

# Categories of nutrients book review example

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



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Judith E Brown in her book, Nutrition and Pregnancy, a complete guide from preconception to post delivery addresses one of the most important issues in pregnancy, Nutrition. The author successfully delves into the issue of nutrition, a very important aspect of human life, and especially during the pregnancy and lactating period for mothers and their new born.

The author dispels a number of myths associated with pregnancy, consistently emphasizing on the importance of a balanced diet to the health of both the mother and the child.

The core of the book is geared towards establishing the effects of nutrition on pregnancy and lactation. The author asks the question, ‘ Does pregnancy and lactation cause an increased physiological and psychological stress which may call for increased nutritional requirements’?

In attempting to address this question, the author recognizes the unfortunate situation experienced in most under developed countries that calls for intensive study on the effects of nutrition in pregnancy and lactation. This is caused by deficiency of proper diet that does not only affect the mother but also the baby. The author establishes that the chemical composition of maternal milk is subject to the mother’s diet, while the

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psychology of both the mother and the child may be greatly affected by their nutritional status at any given time. Proper nutrition is therefore found to be necessary during pregnancy and lactation as this period is crucial for the child's mental growth.

Brown also identifies the optimal nutritional requirements for both mother and child. These ensure a fast recovery for the mother and rapid growth of the infant. The infant specifically requires proper breastfeeding as the mother's milk is believed to be rich in most of the nutrients required for its growth. Due to this it is therefore paramount that the mother is provided with a balanced diet so as to cater for the increased nutritional requirements.

According to Brown, there are conventionally six categories of nutrients, namely: carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals and water.

Carbohydrates, proteins and fats can all act as a source of energy for the body. Vitamins, minerals and water are all needed to a great extent to help in conversion of carbohydrates, proteins and fats into energy for the building and maintenance of muscles, bones, brain and other body parts for both the mother and the infant.

A pregnant mother requires the above food constituents in a balanced manner and none of them should be in excess or deficient so as to achieve a maximum outcome in terms of health for both the mother and the child.

## **Underlying assumptions**

According to Brown, expectant, nursing mothers and young children are considered to be the most vulnerable population in any given society, in regard to health. In her book, Brown therefore recognizes several issues that must be addressed to guarantee the health of this population: These issues include,

- a) The absolute nutritional requirements necessary for normal course of pregnancy and the health of both the mother and the infant mentally and physically.
- b) How the maternal nutritional state affects the course of the pregnancy.
- c) The manner in which nutrition affects the condition of the infant at birth and the neonatal period.

Brown assumes that most of the illnesses witnessed during the pre and post pregnancy periods are related in one way or another, to the nutritional content of food for both the mother and the baby. The book also identifies a number of pregnancy related illnesses such as abruptio placentae and eclampsia that are assumed to affect the mother psychologically while also impairing the mental development of the fetus. In other words, most of the ailments found in new born are in one way or another linked to the mother's diet during the pregnancy period.

## **Evaluation of the ideas and assumptions**

I agree, to a great extent, with the findings of Brown on the importance of a balanced diet during pregnancy and lactation. I also concur fully, with the authors finding that lack of a proper nutritional intake during pregnancy has contributed to the many illnesses witnessed amongst infants, and a host of

complications during childbirth for the mothers.

I am also in full support of the assumptions of her book. I would however like to critique the fact that her book has over emphasized the relevance of nutrition in pregnancy and lactation at the expense of other factors that contribute to the wellbeing of the mother and the baby.

Psychologists argue that, while diet and nutrition are of paramount importance, other factors such as the psychological condition of the mother, climatic conditions, physical condition and other factors also affect the health of the mother and baby. They argue that the psychological status of the mother, which requires that the mother should not have any psychological problems, should be taken to consideration. Besides diet, the mother has to live in a good climatic condition, must exercise frequently and keep fit at all times so as to reduce chances of complications during child birth.

The normal health of the mother is also a key factor that must be considered. While emphasis should be laid on nutrition, the general health of the mother should be checked to ensure that the baby is fine. For instance, cases of mother to child HIV transmission should not be ignored in pursuit of nutritional competence.

Brown however discovered that there was a lot of information gap in the health care sector, that addresses the problem of nutrition among pregnant and lactating mothers and developed this handbook that has come in handy to many mothers who would like to have a healthy pregnancy and a successful delivery.

This book is also valuable companion to all would be mothers especially in developing nations where knowledge on maternal health is scanty. Fathers who would like to reduce cases of illnesses to their pregnant wives and their newborns will find this book an important read.

The ministries of health of various nations could benefit from the findings and wisdom of Brown to design health care systems that are all inclusive so as to ensure that maternal health is guaranteed for future posterity.

## **REFERENCES**

Judy Brown. Nutrition and Pregnancy-A Complete Guide from Preconception to Post delivery: McGraw-Hil, 1998