



I'm Pregnant!

Now what do I eat?

Tips on Nutrition During Pregnancy

A New Baby is on the Way!

Now is an important time to make sure you're eating right for both you and your baby. Healthy eating while you are pregnant will help you give birth to a healthy baby. Here are some helpful tips on what you should and should not be eating during the 40 weeks of your pregnancy.



How Much Weight Should I Gain?

If you are of normal weight, you should expect to gain 25-35 lbs during your pregnancy. This does not mean you can eat everything under the sun! Typically, women need to consume only 300 calories per day more than they did before they were pregnant. This is the equivalent of adding:

- 1 cup cold cereal with 1 cup skim milk and a banana or
- a 2 egg omelette with low fat Cheddar cheese or
- 2 oz of turkey on 2 slices whole wheat bread, topped with lettuce and tomato or
- 4 fig cookies and 1 cup skim milk

to your diet. If you are underweight, plan to gain 28-40 lbs and if you are overweight, gain 15-25 lbs during your pregnancy. Gaining too much or too little weight can be dangerous for both you and your baby.

Recommended Daily Dietary Allowances for Pregnant Women of average weight, >18yo

	Non-pregnant women	Pregnant women
Energy (kcal)	2000	2300
Protein (g)	45	70
Fat-soluble vitamins		
Vitamin A	800 µg RAE	800 µg RAE
Vitamin D	5 µg	5 µg
Vitamin E	8 mg	15 mg
Vitamin K	60 µg	90 µg
Water-soluble vitamins		
Vitamin C	60 mg	85 mg
Thiamin	1.1 mg	1.4 mg
Riboflavin	1.3 mg	1.4 mg
Niacin	15 mg	18 mg
Vitamin B6	1.6 mg	1.9 mg
Folate	400 µg	600-800 µg
Vitamin B12	2.0 µg	2.6 µg
Minerals		
Calcium	800-1200 mg	1-1.2 g
Phosphorus	700 mg	700 mg
Iron	15 mg	27 mg
Zinc	11 mg	11 mg
Iodine	50 µg	220 µg
Selenium	55 µg	60 µg



Sources:

1. Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board, Committee on Nutritional Status During Pregnancy, part II: Dietary Intake and Nutrient Supplements. National Academy Press 1990; Washington, DC
2. Guidelines for Perinatal Care, 2002
3. Wald, NJ et al. Quantifying the effect of folic acid. Lancet 2001; 358:2069.
4. Harada, M. Congenital Minamata disease: intrauterine methylmercury poisoning. Teratology 1978; 18:285.

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December 2004



What Should I Eat More Of?

There are many different vitamins and minerals that you should be getting from your diet during your pregnancy. In particular, pregnant women need to increase their intake of protein, iron, folate and calcium.

Protein: Protein helps your baby build cells. You need 70 grams of protein per day during pregnancy. Good sources of protein include:

- Milk, Yogurt and Cheese
- Nuts, Legumes and Beans
- Meat and Fish

Iron: During pregnancy, your blood volume increases by 50%. You need iron to help your blood cells carry more oxygen around your body. You need 25-30 mg of iron per day. Good sources include:

- Liver
- Lean meats
- Spinach

Folic Acid: Adequate amounts of folic acid help to prevent neural tube defects in your baby. You need 600 to 800 mcg of folic acid per day, more if you've had a baby with a neural tube defect before. Good sources of folic acid include:

- Green leafy vegetables
- Asparagus
- Lentils and chickpeas
- Breakfast cereals

Calcium: The baby needs calcium to build strong bones and teeth. If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, it can be removed from your bones during your pregnancy and cause osteoporosis later in life. You need 1000 to 1200 mg per day. Good sources include:

- Milk, yogurt and cheese
- Green leafy vegetables
- Tofu

Should I Take a Prenatal Vitamin?

Sometimes, no matter how healthy you try to eat, you may not be getting all the vitamins and minerals that you need during pregnancy. We recommend that all pregnant women take a prenatal supplement that contains adequate amounts of most vitamins and minerals for pregnancy. Prenatal vitamins sometimes do not contain enough calcium for pregnant women. Take a calcium supplement too, if you are not eating enough milk, yogurt and cheeses. Ask your doctor which supplement is best for you.



What Should I Avoid Eating?

There are a few things that you should avoid eating during your pregnancy. These can be harmful to your baby's health:

- **Fish** – large fatty fish can contain dangerous levels of mercury that may cause severe central nervous system damage in your baby. Avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish. Limit intake of other fish to 12 oz per week. Limit canned tuna to one 6oz can per week.
- **Caffeine** – Taking in more than 300 mg of caffeine can increase the risk of miscarriage or stillbirth. Limit coffee to less than two cups per day. Don't drink more than four cups of caffeinated soda per day.
- **Undercooked meats and pates** – undercooked meats can contain harmful bacteria.
- **Raw or lightly cooked eggs** – Undercooked eggs can be bad for your baby's health
- **Soft Cheeses** – These cheeses may harbor *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacteria that can cause a harmful infection during pregnancy. Avoid Brie, feta, Camembert, Roquefort, Mexican-style and unpasteurized cheeses.
- **Raw vegetable sprouts** – alfalfa, clover or radish sprouts.

Morning Sickness – Nausea & Vomiting

During the first trimester of your pregnancy, you may experience increased nausea and vomiting. This is due to the increased levels of pregnancy hormones in your body. There are a few things you can do to reduce your nausea and vomiting.

- Nibble on dry cereal or crackers before getting out of bed
- Eat smaller and more frequent meals
- Drink liquids between meals, and limit liquid intake during meals
- Avoid eating fatty foods
- Avoid foods and smells that make you nauseous
- Take your prenatal vitamin with food or just before bed



Easing Constipation

Women often experience constipation during their pregnancies. Hormones can cause your bowels to move less and make you feel constipated. Iron supplements can also cause constipation. Here are a few suggestions to help:

- Drink more fluids, at least 6-8 cups per day
- Eat more fiber-rich foods such as whole grains, lentils and vegetables
- Eat fewer fatty foods
- Mild exercise stimulates digestion
- If diet and exercise fail, ask your doctor if stool softeners or laxatives can help

Please note: These are general guidelines. Talk to your doctor for more information about what you should and should not eat to keep you and your baby healthy during pregnancy.