



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.
- **Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, bigeye tuna, or tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico.** They have high levels of mercury, which can harm your baby. Other types of fish, such as white albacore tuna, should only be eaten once a week (no more than 4 ounces).
- **Eat 8 to 12 ounces a week of fish or shellfish that are lower in mercury.** Good choices include shrimp, wild salmon, pollock, canned light tuna, and catfish. A 4-ounce serving is about the size and thickness of the palm of your hand.
- **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

- **Avoid caffeine or limit how much you drink to about 1 cup of coffee or tea each day.** Caffeine also is found in some soft drinks, such as colas.
- **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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