. My baby seems to enjoy it too, kicking me vigorously at regular intervals throughout the day. So far, all my blood and urine tests have come back 100%, except my last urine test, which showed a slight drop in my iron levels, so I've amended my diet to include more iron-rich foods and I'm taking a natural iron supplement.

I'm no expert, but the wellness I feel physically is backed up by my healthy test results. I think pregnancy should be seen as a natural part of life rather than an ailment and the LCHF way of eating seems the perfect way to eat: for me and my baby. ■

Shannon McLaughlin blogs about her life and her experiences living primal on www.redwineandvanillachai.com.

Remember, this is not Banting because of the amount of fruit Shannon eats as well as the tubers. But she needs extra nutrients while pregnant and has carefully worked out what works for her. – Ed