

Diet During Pregnancy

It is important to eat a well-balanced diet while you are pregnant. There are certain foods you should avoid and foods which will help some of the unpleasant side effects of pregnancy.

What foods do I need to eat?

Eating regular, well-balanced meals is especially important during your pregnancy. What you eat provides food for you baby as well as yourself.

You will need more protein, vitamins, calcium, iron and folic acid in your diet. These nutrients are important for your baby's growth and development, and give your baby strong bones, strong teeth, healthy skin and a healthy body.

You will require more food calories (300 calories beyond the 2100 calories needed for non pregnant women). Your practitioner will suggest a range of weight that you should gain, usually about 25-35 pounds. Your weight gain will depend upon your pre-pregnancy weight. A woman starting pregnancy underweight may need to gain more weight initially, and those overweight should gain less.

Recommended amount of PROTEIN is 60mg per day, 10mg more than a non-pregnant woman.
10grams = 1 ½ oz meat, 1 1/4 cups milk

Good sources of PROTEIN include:

Beans and Peas	Meats & Nuts
Peanut butter	Poultry
Fish & Eggs	Cheese, milk & yogurt
Tofu	Soy Products

Note: Vegetarians who do not consume milk and eggs may want to consult the services of a nutritionist to assist in meeting protein needs.

Recommended amount of CALCIUM is 1200mg per day.

Good sources of CALCIUM include:

Cheese	Sardines
Greens	Milk (8oz = 300mg)
Salmon	Yogurt (8oz = 346mg)

Recommended amount of IRON is 30mg per day.

Good sources of IRON include:

Cereals	Eggs
Rice	Liver
Dried Fruit	Kidney beans

- IRON:** Many women need an extra 30mg per day of iron in the last half of pregnancy. Women carrying twins, women with low iron in their blood, and large women may need up to 100mg per day of additional iron.
- CALCIUM:** Additional calcium may be needed in the last half of pregnancy when the baby needs calcium for bone development.
- FOLIC ACID:** Levels of this vitamin seem to go down as pregnancy progresses; the usual dose needed to supplement a poor diet is 1mg per day.

What substances should I avoid when I am pregnant?

Stay away from alcoholic drinks, tobacco and drugs. Check with your doctor before taking any medications. Some medications cause birth defects and some are safe.

Avoid caffeine. Excessive quantities (present in coffee, tea, cola and other soft drinks) may be associated with increased risk to your baby.

Should I restrict my salt intake?

Research has shown that you do not have to restrict salt during pregnancy, as was thought in the past. A moderate amount of salt helps to maintain proper levels of sodium in your body as your baby develops. You should use iodized salt.

What should I do if I don't feel like eating?

"Morning sickness" during the early months of pregnancy may be controlled by eating crackers, pretzels, or dry cereal before getting out of bed in the morning, or by eating small, frequent, and bland meals throughout the day. Stay away from greasy, fried, acidic (oranges, tomatoes) or spicy foods that may upset your stomach. Don't drink liquids with your meals. Eat what you can tolerate. Have prepared foods available, (for example, crackers and cheese) because the odors while preparing foods may make you nauseous.

Constipation may be relieved by eating more fresh fruits, vegetables, high fiber breads and cereals and drinking more liquids (you need 6-8 glasses of water or other liquids each day). Do not use laxatives but ask your provider about gentle, safe, stool softeners.

Diarrhea may be helped by eating more binding foods such as rice and dry toast, or try yogurt. Over the counter Kaopectate is also safe. If diarrhea persists more than a few days, call for advice.