

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi, everyone. Maryn here today wanting to focus on nutrition. Way back when I started these podcasts almost three years ago I covered nutrition in a really basic way, and that's actually episode number four. If you end up going to indiebirth.com/podcastarchives you can check that one out. That one has also been made into a downloadable PDF transcription by the generous Katie Norr. So I ask that if you are beginning with pregnancy nutrition or you just want a review that you go to that podcast and either listen or read the transcription. I'm not going to cover all those basics today because it would be very repetitive. And frankly, I kind of wanted to move on to a different take—a more fun take for the day perhaps—on pregnancy nutrition.

So I always say with these podcasts, and it's true, that the reason I settle on this topic or that topic is pretty divine in the sense that they just show up. So on my computer I have a list a mile long of suggestions people have made, of outlines that I have done and not completed, of ideas that I've had, and really a podcast only gets done when it seems like it's time which is really cool. So pregnancy nutrition is something I am more than passionate about. I only half joke with Margo that really any prenatal care we think we do or help women with should be sort of reduced although it's not really a reduction—but in time perhaps—reduced to a food truck or a potluck or something because nutrition in pregnancy, food, in general, is so fascinating to me. And, again, just the cornerstone of a healthy pregnancy and birth and postpartum. It's just the only thing that we can control. What we put in our mouths.

So when it comes up a couple times in a week, that's when a podcast happens. And it's come up a couple times this week both with in person women and email consults or questions on Facebook. We've actually started a Facebook group called Indie Birth Nutritional Support. At least, that's the current name of it. But you can probably find it pretty easy on Facebook. It's just a closed group. Anybody may join. So join me there for more detailed questions and conversation.

Moving on to what I'm actually talking about today, 10 nutrition hacks for virtually any diet type. Now I say virtually because I did my best. And you'll hear my suggestions. I think they're mostly friendly for vegans, vegetarians, paleo people, omnivores mostly. There's a couple of things that could be tweaked perhaps if you're just really not comfortable with them. But I thought it wouldn't be too hard to put together a list of 10 things that can enhance the diet. Now reminder, I am not going to go through the

basics of a great nutritional program in pregnancy. A lot of what I suggest is at least loosely based on the Brewer pregnancy diet, which I think is a phenomenal structure. I think the fact that that structure is more than 50 years old begs for some additions and reinforcements. But the basic structure is great.

And, again, you can read or listen to the podcast because there are things that are specific to a pregnancy diet. And I'm not using the word diet in the same way that we talk about losing weight. I don't mean that at all. I mean nutritional program. So number one hack to get more of what you need during pregnancy would be bulletproof tea. Now you may have heard of bulletproof coffee. And if you are indulging in coffee in your pregnancy, which I don't think a cup a day is particularly harmful based on what I've researched, you may certainly do that. But if your pregnant nose is turned off by coffee or that's just not your thing, bulletproof tea is a reasonable alternative. And I think a great way to get in extra calories.

So if you don't already know, you'll just make yourself a cup of tea. And really the best kinds of tea, I think, for adding oil and ghee or butter, which is what you're going to do, is more of a chai flavor. You can experiment, of course. And chais come in caffeinated or decaffeinated. But you'll make yourself a cup of tea. And then while it's pretty hot, remove the tea bag, throw it in the blender. Or get yourself an immersion blender. Those are super cheap. And blend it with a tablespoon of organic coconut, the unrefined variety is best, and perhaps some ghee or butter, grass-fed butter. Even if you just did the oil, that would still be a pretty decent hack being that there's pretty good calories in a tablespoon of coconut oil as well as great fats and it being an antifungal and all those kinds of things too. But mainly I was just thinking for calories here. So many women seem to struggle with getting enough calories.

And the reasons for that are kind of long winded perhaps. But for example, nursing another baby while pregnancy. Nursing two babies while pregnant. Having multiples. Having more than one baby. Just being super active. There's a million reasons why many women out there who are focused on their pregnancy nutrition are trying to get more quality calories in. Now I'm not a calorie counter by nature. Nonpregnant most definitely. But I think it pays to be able to at least eyeball calories during pregnancy to see if you're kind of meeting the average, which we're not average. Each one of us is unique. But the average according to the Brewer Diet is about 2,700 calories per day. And, again, on average. So that's a woman with a single baby, kind of average stress level, average activity level. You may need more. You may need less. But bulletproof tea is delicious. It's nondairy for the people that that's a thing for. And it's just a really easy way to sneak in calories. So I usually do that in the morning. The way most people do coffee. And it feels really good. Something I've been doing for years.

So the next nutrition hack for pregnancy nutrition would be some sort of green powder. Now that's really kind of a cheat, isn't it? I guess I could just list supplements for all ten. I'm not going to. Some of them are more supplemental. And in general, supplements are not as good as food. So we always want to reach for the fresh, whole food first. But the truth is sometimes we need a hack. And if you're not getting any greens in your diet because you can't stomach or whatever the reason is, then a green powder can be awesome. Now a green powder can be added to just juice. It can be blended into a smoothie. It can be mixed into yogurt. There's a lot of ways you can do it and just get it down and feel good that you've gotten all the vitamins and minerals that super greens would provide.

As far as brands, I don't have any particular affiliation other than some general recommendations. There is a company in Tucson, Arizona. I believe it's called Life Force but don't quote me on that. That product itself is called Warrior Greens. And I've not seen a higher quality green powder that isn't made by someone like individually around other than this one. So you could check that out. There certainly are a million of them out there, so you'll have to do some research and figure out what's the best and what you're looking for.

Another one I had tried years ago that I really liked was a woman in—I want to say Washington State—called empoweredherbals.com. Now I honestly don't know if that site is still up and running, but it was a woman named Rachel, who handcrafted this green powder. And I really enjoyed it through a couple of pregnancies. And I just haven't ordered it in awhile but not because it isn't good. The third suggestion would be my friend, Diane, who is here in Arizona. Many of you know her. She's a nurse midwife. She spoke at our conference last year. She's a wonderful friend. She has an herbal business. And her business is called—what is her business called? This is terrible, on the spot kind of thing. I will think of it. And if not, you may contact me for her information. But she also makes a green powder that's really yummy and has more of a sweet vanilla kind of flavor. And my kids love that. So I will think of that probably through the—as I go through this podcast. But it's just not coming to me at the moment.

The next nutrition hack, number three—and this is not necessarily for any diet type although I do encourage everybody to think outside what their label is diet wise during pregnancy. I know that's not always easy to do if you're really philosophically adhering to, say, a vegan diet or a raw diet. But above all, I think it's giving our bodies what we need. So this one is definitely not vegan or vegetarian. You can decide. Liver capsules. Now that sounds really gross. But if you're like a lot of us, myself included, I just can't do liver. Never have. Probably never will. Really never had liver ever in my whole life. And so it's just not an acquired taste. So if you're really following the Brewer Diet to a T and you want to get your liver in weekly as he suggests, then you might consider doing the organic liver capsules. And honestly, a lot of people don't do liver

because they don't really know the quality of what they're getting which is totally understandable. So if you can find a good quality capsule—again, food is always best. But if you're not going to do that, then why not. Increase your iron. Increase your energy levels and fulfill that little checkbox on the Brewer Diet with liver capsules.

Number four nutrition hack is make a smoothie. Not really that revolutionary. But, again, when you're pregnant and you have this template you're maybe trying to follow to make sure you get everything in that's as healthy for you and your baby as possible and sometimes the best way to do it is just to drink it. There are so many things that can be blended into a smoothie that are awesome and really aren't supplemental. So I'm not advocating a smoothie full of powders and all kinds of synthetic stuff specifically protein powder. Once in awhile, I don't think there's anything wrong with it. But I think there are whole foods we definitely can drink in a smoothie. And really the calories can be through the roof in such a smoothie. So some ideas that may not have occurred—I think everybody knows how to make a smoothie but avocado can be great in a smoothie. Really rich. And, of course, you don't taste avocado. It just makes it thick.

Raw eggs. And, of course, there are always people that get upset about that. First of all, you have to be okay with eggs in your diet which is nice, honestly, when people are. That is kind of a key point of the Brewer Diet because eggs have albumin and really no other food does. So you can certainly work with someone who won't or can't do eggs. But certainly, it makes things easier from that perspective. So raw eggs if you know where you're getting them maybe from a local farm. I personally don't see all the hoopla. If you're getting eggs from somewhere where you don't know the quality or—I don't know. Maybe they're old or super cheap or something, you want to do them raw. It's really up to you. But raw eggs in a smoothie can, again, really raise the protein, the calories, the nutritional value, and you don't taste them.

Another key ingredient in smoothies—pretty obvious—some kind of thickener. Of course, avocado can do that as well. So can eggs. But if you're looking for something else, a whole milk yogurt or a coconut milk yogurt, if you're not doing dairy. Making sure that the smoothie is as high fat and calorie and protein dense as you can muster since you'll probably drink this and be full for awhile. Coconut oil is another great addition to smoothies and sort of the same reasons why it's great in the bulletproof tea. And greens. If you haven't ever tried them in your smoothie. Of course, you could do the green powder. But even just a handful of fresh spinach. Get your dark, leafies in there. And if you've got enough fruit and other stuff, you certainly won't taste it. So smoothies come up a lot when I'm trying to suggest more bang for the buck when people are wanting suggestions.

Next nutrition hack for any diet type, number five, would be almond flour. Now I could have been more broad. And I guess I can be. Really any of the nut products in

general, if you're able to tolerate nuts, are going to be pretty high fat, pretty high protein, and generally pretty high calorie as well. So when I was coming up with this list, I thought nut butters, that kind of thing, are pretty obvious to most people. If not, it's one of the first suggestions they'll receive. But something like almond flour, sometimes I even forget about. You can make your own almond flour pretty easily if you're soaking almonds and blending them in a high quality blender. Then you strain the almond milk out. Of course, you can use the almond milk for smoothies or whatever you want to use it for. And then the pulp you can dry into almond flour.

Now that's if you really want to be in control of your quality. But if time is more of your concern or just plain effort, you can certainly buy just almond flour without anything else in it. And I had just posted a recipe in the Indie Birth Nutritional Support group on Facebook for almond flour muffins. And I think that recipe was courtesy of Dr. Mercola online. And it was one that I used a lot in my last few pregnancies because almond flour has so much protein and is so calorie dense. And the muffin recipe, in particular, is even more so. There's eggs in there, but you can find substitutions if you're vegan or don't want to do eggs. So almond flour is a great way to cheat. Any time you use flour for anything at all you can get more protein and calories out of it by doing the almond flour.

Number six nutrition hacks for any diet type would be coconut butter. Now I don't know if you've tried coconut butter, but it's worth checking out if you like coconut, of course, and can tolerate that. Coconut butter is delicious and really rich. And literally something you can eat out of the jar with a spoon. You can spread it onto apples or fruit. You can put a tablespoon into a smoothie. I'm trying to think of what else. Oh, that's a couple good ideas. It's just really versatile. And, again, just really high calorie and great fats in the coconut. So if you haven't checked that out, that's a great product to Google and just see if you can find the highest quality one that you can. And try it out. It's really awesome.

Number seven of my nutrition hacks is—and this was a fun one. Making chocolate. Now I am not a cook by any nature. I am not a baker. But we do have the luxury here in Sedona of having a couple raw chocolate shops. So I love chocolate. And I've come to realize over the years that although I'll never sell chocolate professionally it's quite easy to make on your own in your own home. Really only need a couple of ingredients. And if you can do that in pregnancy meaning you can tolerate the chocolate—in early pregnancy, I think it's fairly common not to be able to. But at any point, if you couldn't, you couldn't. But you only need a couple ingredients. So raw cacao, coconut oil, and coconut butter. I use coconut butter. I think you can use—I forget what the other coconut product is. But you could Google how to make raw chocolate. And, again, really high calorie, really high fat, and you can increase the protein with things like almond butter, for example, or even peanut butter. So that's a nice treat. You get a

little bit of sweetness in there. Of course, you could sweeten with maple syrup or honey or even stevia. So a tiny bit of sweetness if you're craving that. But also some other good stuff. And I didn't have that as a separate hack because it's not really a hack. But I would say always limit the sugar in a pregnancy nutritional program. It's not that we can't have good quality sweetness but always in balance with something better. Otherwise, it just takes up valuable space in your diet that, frankly, you need for better quality food.

So number eight nutrition hack would be a baked sweet potato. Now pretty much everybody can do that. You can certainly even do something else baked really. You could do a baked apple. You're not going to get the vitamin A with an apple. That's kind of why I like the sweet potato. Vitamin A products have to think about that when you're doing your Brewer Diet checklist. So bake a sweet potato. And then no matter if you're vegan or not, you can cover it with stuff. So lots of butter or ghee. Even just coconut oil or another high quality oil. Salt, pepper. You could even get fancy and maybe roast some pecans. Roast them with a tiny bit of coconut sugar and maybe some cinnamon, so you're getting some protein on top of that potato. And ideally, at least in my mind, that potato would be a side to a more protein rich dinner perhaps. But it could also stand alone, if you bulked it up enough. So something as simple as a baked potato or, again, maybe even a baked apple can seem really decadent, but it's really easy. And really high fat. And really good for you.

Number nine of my nutrition hacks—and this is an old standby. I feel like I've been saying this one for years and doing it myself. Make a trail mix. Again, you have to be okay with nuts. But even if you weren't, you could probably figure it out especially if you can do some seeds. So any kind of nuts and seeds, anything you like from sesame or—not sesame. Pumpkin seeds to sunflower. That's what I meant. Sunflower seeds. All kinds of nuts. Coconut shreds are great. Organic coconut shreds. Kind of dried. And then add in some fruit. So apricots are great. Maybe diced sort of tiny. Another great vitamin A and iron rich food. Things like raspberry—not raspberries. Boy, my brain is gone today. Raisins. Other dried fruit. Look for, I would say personally, unsweetened. Cherries are great. Cranberries. So you can get all the flavors in there. The sweetness, the salty. You certainly could throw in a couple chocolate chips or carob chips or whatever sort of decadent thing you want in just to entice yourself to do this.

But, again, lots of great protein. Lots of great fat from the nuts and the coconut. Put it all in a bag or a jar. Give it a great shake of good sea salt. You could probably even do a tiny bit of oil just to get the sea salt to stick, if you were going to eat it in the near future. And pretty complete snack. So especially when you're on the go. I think these come up the most. These hacks are needed the most. And maybe I'm biased here. But for women that have a couple kids. Usually, it's not the moms that are having their

first babies unless they're just super busy. It's mostly the moms that are running around town. And they're going here, and they're going there. And/or they're feeding their kids all day. So they need to have easy things that don't take a lot of time. And, again, trail mix is something you, literally, could make up at the beginning of a week in a giant jar and just scoop yourself a cup and throw it in a container every time you leave the house. I think that's a fabulous hack and probably one that has stuck around for a reason.

The last nutrition hack, if I'm just going to stick to ten today—I'm trying to keep it simple is a cheat for minerals. Now to my knowledge, minerals as a necessary element of a healthy pregnancy program was not part of the Brewer Diet over 50 years ago. And that's cool. Things change. We learn more. I don't remember that being a thing. But that's an addition that I've made just in my own recommendations and in my own pregnancies. And frankly, just talking with experts that know more than myself that we know now how valuable minerals are. And that perhaps it's just because our soil even is so deficient in minerals. So even vegans or people that are relying on plants for their nutrition allegedly aren't really getting the minerals that they need either. So I think no matter what your diet type you have to consider minerals. Our mineral balance in our bodies is just so important. It determines how our fluid is distributed throughout our bodies. So kind of broad here but even something like swelling in pregnancy—there's so many reasons why we need good minerals.

So I have two ways to get minerals. And the first would be herbal infusions. Now that could be its own class or podcast really. But if you don't know how to make an herbal infusion, probably the best resource is Susun Weed. So Google her and how to make an infusion, an herbal infusion. She will actually be our keynote speaker this coming March for the Indie Birth midwifery conference. And I have been reading her stuff, of course, for years. She's brilliant. Is kind of like the grandma herbalist of our time. And infusions are something I've incorporated into my life even not pregnant, even with the kids. And I think it's just a really amazing part of good nutrition. So basically, you're taking the herb of your choice. So let's say, in pregnancy, maybe it's oat straw or maybe it's red raspberry leaf. And you're making more than a tea. So you're making a medicinal substance that is similar to a tea but is steeped longer and is more intense.

So it's drunk like a tea. Make up a big jar of it and drink it. Just drink it straight. You can mix it with some water or maybe some lemonade or something like that, if you want. But the minerals that come through in really any pregnancy infusion are amazing. And calcium and magnesium and phosphorous and so many vitamins. So I think that's a great hack especially for those that really don't feel like they're getting what they need from their food. To me, infusions are more food than supplement. It's not like taking a tincture where you're not getting any of those things from the plant. The infusion is really mineral rich. So even if you're doing a great job on your diet, you have to drink

something, right? Why not replace your water with an infusion, with an herbal infusion. So much more beneficial to you than a glass of water. And as far as other herbs, again, kind of an extended discussion. But I mentioned a few.

I will say that if you're highly knowledgeable or involved in the Brewer Diet then you will hear that perhaps these sorts of things aren't a great idea. Particularly nettle infusion. Now I'm not a herbalist. But I don't think that's necessarily relevant to this conversation because I do understand the way the blood volume works in pregnancy. And if you don't, again, please review the suggested materials. And I do know a lot about what we need, and I have helped literally thousands of women with their nutritional support during pregnancy. So I'm of the belief that herbal infusions are brilliant and, if someone is into them, they should probably do them. You might find you actually crave them. And ironically, nettles is one of those, at least for me, that I never used to like. And I actually do crave now probably for a couple reasons.

But, again—excuse me. In the high intensity Brewer Diet world, nettles is a no go. They say it's a diuretic. And that that is contraindicated with an expanding blood volume. So I offer that to you to do your own research on and find your own comfort level with. I will just say that infusions have immense nutritional benefits. And that if we're looking at issues that food can actually cause—and I do consider infusions food—I think they're pretty limited with the exception of highly adulterate food. Food that has a lot of additives like MSG. I think there can be things that are certainly not in our favor during pregnancy. But an infusion, to me, just isn't one of them. So I think like any good advice all we can really offer is, hey, some people think this. And some people think this. And how do you feel? And you could try it out. You could try out a nettle infusion and just see how you feel. Certainly one nettle infusion isn't going to do anything probably in either direction. But your body would probably know.

I also think that women that are struggling with a constricted blood volume probably aren't drinking nettles. I really don't think so. Generally, the problems that come from a constricted blood volume come from the basics of blood volume expansion not happening. So, again, review those materials. But if someone isn't getting enough calories and protein through the course of their pregnancy, that's a problem. And I don't think those are generally the women making infusions. Generally. They're the women that aren't eating. And maybe have other things going on that need to be looked at. But they're certainly not making infusions every day. So that's my two cents on it.

The other way we can cheat with minerals—and really it's not even a cheat. It's a great idea. Is bone broth. And I will give credit to Heather, who is in our Indie Birth nutritional group, for reminding me of that today. And I didn't need to be reminded from a personal perspective. Bone broth despite my lack of cooking interest—bone broth is something that is always simmering in my house. The crock pot is nearly almost always on unless

the bone broth is done for that couple of days and already in the fridge. Then maybe I'll take a crock pot break. But it's imperative for our household. The benefits from drinking it would be gut health. And that was what Heather was reminding us of today. That's huge. And I'm citing it today for the mineral balance that comes out of the bones of whatever you choose to use. So chicken broth, beef broth. And you can find basic recipes online as to how to make a good bone broth.

But, again, if your diet will include such a thing, that's a fabulous addition. Can have it in the morning the way you would a cup of tea. Have it in the middle of the day. Whenever. And with a little bit of sea salt in there, it's actually one of my favorite things. I am partial to chicken broth just because it seems to be easier for me to make. And if the cook—the cook. If the chickens are cooked with say grass-fed butter and oil and then those chickens are put into the crock pot, then you get the added bonus not just of minerals but actually some nice fat as well. And it tastes really yummy. So those are my hacks for minerals. And those are my ten, in general, hacks for getting more of everything good into a pregnancy diet.

Thanks so much for listening. And check out the Indie Birth site for updates and all kinds of exciting stuff. Have a great day.

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