



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series
FEB 2023 CCSS: Exploring Evidence-Based Practices in Women’s and Infants’ Health

S06: Eating in Labor: What Does the Evidence Say?

Resource List

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Call to Action \(2022\)](#) offers a brief description of selected factors that contribute to maternal health. The factors indicated are wide ranging and multi-faceted. This Call to Action reflects the current state of evidence and recommendations to improve maternal health. Bear in mind, this evidence base is still evolving, and more studies are needed to assess factors that impact maternal health outcomes.

[National Institute of Health \(NIH\) U.S. National Library of Medicine \(2019\)](#) has determined that vaginal births can be a prolonged process, especially during the first delivery. The recommendations regarding eating and drinking during the labor and delivery process are not clear. There is no agreement between the physicians regarding eating and drinking while being in labor in the birthing center. This disagreement is due to lack of research in this field and inconclusive results in previous studies. The objective of this study is to assess whether eating and drinking during the labor process improves obstetric outcomes and maternal satisfaction.

The [National Academies \(2020\)](#) last reviewed the state of the science on nutrition during pregnancy and lactation 30 years ago. In the intervening period, there have been advancements in evidence on nutrients, dietary patterns, nutritional supplements, and other nutrition-based topics relevant to pregnancy and lactation. A more detailed review of these updates will increase the providers capacity to offer evidence-based care to mothers during labor.

[World Health Organization \(2016-2030\)](#) determined that new evidence-based approaches backed by innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms, such as the Global Financing Facility are required in support of the “Every Woman Every Child” initiative that is part of the Global Strategy for 2015-2030. The updated Global Strategy includes adolescents because they are central to everything we want to achieve, and to the overall success of the 2030 Agenda. By helping adolescents to realize their rights to health, well-being, education, and full and equal participation in society, we are equipping them to attain their full potential as adult. This document is more comprehensive and relevant, and a must read for medical providers assisting pregnant mothers and their youth.



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

References

Health and Human Services. (2021). *The Surgeon General's call to action to improve maternal health*. U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/call-to-action-maternal-health.pdf>

Meir Medical Center. (2019). *Does oral intake during labor and delivery have an effect on complications and outcome?* National Institute of Health (NIH), U.S. National Library of Medicine & ClinicalTrials.gov. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03949166>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2020). *Nutrition during pregnancy and lactation: Exploring new evidence: Proceedings of a workshop*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25841>

World Health Organization. (2016-2030). *The global strategy for women's, children's, and adolescents' health (2016-2030)*. World Health Organization and United Nations. <https://globalstrategy.everywomaneverychild.org/download/index.html>