

Nutrition in pregnancy

Good nutrition is the cornerstone for a healthy, low-risk pregnancy. Good nutrition means eating food that will give your body the building blocks to keep you and your baby healthy and strong. Making good food choices can begin at any time, but the earlier you start, the better chance you have in preventing complications like preeclampsia, anemia, and hypertension. How well you eat during pregnancy also plays a significant role for labor and delivery, avoiding postpartum complications, having a faster recovery time, and in breastfeeding. Pregnancy is not the time to restrict the amount of calories you consume or the amount of food you eat. In fact, doing those things can deprive your baby and your body from the nutrients needed to be healthy and strong. The food you eat today will directly affect the outcome of tomorrow.

Trimester Nutrition Highlights

1st trimester

Low blood sugar can contribute to nausea.

Eating small snacks with protein every few hours, even through the night, will help you feel better.

Good snacks to eat are: cheese and crackers, a handful of raw almonds, yogurt, or peanut butter on whole grain bread.

2nd trimester

Aim for eating between 75-100g of protein daily with 30% being complete proteins.

You may notice your appetite has increased quite a bit from the previous trimester.

Enjoy eating again and be conscious **not** to restrict calories or salt.

3rd trimester

Now is when your body and your baby demand the most calcium, iron and protein.

Your food choices should be varied and appealing.

Your meals will tend to be smaller portions so please make sure you eat every 2-3 hours.

If your baby was born now, he or she would be eating every 2-3 hours

Tips for eating a healthy diet

- **It is good to eat a variety of nutritious food sources;** many foods can fulfill different food source categories!
- **Dairy can be considered a complete protein.**
- **Don't double count your food sources.** If you are counting the milk you had for breakfast as a protein source, you cannot also count it as a calcium source.
- **Eat breakfast every day.** It may help to have a small snack before breakfast time to help settle nausea.
- **Slow down when you eat,** pay attention to your body's cues for hunger and fullness.
- **Fish is good for you!** Avoid any fish that may contain high levels of mercury (shark, swordfish, king mackerel).
- **Avoid eating** raw/undercooked red meat, poultry, or fish, deli meat, hot dogs and soft cheeses such as brie, feta or goat.
- **Your prenatal vitamin is not a substitute for food!** A prenatal vitamin is taken to compliment your diet. Pick a food based, organic prenatal vitamin, that will be easier for your body to assimilate nutrients.
- **Listen to your body's cues of hunger and fullness.** If you have used nicotine, caffeine, soda, or other non-food items to suppress your appetite or to feel full, it will be hard to respond to normal hunger cues. Do not wait until hunger pains subside or you start to feel faint. If you tend to eat past "full", responding to normal full cues can also be difficult. Sit down at the table when you eat, purpose to chew slowly, being aware of the taste and texture of the food you are eating. Partway through your meal, ask yourself- Do you feel physically satisfied with that amount? Do you still feel hungry? If you are full, stop eating. Remember you can always have more later. It is **ok** to walk away from food!
- **Pay attention to food/non-food cravings you may have.** Before you eat what you're craving, make sure it is really what your body wants. For example:
 - **Sugar craving** (fruits, fruit juice, sugar drinks, sugar foods)- It may be your body needs more protein. Before you eat a slice of apple pie for breakfast, have some protein, try a bowl of oatmeal with milk instead. Then, if apple pie is still what you want, have a small slice.
 - **Salty food craving-** Sometimes all you need are a few potato chips with your ham and swiss sandwich. Take cues from your body, you might be craving salt because you need extra sodium in your diet.
 - **Caffeine craving-** Have you changed the amount of caffeine you are consuming? You could be having caffeine withdrawal. Drink some water when you crave caffeine.

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A healthy diet should incorporate the following daily food choices and portions:

Daily food source categories:	Omnivore: Daily serving	Ovo-lacto Vegetarian: Daily serving	Vegan: Daily serving
Calcium • Dairy & dairy substitutes • Non-dairy food sources of calcium	4	4	4
Protein • Eggs • Meat, seafood, vegetarian protein sources	6 (2) (4)	6 (2) (4)	8 Omit (8)
Complex carbohydrates • Whole Grains • Starchy vegetables and fruits	4-6	4-6	4-6
Dark green leafy vegetables, yellow/orange vegetables and fruits	5	5	5
Vitamin C foods	2	3	4
Fats	2-3	5	9
Iron Rich Foods • Heme Iron Sources • Non-Heme Iron Sources	Some daily	5 daily	5 daily
Water	64 ounces	64 ounces	64 ounces
Salt	to taste	to taste	to taste
Vitamins & Minerals	as needed	as needed	as needed

Sample diet

Snack: Orange Juice, prenatal vitamins

Breakfast: Oatmeal w/soy milk & blueberries, 1/2 whole wheat english muffin w/peanut butter, water

Snack: Pumpkin seeds, banana & protein shake, water

Lunch: Large green salad (dried cherries, strawberries, walnuts, shredded cheese, chick peas), protein drink, water

Snack: Yogurt & peaches, vegetables -broccoli & cauliflower (eat throughout the afternoon), handful of almonds, water

If you are struggling to eat all the daily servings

- Start writing down every BLT (bite, lick, taste) of food you have during the day to give you an idea of what nutrients you need to have more of.
- Make every bite count. If you eat an apple, pair it with a serving of peanut butter or a protein drink.
- Try eating small meals and snacks, every 2-3 hours, instead of 3 large meals a day.
- Try not to drink and eat at the same time. Eat your food first, then drink your water.
- Plan your meals ahead of time, which makes it easier to eat the foods and the amounts your body needs.
- **Talk with your midwife about your concerns.**

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Food source categories

Protein-

Complete proteins are food in which the eight essential amino acids are always present in the specific amounts that our body needs. Incomplete protein is food that has some of the essential amino acids but needs a complement food to make a complete protein.

Examples of proteins paired together to make a complete protein: rice & beans, macaroni & cheese, rice & tahini, pasta w/ peanut sauce, and whole wheat bread w/peanut butter.

Complete protein-

Meats, poultry, Seafood & fish (shrimp, canned tuna, salmon, pollock, catfish, clams) - 2-3 oz

Dairy

Soy products (Tofu) - 1/2 cup

Eggs- 1 egg

Incomplete protein-

Legumes (dry beans and peas) - 1/2 cup cooked

Nuts- Almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts- 2 oz; Peanut butter- 2Tbbs

Seeds- Pumpkin, sesame or sunflower seeds- 2 oz

Grains- oatmeal, some vegetables and some fruits

Calcium-

Dairy products-

Milk, yogurt- 1 cup; Cottage cheese 1/4 cup; Cheese- 2oz

Dark green leafy vegetables

Calcium fortified foods-

Orange juice, cereal, bread, soy milk, tofu and other soy products

Nuts & Seeds

Iron-

Heme (animal sources)- Beef, poultry, fish, clams, shrimp, organ meats

Non-heme (plant sources)- Fortified cereal, blackstrap molasses, pumpkin seeds, prune juice, beans, and lentils

Vitamin C-

Bell pepper, sweet potato, broccoli, strawberries, orange juice/oranges, kale, cantaloupe, papaya- 1 medium

Carbohydrates-

Simple- (sugar)

Refined sugar- Candy & soda

Unrefined sugar- Honey, maple syrup, natural sweeteners, fruit

Complex- (Starch and dietary fibers)

Vegetables- Potatoes, beans, corn, peas

Grains- Oatmeal, whole wheat bread, barley, brown rice, couscous, popcorn, pasta

Dark leafy greens yellow/orange fruits and vegetables-

Broccoli, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, spinach, squash, sweet potato, carrots - 1/2 cup cooked, 2 cups raw

References:

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