

Nutrition in Pregnancy

Excellent maternal nutrition results in healthy mothers and babies.



Super Pregnancy Food

- Iron** Leafy dark green vegetables, organ meats, red meat, dried fruit
- Calcium** Milk, hard cheeses, yogurt, leafy green vegetables, salmon, seaweed, tahini
- B-Vitamins** Whole grains, yogurt, leafy green vegetables, salmon, nutritional yeast
- Vitamin C** Fresh fruits & veggies, kale, peppers, strawberries, citrus fruits, alfalfa sprouts

More than eating.

Nutrition is more than eating. It matters what you eat, how it is prepared, and how much you enjoy eating it. Pregnancy is a time for nourishment. It is a chance to learn to love and appreciate your body and to watch in awe as you likewise love and nourish your baby.

During pregnancy make a commitment to living a well-nourished life. Many pregnancy problems, discomforts, and some serious complications can be prevented or relieved with optimal pregnancy nourishment (for example, persistent constipation, headaches, leg cramps, exhaustion and even the risk of postpartum hemorrhage).

By the 20th week of gestation you will need an additional 500 calories per day, and an additional 25 g protein above your pre-pregnancy requirements. Avoid processed foods, opting for whole, organic, natural foods instead. You and your baby will thank you for it!



What about fish?

Don't fear fish! Eat it!

Choose fish low in methyl-mercury such as Herring, Rainbow Trout, Salmon, Sardines, Whitefish (such as Pollock, Tilapia, or Cod).

Nutrient Needs

There is no standard pregnancy diet. Just as women are unique, so their diet during pregnancy must be tailored to each individual woman. However, there are some specific nutrient needs that pregnant mothers should be paying attention to, ensuring that they are giving their baby the best start possible.



Protein: 4 servings daily
(75-100g - 30% complete proteins)

Protein provides the raw material for making the baby, placenta, & a strong uterus. It also contributes to the formation of breastmilk & is essential for healthy blood coagulation.

Protein is not stored well in the body, so it is important to maintain a continual supply. It also may be lost during injury or illness.

For protein to be used optimally by the body complete proteins should be consumed. To make complete proteins pair foods together: meats & dairy, grains & legumes

Vitamin C: 2 servings daily

Vitamin C is essential for collagen production which is needed for a healthy placenta, capillaries, & cell walls. It helps prevent varicose veins & hemorrhage & aids in the assimilation of other nutrients.

Vitamin C is important in preventing & healing infections and is quickly used up in stressful times.

Calcium: 4 servings daily

Calcium is essential for the formation of the baby's bones & teeth, and also for the maintenance of maternal bones, teeth, & connective tissue. It is essential for blood coagulation, healthy nerves, normal metabolism, mineral balance, & regular heartbeat. Calcium increases the pain threshold & is productive in relaxation.

Carbohydrates: 4-6 serv.
(whole grains & complex carbs)

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for the body. If carb intake is insufficient the body will use protein and fat for energy.

Veggies & Fruits

Green leafy, yellow & orange: 3 servings daily; Other veggies & fruits: 1-2 servings daily

Rich in vitamins and minerals essential for a healthy nervous system & metabolism. They promote healthy skin, strong bones, rich blood, & a well-nourished body.

Iron: Some daily

Iron combines with other nutrients to create hemoglobin. It builds blood, increases resistance to stress & disease & allows for proper muscle contraction. It also aids in protein metabolism, improves respiration, & prevents hemorrhage.



Nourish the whole family.

High-fat foods: 2 serv daily

Needed for optimal brain development in the fetus, & for absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Also makes calcium available to the body tissues.

Salt: daily in moderation to taste

Nutrition, One Trimester at a Time

1st Trimester

Baby's organs are developing:

- Focus on Vitamin A and D for organ development
- Don't worry! Just eat what you can!
- Choose whole, natural foods rather than processed foods.
- Avoid white sugar and white flour, which deplete B-vitamins.
- A prenatal multi-vitamin is a good idea too.

I RECOMMEND: Butter, eggs, yellow & orange fruits and vegetables, liver, dark greens and seafood

2nd Trimester

Baby's bones and muscles are developing:

- Focus on calcium and protein for good bone and muscle development.
- Get your probiotics! Think Yogurt.
- Beef is a wonderful source of omega-3 fats, iron, protein, and B-vitamins. Choose grass-fed beef when possible.

I RECOMMEND: Meat, fish, poultry, milk, cheese, leafy green vegetables, nutritional yeast and eggs

3rd Trimester

Baby's brain is developing:

- Focus on Omega-3 fats found in fish.
- Don't fear fish! Eat it! Choose fish low in methyl-mercury such as Herring, Rainbow Trout, Salmon, Sardines, Whitefish (such as Pollock, Tilapia, or Cod).
- Pastured Eggs from free-range chickens are a super pregnancy food.

I RECOMMEND: Cod-liver oil throughout the childbearing cycle.

Supplements should be Supplemental

Food comes first!

Your prenatal supplement and any other supplements you are taking take a backseat to good nutrition from food. Do not think of your supplements as sufficient to cover your nutritional needs so that you can eat poorly. Both you and your baby will suffer from such a mindset.

Still, a very conscientious eater who has a very well-balanced diet will likely still be lacking in some

nutrients. Therefore you may need to supplement. A basic prenatal vitamin is a good start. Cross-check your prenatal vitamin with the following list of nutrients:

- Omega-3s : 3 g (found in high quality fish oil or flaxseed oil)
- Vitamin D3: 5,000-10,000 IU
- Calcium: 1200 mcg
- B Vitamin Complex (or at least Folic Acid 800 mcg)

- Vitamin E: 400 IU
- Vitamin C: 500 mg
- Iron: 75 mg
- Magnesium: 600 mg
- Zinc: 20 mg

Food Source Supplements:

- Blackstrap molasses
- Chlorophyll
- Spirulina



Alternative Diets

What if I am vegetarian, or vegan, or follow a raw foods or macrobiotic diet?

Different women will have different nutrient needs during pregnancy, especially if following a vegetarian or other diet. While these diets are largely healthy for non-pregnant women, it is more challenging to properly nourish a pregnancy as a vegetarian or vegan than it is as an omnivore.

It may be wise to expand your diet just for the time of pregnancy to ensure you are getting everything your body and your baby needs for health and well-being.

If you eat eggs, dairy or fish, you should have little to no problem maintaining a healthy pregnancy. However, strict vegetarians or vegans may be deficient in many nutrients.

On a vegan diet it can be challenging and sometimes impossible to meet the caloric needs of pregnancy.

Additionally, protein levels may be deficient, along with Vitamin B12 (found only in animal products), and Calcium.

Many vegan foods are processed to

include some of these nutrients, but they also contain substances that are not good for the body. As a result I discourage following a vegan diet during pregnancy.

It is best to expand your diet to include dairy, eggs, and/or fish.

If you find yourself craving something you would not normally eat. Go ahead and eat it. Likely your body is telling you that you need some specific nutrient available in that food.

Stay Hydrated!

Many North Americans are chronically dehydrated. Pregnancy is not a time to be shy with fluids! Drink freely, at least 2 quarts a day.

Fluids are important because during pregnancy the blood volume must expand. In order to do this the body must have sufficient fluids to assist in this process.

Adequate fluid intake supports the maintenance of amniotic fluid volume and helps the kidneys and liver to work more efficiently as well.

Choose clear, uncarbonated liquids like water, coconut water, vitamin water, and unsweetened 100% fruit juices. Soups and broths are a great source of fluid as they are also high in nutrients.



Nutrient Rich Herbal Sources of Vitamins and Minerals

Many herbs offer rich, & varied nutrients. Check out these multi-nutrient herbs!

Nettle: Vitamins A, C, D, Calcium, Iron

Red Raspberry Leaf: Vitamins A, B1, Calcium, Phosphorus

Dandelion: Vitamins A, B1, B2, C, Calcium, Iron, Phosphorus

Alfalfa: Vitamins A, C, D, Calcium, Iron, Phosphorus

Watercress: Vitamins A, C, Iron, Iodine, Phosphorus, Zinc

Kelp: Vitamin B2, Calcium, Iron, Iodine

