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“Higgins Method”[®]

- The “Higgins Method” is a counselling approach aiming at the nutritional rehabilitation of disadvantaged pregnant mothers named after Agnes C. Higgins, its initiator—composed of precise guidelines and corrective measures—that has been scientifically proven to be effective.
- The “Higgins Method”[®] is based on the following premises:
 1. A well-nourished mother has a better chance of giving birth to a healthy baby;
 2. Birth weight is a key indicator of a baby’s health;
 3. Often women with low incomes are malnourished when they become pregnant and cannot obtain the food needed for a successful pregnancy;
 4. Low birth weight is much more frequent among those with low incomes.
- A corner stone of the “Higgins Method”[®] is the “art” of counselling wherein the future mother is helped to understand that a healthy baby depends largely on how she, as the mother, feeds her child during the nine months of pregnancy.
- Risk factors for which the “Higgins Method”[®] offers protein and calorie corrective measures include under nourishment, thinness, unfavourable past pregnancies, close pregnancy, gaining less than 4.5 kg by the 20th week of pregnancy, persistent vomiting, serious emotional problems.
- Nutritional rehabilitation strategies are always adapted to the specific circumstances of each expectant mother.
- When necessary the expectant mother receives a litre of whole milk, an egg and a prenatal mineral-vitamin supplement daily until the birth of the baby and for the first three months of breastfeeding.
- Regular follow-up meetings are held at two-week intervals where the assigned dietitian monitors progress, reinforces positive practices and fosters the bonding process between mother and child.
- The Method presently costs \$500 per pregnancy, including salaries, food and vitamin supplements and administration.
- Without this intervention, 10-12 per cent of the babies of disadvantaged mothers are at risk of being born too small. The “Higgins Method”[®] reduces this risk by at least 50 per cent while fostering the personal and social well-being of the MDD mothers. And in the process, it saves the community millions of dollars in health care costs.