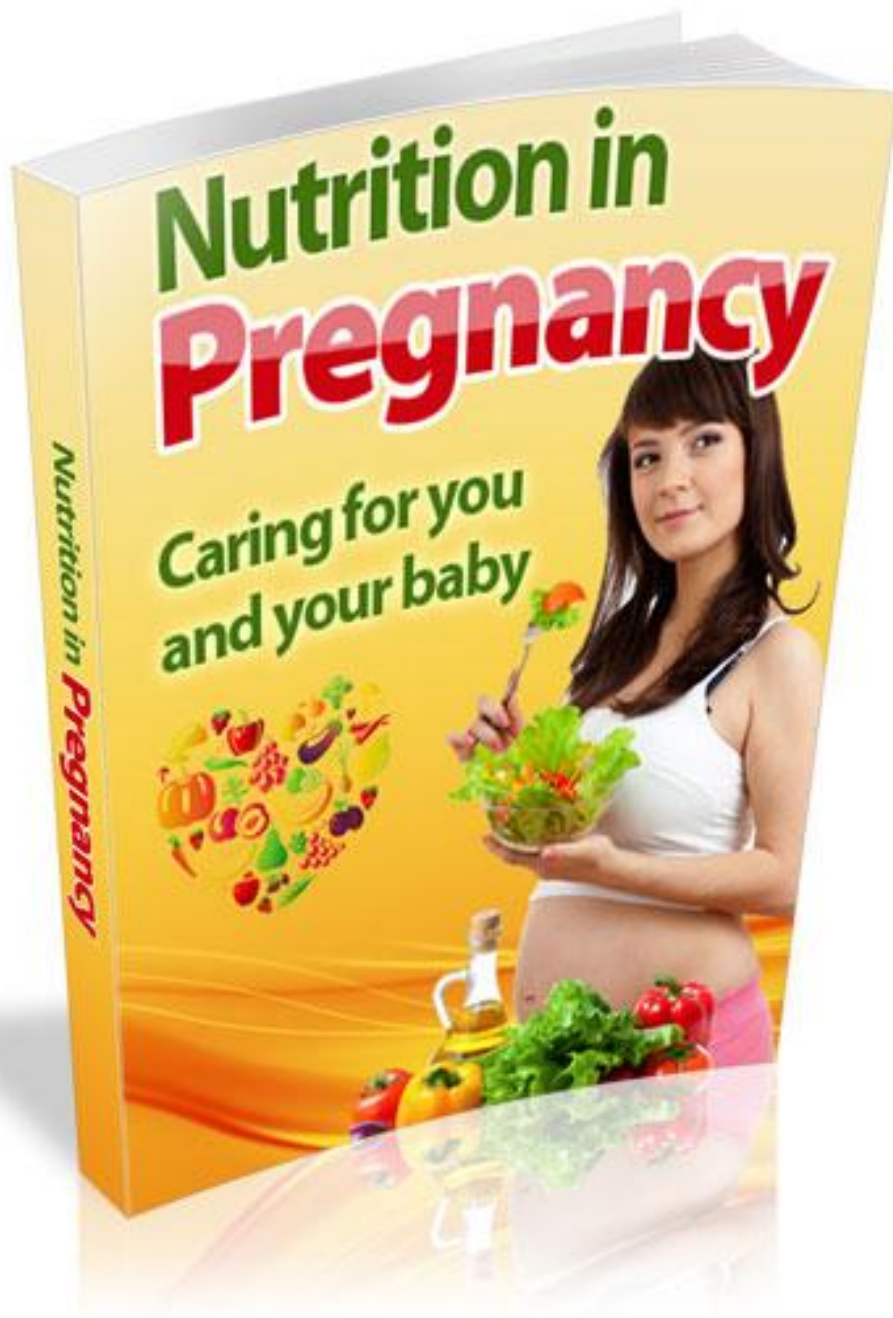


# Nutrition in Pregnancy



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## **What You Should Eat What You Should Not Eat During Pregnancy**

From the minute you find out you are pregnant most moms-to-be have a number of questions relating to pregnancy nutrition. What foods you should be eating and which foods should you be avoiding as the next nine months progress. Some foods are even better completely avoided. Then there is all those old wives' tales to sort through and figure out truth from fiction. Let's try to simplify things at least a little for you in this article.

### **Sugar and Artificial Sweeteners**

When you are pregnant, you should try to avoid, even better cut out, sugar and artificial sweetener from your diet. Don't make the mistake of replacing sugar with Sucralose, aspartame or other artificial sweeteners, which are potent chemicals with questionable health concerns. In fact, their effect on the fetus is not yet established and there is a belief they could pose a health risk to your baby.

Sugar is responsible for a number of pregnancy concerns but the most worrisome is the fast release of insulin in your body. This can result in your pancreas falling short of being able to do its job properly, which in turn leads to an increase in blood sugar levels in the body.

Even if you don't suffer from high blood pressure or gestational diabetes, if you have a high blood sugar, it can lead to birth complications, a very large baby causing labor problems, and excessive weight gain. If you must use sugar or you want to satisfy a sweet tooth look for raw honey, agave syrup, stevia, etc.

### **Caffeine**

Since caffeine stimulates the nervous system, it is important to cut your caffeine intake. It will also leach calcium, which is necessary during pregnancy. When you are depleted of calcium your baby will also be depleted, and so the fetus will draw on your calcium reserves, which in turn will decrease your calcium more. It becomes a vicious circle. Caffeine is also a diuretic and so there is a danger of becoming dehydrated. This is especially true if you are suffering from morning sickness. Drinking too much coffee can actually result in it crossing the placenta and affecting your baby.

### **Processed Foods**

Processed foods contain all kinds of preservatives and fillers, which are not healthy and can affect the health of your baby. They are generally also high in sugar and sodium, which should be avoided. Rather than processed why not opt for whole and organic foods, which are safer and healthier food choices.

Bottom line - healthy food choices lead to a healthier mother and baby.

## **First Trimester Pregnancy Nutrition**

The first trimester can be one of great change in many aspects of your life and that includes pregnancy nutrition. Many moms-to-be want to immediately change how they eat. The trouble is making drastic changes too quickly can really backfire on you and land up causing too much stress. It is much better to incorporate changes slowly. We are going to look at the four basic

areas of your first trimester nutrition to get you started on making dietary adjustments without the stress.

It would be wonderful if we knew in advance that we were to become pregnant. Sure, some pregnancies are planned but others are not. It would be great because then we could switch to a whole food diet that was organic before we became pregnant. Since this isn't going to happen too often the best we can do is make the switch as soon as we know we are pregnant.

Work towards the elimination of all processed foods and as many non-organic foods as possible. That is because processed foods along with non-organic foods that contain pesticides and other toxins are directly linked to numerous health concerns that can affect your baby. However, don't look at this as an all or nothing situation. Do your best and remember every little change is a positive change for your baby. A good way to start is to remove processed foods from one meal a day and then take baby steps from there.

You should also eliminate sugar, artificial sweeteners, and caffeine from your diet. Experts agree it is safe for a pregnant woman to have 150 mg of caffeine a day so that's a good starting point to cut back to. Once there you can try to cut it out completely. For anyone with a sweet tooth there are a number of natural sweeteners that you can use such as agave syrup, stevia, or raw honey.

Morning sickness can be a real problem during the first trimester of your pregnancy. As your body is trying to adjust to hormonal changes, it can be a bit overwhelming trying to deal with the nausea that is not always just in the mornings. For nausea that is incapacitating you need to talk to your doctor. However, there are some things that can calm nausea for many including ginger, eating protein, a handful of nuts, or crackers.

There you have it – a good start to nutrition for your first trimester to keep you and baby healthy.

## **Nutrition Guidelines for a Healthy Pregnancy**

In order to ensure all pregnant women know what is needed to have a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby, in terms of nutrition, there has been some excellent pregnancy nutrition guidelines established. When you are pregnant, you only need an additional 300 calories per day. You should make sure that these are not empty calories, and that they are in fact nutritious calories. Let's have a look at some of those guidelines.

### **Protein**

During the time you are pregnant, for your baby to grow healthy; you need to have approx. 60 grams of protein on a daily basis. Protein keeps your uterus, breasts, and placenta healthy, it produces adequate amniotic fluid and it increases the volume of blood.

### **Calcium**

Doctors recommend a calcium intake during pregnancy to range between 1200 to 1500 mg a day. Calcium is vital for your baby's bones, teeth, heart, and muscles to develop. If you aren't taking in enough calcium, your baby will draw from your own calcium reserves, which means you are at an increased risk for osteoporosis. Milk and milk-based products are good sources of calcium. If you are lactose intolerant, there are lactose free milk products.

## Iron

Iron is very important in haemoglobin production for both you and your fetes. In the last trimester, your baby will take your body's iron reserves to ensure it is not anaemic during the first six months of life. You also lose some blood during the delivery process. These are all reasons why it is so important to increase your iron intake.

While your body only needs 27 mgs of iron per day, you actually have to take 60 mg to get that 27 mg because not all iron is absorbed. If you are anaemic, you should take an iron supplement. Vitamin C enriched foods will help you with your iron absorption. Foods like oranges, grapefruits, and tomato juice work well. Avoid taking your iron and calcium supplements and/or foods at the same time since calcium interferes with iron absorption.

## Vitamins

The recommended increase in vitamins is 25 to 50 percent. Your folic acid need doubles to 400 micrograms per day. Eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, etc will help to ensure you get adequate vitamins.

Your physician will instruct you about any other nutritional needs he/she feels you may need in order to ensure a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.

## **What Not to Eat When You are Pregnant**

You are pregnant – the minute you hear those words all kinds of thoughts start running through your mind, and one of the main ones is what to eat and what not to eat when you are pregnant. After all, you want to make sure your baby is healthy and that you remain healthy.

It is important that you avoid foods that high in mercury. Fish are high in protein and omega 3 fatty acids, but mercury is a very real concern, especially for your fetes. Too much mercury has the potential to damage the nervous system of your baby. The FDA and EPA recommend avoiding shark, swordfish, King mackerel, and tilefish.

The FDA and EPA say that 8 – 12 ounces of any of the following seafood are fine for pregnant women to eat. This includes shrimp, crab, tuna, salmon, catfish, tilapia, Pollock and cod. Different doctors have their own idea of what is safe, so talk to your doctor before eating seafood during your pregnancy.

A pregnant woman should always avoid under cooked meat, eggs and poultry. When you are pregnant, you are at risk of bacterial food poisoning. To prevent foodborne illness make sure the meat you eat is completely cooked. Use a meat thermometer to ensure it is cooked. You should always cook hot dogs and processed meats until they are steaming hot to avoid illnesses such as listeriosis. It's even better if you avoid completely.

Do not buy raw poultry that is already stuffed as this can cause bacteria to grow. If you choose to buy these types of products make, sure they are thoroughly cooked.

Pregnant women should avoid unpasteurized milk, Brie, feta, blue cheese, camembert, or Mexican cheese as all of these can lead to foodborne illness. Eggs should be pasteurized and not fresh as there is also a risk of bacteria.

When you are not pregnant, the majority of these foods do not pose a risk. However, to your unborn baby a bacterial infection or food poisoning can be life threatening. As a result, the FDA, EPA, and most doctors recommend that you avoid any food that is considered high risk. It is a good idea to speak with your doctor, whom you trust, about what is right for you. Eating a healthy diet is important to your health during your pregnancy, and to your baby's health.

## **A Pregnancy Diet Plan That Works**

Congratulations on your pregnancy! Of course, the first thing that's on your mind is staying healthy throughout your pregnancy. Part of staying healthy is ensuring you have a pregnancy diet plan that works.

There are a number of reasons why moms who are expecting need to understand healthy nutrition but the most important is because of the impact what you eat has on your baby. A healthy diet is good for both you and your baby.

Weight gain goes with being pregnant. In fact, it is a positive thing for both mom and baby. This is how nature begins to prepare your body for what is to come. A healthy diet is an excellent way to provide the nutrient for proper weight gain rather than excessive weight gain. When you gain the right amount of weight it will be much easier to lose after the baby is born.

There has also been a direct connection established between your nutritional health and how the effect it has on children later in their life. It's been established that everything you do in those nine months from your physical activity to the fluids you drink will affect your child's current growth and the child's future growth. What you eat while you are pregnancy has the potential to prevent future health problems with your child and you. And of course, the food you eat now will affect your weight gain throughout your pregnancy.

During the first trimester, it is important that you make sure to limit any excess calorie intake. After the first 12 weeks pass, you can add an additional 300 calories per day in addition to your regular calorie intake.

If you are of normal weight, you should expect to gain 25 to 35 pounds during your pregnancy. You should limit your weight gain to no more than 5-10 pounds in the first 20 weeks, and then following that a pound per week. Doctors advise that you lose some weight before becoming pregnant if you are overweight. This will make it easier for you to keep extra weight off during your pregnancy and to lose it after the birth. Statistically women who are overweight have a significantly higher emergency caesarean rate, miscarriage rate, more incidents of gestational diabetes and suffer from high blood pressure more often.

To significantly increase the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy make sure that you eat a nutritional diet, high in fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and protein, while avoiding processed foods.

## **Make Whole Food Vitamins Part of Your Pregnancy Diet**

When it comes to nutrition during pregnancy, pregnant women should think about adding whole food vitamins to their diet. This type of vitamin supplement is extracted from natural sources rather than being chemically engineered. That makes these a better choice during pregnancy and after childbirth as well.

### **Why Mothers-to-be Need to Take Vitamin Supplements as Part of Pregnancy Nutrition**

There's no question – the human body is amazing and has an incredible ability to get what it needs through resources nature has to offer. When we eat a healthy diet, we can extract the right balance of vitamins, fats, minerals, and energy sources to keep the body running optimally. During pregnancy, we must be even more vigilant to ensure we get the nutrients that the fetus requires to develop both mentally and physically into a healthy term baby.

Unfortunately, many of us aren't eating a healthy well balanced diet and in no other time has the need for specialized pregnancy nutrition been necessary. There are a number of reasons why there has been such a change in the way we eat, which includes convenience, low cost, and availability of processed foods. Adding whole food vitamins makes it easier to ensure some of those essential compounds that are missing from processed foods are received by mother and baby on a daily basis. That's important for the development of the child and the mother's overall health.

### **Why Whole Food Vitamins are Better**

Whole food vitamins don't use synthesized compounds. Rather, they use sources that can be found in nature. This type of vitamin is better assimilated by the body. Sure the best way to get the nutrients we need is by eating healthy – lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, etc.; however, most of us are not able to maintain that on a daily basis. This is even more important when you are pregnant, and so whole food vitamins do a better job of filling that void.

The body can easily recognize these natural compounds and use them compared to synthetic vitamins where as much as 90% pass through never being used by the body. It doesn't make a lot of sense to take these if you are only going to get 10% value. Instead, by making the whole food vitamins part of your daily nutrition you can be sure the baby and you are getting the maximum nutritional value.

## **Iron Rich Foods to Eat During Pregnancy**

So you have just recently discovered your pregnant – congratulation! That certainly means that life is going to change. One of the first things you will want to think about is your diet and what it is you and baby need right now. Thankfully, it is not actually that difficult to get the correct nutrition during your pregnancy just as long as you stay focused on eating foods that are packed with protein and high in nutrients.

Worrying about the needs of the baby for proper development is common. The good news is as long as you eat well, your baby will get the nutrition he or she needs as they draw their nutrition from you. For example, if you make sure to eat foods that are high in iron you will not have to

worry about becoming anaemic. If you have a diet that is sufficient in calcium, your baby will have strong teeth and bones.

Your doctor will keep an eye on things by drawing blood at your checkups. If you are lacking nutrients, supplements can be prescribed and you can make changes to your diet. Let's have a look at the foods that will provide you with the nutrition you need during pregnancy.

Eating a well balanced diet is a great way to ensure you are getting the nutrients you need. Eat a diet that is packed with fresh fruits and vegetables. Strawberries and citrus fruit are high in vitamin C. Good choices since you need about 70 mg of vitamin C a day. Eat plenty of green leafy vegetables and legumes to ensure you get the 4 micrograms of folic acid you need daily.

Foods that are rich in iron are important too. It is recommended that pregnant women get around 27 mg of iron each day. Iron helps your blood cells take oxygen to your baby, and it is important to you too as it brings oxygen to your muscles so they can function properly. Adequate iron will help to decrease your susceptibility to stress and disease. Good sources of iron include fish, chicken, and meat.

If you already eat healthy, your diet during pregnancy won't need to change a lot. You should avoid processed foods, sugar, too much fat, and white flour. And of course, you should always follow your doctor's orders when it comes to healthy nutrition for you and your baby.

## **5 Key Principles to Pregnancy Nutrition**

If you already eat a healthy diet, there may only be small adjustments you need to make to your diet to ensure you are eating right for the next nine months. These five key principles will ensure that you remain fit and healthy, and that baby gets all the nutrients he or she needs to grow to be strong and healthy.

### **#1 Drink Plenty of Water**

For a healthy pregnancy, it is critical that you drink enough water, as it will help to flush the toxins from your body and fight water retention. Water will also help with constipation and headaches associated with pregnancy.

### **#2 Avoid Processed Foods**

The best way to begin your pregnancy is with proper nutrition. That includes the elimination of processed foods that are high in fillers, sodium, salt, and preservatives, which could potentially pose a risk to baby. In addition, you are far more likely to gain extra weight and suffer with fluid retention when your diet contains processed foods. Instead, opt for healthy, whole food choices that are good for you and baby.

### **#3 Buy Organic**

Organic foods are becoming more readily available and they are also becoming more affordable. Therefore, your goal should be to buy organic whenever possible. This is especially true when it comes to dairy products, meats, and eggs. Organic foods are higher in amino acids and fatty acids than the non-organic version. When it comes to fruits and vegetables at least make sure that those with the highest pesticide concentrations are organic. These are peaches,



celery, apples, strawberries, blueberries, spinach, bell peppers, kale, cherries, grapes, and potatoes.

#### #4 Eat Vegetable With Every Meal

As you get further along in your pregnancy it becomes even more important to make sure that you eat vegetables with every meal. They are high in fiber and that will help with constipation associated with pregnancy. You'll also feel fuller and you'll obtain tons of nutrients.

#### #5 Every Meal Should Include Healthy Fats

Healthy fats include olive oil, organic butter, coconut oil, raw nuts, nut butters, and avocado. These fats will help you to feel full while providing you with nutrients, and they provide the kind of healthy fats that help with your baby's cognitive development.

Include these five key principles in your pregnancy nutrition and you'll be on your way to well balanced nutrition throughout your pregnancy. Of course, you should always follow your doctor's orders when it comes to nutrition.

## **Nutrition for a Healthy Mom and Baby**

Being pregnant should be a joyous time, but for many it's a scary time with preeclampsia, pregnancy induced hypertension, toxemia, and other conditions. While you may not be able to avoid having a problem during your pregnancy, there are some nutritional things you can do to reduce your risk. Let's have a look at some of those eating strategies.

\* You should never be shy about dairy products because as a mother to be you need at least 4 servings or 1000-1300 mg of calcium daily. You also need at least 4000 IU's of Vitamin D3 per day.

\* Iron is very important during pregnancy. You need to get at least 27 mg a day. You can increase your iron by taking an iron supplement. In fact, your doctor may instruct you to do so. The top 10 foods for iron are:

- o Artichokes
- o Beans, chick peas, lentils and soybeans
- o Dark, leafy greens (i.e. spinach, collards)
- o Dried fruit (i.e. prunes, raisins)
- o Egg yolks
- o Iron-enriched cereals and grains
- o Liver
- o Molluscs (i.e. clams, oysters, scallops)
- o Red meat
- o Turkey or chicken giblets

\* Pregnant women need at least 70 mg of Vitamin C daily. Vitamin C helps to fight off infection and keep you healthy. Some good sources of Vitamin C include:

- o Oranges
- o Strawberries
- o Tomatoes
- o Broccoli

## o Dark Leafy Greens

- \* You likely will have huge cravings but at the same time, you should decrease your fat intake so that it is no more than 30 percent of your total daily calorie intake. Make sure to read labels.
- \* Omega 3s are important for the development of your baby's vision and brain.
- \* Easy on the mayo or cheese limiting your cholesterol to 300 mg a day.
- \* Protein develops every cell of your baby. You need to eat 80 to 100 grams of protein a day. If you find that the smell of meat makes you sick, keep in mind that you can get your protein from drinking a whey protein shake.

Being pregnant isn't easy and eating healthy can be a real challenge. Some days you'll feel fantastic, while other days the idea of eating is the farthest thing from your mind. A healthy weight gain is generally 25 to 35 pounds. However, if you are underweight, you should gain 28 to 40 pounds and if you are overweight, you should gain 15 to 25 pounds.

When your nutrient intake isn't the best it could be, you increase your risk of developing pregnancy related conditions such as preeclampsia, pregnancy hypertension, toxemia, and HELLP syndrome.

## **I'm Pregnant - Should I Eat Differently Now?**

As a mom-to-be, you're likely more cautious about what you eat. Early on that might be focused around morning sickness, but as time goes on it becomes a concern to make sure that you are eating nutritiously. So what should the diet of a pregnant woman look like? Here's how to make sure both you and your baby get the necessary nutrients.

- \* Foods that are rich in protein such as eggs, chicken, lean meats and legumes (i.e. beans, lentils, edamame, chickpeas, etc.)
- \* Fruits and vegetables – fresh is always preferred. Other options include dried, frozen, and canned. Berries are rich in antioxidants. A diet that includes a good balance of fruits and vegetables is preferred. Below you will find those listed that are high in folic acid.
- \* Starchy foods such as pasta, potatoes, bread, and rice.
- \* Dairy foods such as cheese, yogurt, and milk.
- \* Plenty of water to remove toxins from the body.

### Sources of Folic Acid

During pregnancy folic acid intake is important because it helps to protect an unborn baby from developing neural tube defects like spina bifida. Your doctor will tell you how much folic acid is recommended. The following are good sources of folic acid.

- \* Vegetables including avocados, endives, green peas, broccoli, baby carrots, seaweed, cauliflower, parsley, spinach, Brussels sprouts, mustard greens, beets, Romaine lettuce, and asparagus.
- \* Legumes including Romano beans, lentils, white beans, black beans, edamame, kidney beans, chickpeas, and pinto beans.

- \* Pasta, bread, and bagels that are made from enriched wheat flour.
- \* Fruits and berries such as strawberries, raspberries, kiwis, blackberries, and clementines.
- \* Seeds and nuts such as peanuts, sunflower seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, almonds, and walnuts.
- \* Juices including pineapple juice and orange juice from concentrate.
- \* Enriched breakfast cereals.

During your pregnancy, making healthy food choices is important. There may be some foods that don't agree with you – of course, you should avoid those foods. There are many choices under every category so choose an option that you enjoy and that agrees with you.

Calorie counting may not be necessary; however, weight gain is a common concern among mothers-to-be so it's a good idea to monitor your weight, and to at least be aware of the foods you are eating. Cravings can be hard to control and often changes in metabolism can result in burning calories differently. Making healthy food choices will help with weight gain and ensure you and baby are getting the nutrition you need.

## **Pregnancy Nutrition Tips You Should Know**

We already know just how important it is for us to be well nourished throughout our pregnancy. These nutritional tips are easy to implement and are highly beneficial so why not implement them today?

### **Just One Apple a Day Will Keep Asthma Away**

'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.' Who hasn't heard this before? But what many are unaware of is that the research shows that eating just one apple a day throughout your pregnancy will actually reduce your child's risk of developing asthma when he/she is older. One of the studies learned that when mothers ate apples regularly throughout their pregnancy these children had far less wheezing and other asthmatic symptoms.

### **Eat a Banana to Reduce Swelling**

Edema is common with pregnancy. However, the potassium that is in bananas can actually help to reduce your swollen feet and legs. So why not go ape and start eating plenty of bananas.

### **If You Want a Happy Baby Eat Chocolate**

In 2004, Finland scientists found that eating just a small amount of chocolate regularly throughout your pregnancy led to having a happier baby. The study questioned 300 women who ate chocolate throughout their pregnancy and they reported happier babies than their counterparts. However, this doesn't give you an excuse to eat chocolate excessively. Remember just a tiny bit daily will satisfy your chocolate cravings and keep your baby happy. It's a win-win.

### **Skimmed Milk Equals Whole Milk**

If you have always drank skimmed milk and the thought of drinking the fatter, richer whole milk doesn't sit well with you, there is some great news – Skim milk has as much calcium as whole milk it just doesn't have the same fat content. So you can drink with the worry of calories and enjoy all of the benefits.

### Coal and Mud Cravings Mean More Iron is Needed

If you have strange cravings to eat coal or mud, it means you likely need more iron. Visit your OB or midwife to be tested for anaemia. You can increase your consumption of foods that contain iron or if you're really depleted you may be given an iron supplement.

Women who are pregnant commonly stress and worry about whether they are eating right. A healthy diet is a great start. These simple tips are a great way to add to your nutrition and they will benefit both you and your baby.

## **Pregnancy Nutrition Wholesale and Processed Foods**

Pregnant women commonly ask whether it's okay to eat processed foods when you are seeking optimal nutrition during pregnancy. And the answer is.... Yes and no. If you are focusing on keeping your weight gain lower while keeping your baby healthy, then saying no to processed foods is going to be a real benefit to you.

Then again, processed foods are part of our culture and imagining life without them can be difficult. Let's look at the pros and cons of processed foods and whole foods.

Processed foods offer us convenience over unprocessed foods. If you find yourself growing hungry while out running doing your errands, it's quick and easy to stop at a fast food restaurant, order, and be on your way in minutes. Processed food is also much cheaper than whole foods.

If you are on a budget then processed foods may seem like the logical way to inexpensively stay full and satisfy your cravings. In fact, you might think that having lunch meat while you are pregnant is the perfect way to make sure you get your protein at each meal without the expense of purchasing and preparing lean cuts of meat.

However, there are many disadvantages to processed foods including that they are packed with fillers, calories, and sodium. This can cause you to gain excess weight, cause fluid retention, lead to indigestion or bloating, and not provide the best nutrition for you and your baby. At best, they should be used as a short time solution occasionally.

Most of us are already aware of the pros to eating a diet made of whole foods. They are higher in vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber, all of which are important to a healthy successful pregnancy. Whole foods, especially organic whole foods, are chemical free, hormone free and do not contain many of the questionable fillers that can be harmful to a developing fetus. Even though these foods seem more expensive, they actually are better value because you stay full for longer and you get the nutritional value.

The main disadvantages include cost and preparation time. It can seem like a lot of effort to prepare a meal when you can grab something on the go. You really can have the best of both worlds. Start by slowly incorporating whole foods into your life. One of the best places to buy whole foods is a local farmer's market where you'll find organic fruits, vegetables, and meat that's fresh. Start by changing your habits slowly. For example, try taking an apple with you along with some nuts when you are out running errands or eat before you go so you aren't hungry while out. Be creative.

## Is Caffeine Okay During Pregnancy

In 1980 the FDA released a publication that warned against a pregnant woman drinking caffeine beverages. It recommended that a woman restrict or better yet, eliminate all caffeine intake because it could be directly linked to the potential for certain birth defects. This recommendation stood strong even in 1994 when a review of more than 200 medical journals conducted by Dr. Astrid Nehlig was published in the Journal of Neurotoxicology and Teratology. But what's the recommendation today?

Currently many doctors recommend that a pregnant woman takes in less than 300 mg of caffeine daily. This is because studies that are more recent have not shown a link between caffeine and harm to the baby with an intake that is less than 300 mg. These new scientific studies are causing doctors to have a look at the results and many are changing their recommendations although some still remain very conservative. This is best discussed openly with your doctor.

### What Caffeine Does

Caffeine is a stimulant that stimulates the central nervous system. It also reduces your iron absorption and it leaches calcium from the body. Caffeine has a diuretic effect and it has the ability to cross the placenta and make its way to your baby. Caffeine does the following once it is in your body:

- \* Decreases the amount of calcium in your body
- \* Dehydrates you
- \* Increases your blood pressure
- \* Raises your heart rate

The same thing that happens to you happens to your baby with the one exception and that is that baby will steal calcium that it needs from your bones if it can't get it elsewhere. Caffeine has also been linked to interfering with normal fetal growth and as a result this leads to low birth weight and weakened adrenal glands that can affect the ability to cope with stress and to regulate blood sugar

It is a good idea to avoid caffeine or at least cut back your intake to 300 mg per day, and some experts say that number should be no more than 150 mg per day. You may have no problem handling caffeine but remember that the liver of your baby is immature and so it is not able to remove the caffeine. This means that caffeine stays with your baby for 40 to 130 hours.

Common sources of caffeine include:

- \* Coffee - 100-200 mg per 8 ounce
- \* Headache medicine - 65-130mg
- \* Soda - 40-75mg per can
- \* Tea - black 60mg, green 40mg
- \* Dark Chocolate - 5-35mg per 1 ounce
- \* Milk Chocolate - 1-15mg per 1 ounce

Talk to your doctor about caffeine intake and follow what his/her recommendations are.

## Second Trimester Pregnancy Nutrition

As you enter into your second trimester, your nutrition needs are going to change a bit. By now you've likely gotten any sugar and caffeine addictions under control. By now morning sickness should be easing. However, now you'll face new challenges. Let's look at the main ones you'll face in your second trimester of pregnancy.

### #1 How to Deal With Your Cravings

By now it's likely your morning sickness has passed and you find yourself dealing with your cravings during the second trimester. Some experts believe that these cravings are symptomatic of a nutritional deficiency. For example, if you crave oranges you need to increase your Vitamin C. Then again, other experts believe that cravings have no underlying meaning and they are just that – cravings. You should talk to your OB/GYN to see if he/she thinks you should make changes to your diet.

### #2 Get Adequate Protein

During the second trimester of your pregnancy, your baby's cognitive development is taking place quickly. To encourage this development you need to provide the necessary amino acids and the way to do this is to increase your protein intake. Nuts, nut butter, organic eggs, organic meats, and grass fed beef are all good protein sources. Seafood is also an excellent source of protein but stay away from any fish that has the potential for high mercury and do not have more than two servings per week.

### #3 Dealing With Weight Gain

Typically, it is during this trimester that women tend to gain the most weight. That's because baby is growing very rapidly. 20 to 30 pounds is considered a healthy weight gain by most doctors. You should expect to gain around a third of that during your second trimester. You do need to be careful that you are not gaining weight too quickly and here are some ways to do that.

- \* Limit your sugar intake
- \* Remain active throughout your pregnancy
- \* Cut back your refined carbs
- \* Cut back your grain consumption
- \* Drink plenty of water every day all day long
- \* Snack on fruits and vegetables and leave the refined carbs alone

Weight gain is expected during a healthy pregnancy, but too much weight gain is not healthy and can make delivery harder. It can also be very difficult to lose. Just a few common sense changes to the way you eat can make it easy to get the best nutrition in your second trimester.

## Pregnancy Nutrition to Help Control Weight Gain

When you are pregnant, you aren't just catering to your needs – you must always keep your baby's needs in mind as well. The health of both you and your baby will depend on a number of choices that you will make.

Nutrition

Nutrition during your pregnancy is very important because you are eating for both you and your baby. To meet the increased demands during pregnancy you need around 20 grams of extra protein and 300 Kcal of energy every day. You can easily meet your energy needs by eating more complex carbohydrates.

During your pregnancy, you require more energy for the baby to grow properly. You also need more folic acid, Vitamin B12, and iron for production of blood and muscles. Protein is very important to the baby's muscle and tissue development. You also need extra protein for your muscles. You will also need additional calcium so that your baby's teeth and bones properly develop.

### Weight Gain

It's normal to gain weight during pregnancy. That weight gain is the result of the weight of the placenta, weight of the fetus, fluid retention, increase blood volume and fat. You are expected to gain between 25 and 35 pounds during your pregnancy. If you were underweight before you become pregnant then you are expected to gain between 28 and 50 pounds. If you were overweight before your pregnancy, you are expected to gain between 15 and 25 pounds. If you are pregnant with twins, you should gain between 45 and 50 pounds. It's important to have a healthy diet so that you don't find yourself gaining too much weight.

You will have all kinds of cravings throughout your pregnancy and feeding those cravings is okay as long as you do it in moderation. Many times these cravings are for simple carbs, which are packed with calories that are of no benefit to us. These calories can quickly escalate the weight gain and that's not what you want so remember 'moderation.'

Eating healthy isn't as difficult as you might think. It starts with eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, which are packed with tons of nutrients but few calories. Always choose organic whenever possible and wash your fruit and veggies well to avoid ingesting pesticides and other toxins from non-organic foods. Even organic can become cross-contaminated. Your diet should also include whole grains and lean meat. Making good food choices will ensure that you do not gain more weight than you should. It will also make it much easier to lose the weight after your baby is born.

## **What You Should Know About Your Pregnancy Diet**

When it comes to pregnancy nutrition getting enough protein is key throughout your nine months of pregnancy. This will give you and the baby all you need for healthy development to occur. Protein is a vital building block of your eating plan during pregnancy because it provides all the amino acids necessary for your baby's brain and cognitive development.

Protein is also important in curbing appetite and in evening out fluctuating blood sugar levels. You should make sure every meal including snacks contains some protein. There is some confusion about which protein types are best to seek out. Let's have a look.

### Organic Eggs

Eggs have really come under pressure in the past few years. There's been concern over cholesterol, but more recent research has shown that these concerns are unfounded and that eggs are actually an excellent source of Omega 3 fatty acids and protein.

### Organic Meat

Meat is the most obvious protein source, especially chicken and beef. However, there have been some serious concerns relating to the hormones used in some meat, which is why it's best to switch to organic meat.

### Seafood

There are some serious concerns relating to mercury in many different types of seafood. When you are pregnant, these concerns are even bigger as they can affect the fetes. While you should avoid seafood that is known to be high in mercury, other seafood is fine to eat such as shrimp, lobster, crab, anchovies, sardines, and salmon. However, you should not eat no more than two 6-ounce servings twice a week.

### Soy Product

Pregnant women should avoid soy products for a couple of reasons. Soy products have a lot of preservatives in them, which can be unsafe. You should avoid all preservatives. Soy has also been linked to the under-development of the sex organs of feteses, which can have long reaching consequences for the child. It's best to err on the side of caution and just avoid soy products.

### Nuts

Nuts or nut butter is also a good source of protein especially if you aren't fond of meat. They are readily available, convenient, and an excellent source of protein. They are also high in healthy fats, which can help with cognitive function and your brain development of your baby. It will also help you to feel fuller so you are less likely to overeat and become overweight. Look for raw nuts and organic whenever possible.

There you have it – some great information on what you should know about your pregnancy diet. Now relax, and enjoy the time before your baby arrives.

## **Foods to Avoid During Pregnancy**

Pregnancy is a time when most mothers to be are concerned about their health, and about how what they eat, will affect their unborn baby. Public health agencies make many recommendations and one of those, in fact the most important one, is for women to avoid foods that have a high potential for disease causing bacteria or that are dangerous to the fetes.

Here's a list of foods that public health agencies recommend you avoid during your pregnancy.

- \* Alcohol - It is recommended that you completely stop drinking alcohol during your pregnancy as it is directly linked to fetal alcohol syndrome and other conditions.
- \* Caffeine – You should limit your consumption of coffee, tea or cola to no more than 0-1 per day. Caffeine is linked to low birth weight as well as miscarriage.
- \* Freshly caught fish – this includes tuna, swordfish, shark, marlin, etc., which may contain unsafe mercury levels. You should limit your intake to 150 grams per month. Canned white tuna and albacore tuna contain some mercury, so you should limit your consumption to no more than 300 grams per week.



\* Herbal tea, such as sage tea, Chamomile tea, pennyroyal, parsley tea, lobelia, coltsfoot, teas with aloe, juniper berries, comfrey, Labrador tea, buckthorn bark, and sassafras should all be avoided during pregnancy. There are others so make sure to read the packaging before purchasing.

\* Liver

\* Non-dried deli meats – cold cuts, refrigerated pate, hot dogs, refrigerated smoked seafood and fish, and meat spreads

\* Raw fish - clams, oysters and sushi. Avoid smoked fish that is kept in the fridge such as smoked salmon.

\* Raw or undercooked eggs – this includes foods that are made with raw eggs like Caesar salad dressing. Raw eggs can potentially contain salmonella and therefore should be avoided throughout your pregnancy.

\* Raw sprouts - especially alfalfa sprouts

\* Undercooked meat or rare meat, seafood and poultry

\* Unpasteurized juices

\* Unpasteurized milk products - also foods that are made from using raw milk cheese, especially soft and/or semi-soft cheeses. This includes Brie and Camembert. All unpasteurized cheeses have the potential to be infected with Listeria bacteria, which can be harmful to your baby. If you are unsure about a certain food, it is best to avoid that food until you can find information regarding it. You should feel free to ask your doctor about any nutritional concerns you might have.

## **Pregnancy Nutrition During Your Third Trimester**

If you are moving into the final stretch of your pregnancy, the third trimester, for many women this feels like the longest phase of the pregnancy. After all, this is a stage that is increasingly awkward, there's plenty of growth, it's a busy time, you are preparing your birth plan, and there can be physical symptoms such as heartburn, indigestion, and constipation that increase. Nutrient needs are at the highest demand, as your baby triples its weight and size. Protein is needed for growth, iron for blood and cells, and the brain requires optimal nutrition to complete the developmental stage.

Zinc and magnesium are key during the third trimester. Increasing your zinc positively affects the cell division and DNA production. Most women are deficient in zinc even before they become pregnant. The RDA is 3 mg of Zinc daily for a pregnant woman. Good sources of Zinc include meat and oysters have the highest amount of Zinc of all foods. Zinc can also be found in plants and grains.

Magnesium is also very important, not only to the development of healthy bones and muscles, but also to the development of over 300 bodily enzymes that need Magnesium in order to function properly. While we many not normally need that much Magnesium the RDA for a pregnant woman is 320 mg. In studies, high levels of magnesium are linked to preventing premature birth and a lower risk of a slow growing fetes. Some foods that are high in magnesium include whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds, seafood, and leafy green vegetables.

During your third trimester you will grow the most – in fact, you will put on an average of one pound per week as the baby grows and gets bigger. That's about 12 pounds in the last trimester. If you've been eating a healthy diet all along and your weight, gain is on track that's

terrific! Right now, your baby is converting the food you eat into nutrition it can use to provide for that rapid growth spurt as the end nears. Right now small meals more often is a better to help to keep your digestion optimal. You should also be eating foods that are high in fat content, which will keep things moving smoothly.

It's not much longer now before you will have your baby in your arms so spend the next few months making sure that your baby is getting all the nutrients it needs – before long you'll be many pounds lighter.

## **Latest Changes to Pregnancy Nutrition**

Recently there has been some new research published relating to the importance of Vitamin D throughout a pregnancy. In the past, the focus has mostly been on Folic Acid. While this is certainly still very important, it seems the importance of Vitamin D has been significantly underestimated.

The study found that many pregnant women and those who are breastfeeding are not getting sufficient Vitamin D, which is linked to pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes, along with decreased bone density in newborns.

The research also indicates that the majority of women actually are Vitamin D deficient at the start of their pregnancy, because the recommended 600 IUs is inadequate. Researchers are now recommending that pregnant women take at least a 1000 IU supplement.

Another change that has been made is the recommendations relating to iodine, which is important to brain development of the baby and the mothers metabolism. It is very important that pregnant women get enough iodine to protect their baby from impaired cognitive function and birth defects. A good way for you to acquire iodine through your diet is to use iodized salt and choose foods that are iodine rich such as cod, potatoes, and milk.

Choline is yet another important nutrient that to date has not been stressed enough for pregnant women. It is very important in the development of the baby's brain. There have been recent studies that have shown women who aren't getting enough choline through their diet have a significantly higher occurrence of tubal defects in the early months. Good foods for choline include lean beef, Brussels sprouts, cod, and eggs.

Research also goes so far as to caution pregnant women to avoid the use of artificial sweeteners, especially for those with gestational diabetes. It is much better to watch your sugar intake rather than use these substitutes. Research coming out of Denmark shows a significant increase in pre-term deliveries in women who consumed just one beverage a day containing aspartame sweetener. While more research is needed, it certainly should be taken seriously and many doctors are recommending to use caution and avoid artificial sweeteners if at all possible.

Some good news when it comes to those pleasure foods we love, dark chocolate along with natural cocoa have been given the thumbs up. Recent research has shown that these chocolates actually improve blood vessel function that is directly linked to improved cardio

health. It is also linked to reducing hypertension and pre-eclampsia. What a great reason to spoil yourself with a little chocolate.

In addition to this recent dietary recommendation, you should always eat a diet that's packed with fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and avoids processed foods.