

Pregnancy: Your Nutrition

Healthy eating when you are pregnant is important for you and your baby. It can help you feel well and have a healthy pregnancy and delivery.

During pregnancy your nutrition needs increase. Even if you have good eating habits, your doctor may suggest a multivitamin to make sure you get enough iron and folic acid.

Many pregnant women wonder how much weight they should gain. If you have questions about weight gain during pregnancy, talk with your doctor about what is right for you. Gaining a healthy amount of weight helps you have a healthy baby.



What should you do at home?

Food choices

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Include a variety of orange, yellow, and leafy dark green vegetables every day.
- Choose whole-grain bread, cereal, and pasta. Good choices include whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, and oatmeal.
- Get 4 or more servings of milk and milk products each day. Good choices include nonfat or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese. If you cannot eat milk products, you can get calcium from calcium-fortified products such as orange juice, soy milk, and tofu. Other sources of calcium include leafy green vegetables such as broccoli, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, bok choy, and brussels sprouts.
- If you eat meat, pick lower-fat types. Good choices include lean cuts of meat and chicken or turkey without the skin. Heat lunch meats (such as turkey, ham, or bologna) to 165 degrees before you eat them. This reduces your risk of getting sick from bacteria that can be found in lunch meats.
- Avoid fish that are high in mercury. These include shark, swordfish, king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, and bigeye tuna, as well as tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico.
- It's okay to eat up to 8 to 12 ounces a week of fish that are low in mercury **or** up to 4 ounces a week of fish that have medium levels of mercury. Some fish that are low in mercury are salmon, shrimp, canned light tuna, cod, and tilapia. Some fish that have medium levels of mercury are halibut and white albacore tuna.
- For more advice about eating fish, you can visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website.

- Do not eat unpasteurized soft cheeses, such as Brie, feta, fresh mozzarella, and blue cheese. They could have bacteria that could harm your baby.

Other choices

- Limit caffeine to about 200 to 300 mg per day. On average, a cup of brewed coffee has around 80 to 100 mg of caffeine. Caffeine also is found in some soft drinks and in energy drinks.
- Do not drink any alcohol. No amount of alcohol has been found to be safe during pregnancy.

- Do not diet or try to lose weight. For example, do not follow a low-carbohydrate diet. If you are overweight at the start of your pregnancy, your doctor will work with you to manage your weight gain.
- Tell your doctor about all vitamins and supplements you take.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.



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