

Nutrition During Pregnancy



Nutrition is one of the most important factors in the health of both mother and baby before, during and after pregnancy. Be sure to eat a diet high in whole, organic, fresh foods. Avoid processed, refined foods and foods with chemicals, additives and those high in hydrogenated oils, sugars and refined salt. Fluid requirements increase significantly as blood and amniotic volumes expand during pregnancy. Avoid caffeine from coffee, black tea and soft drinks.

A healthy weight gain is typically 25-35 pounds depending on pre-pregnancy weight, activity levels and Mom's unique physiology. Too much (more than 40 pounds), to too little (less than 20 pounds) weight gain can have a negative effect on the health of the baby and puts Mom at risk for gestational diabetes, high blood pressure and hormonal imbalances during and after pregnancy.

Caloric Needs

A pregnant woman requires 300-400 extra calories per day. Add another 500 calories per baby if pregnant with multiples. For the average woman, moderately active and in overall good health, that amounts to about 2500 calories per day. Discuss this with your health care practitioner if you are unsure about where you fall.

Carbohydrates, Proteins & Fats

Approximately 300-400 calories (75-100g) should come from good quality proteins including free range chicken or turkey, grass fed beef, bison or lamb, free range eggs, nuts & seeds, full fat, organic dairy products, beans and legumes.

Approximately 600-700 calories should come from health fats. Avoid trans fats/hydrogenated oils. Place special importance on omega 3 fatty acids from cold water fish, raw nuts and seeds, olive oil, flax, and hemp. Unrefined coconut oil should also be a staple in your diet.

The rest of your calories should come from carbohydrates, with an emphasis on fiber rich, complex carbohydrates from whole grains (oats, quinoa, rice, whole wheat), vegetables and beans and legumes. Avoid processed grain products and sugars.

Important Nutrients in Pregnancy

It is highly recommended to take a good quality pre-natal multi-vitamin/mineral formula to ensure that you are covering your bases.

Vitamin A

- Greater than 10,000IU/day of Vitamin A products may lead to problems during pregnancy. Women thinking of getting pregnant or those who are pregnant should limit their intake of Vitamin A in supplemental form.
- Pregnant women do, however, need 5000-6000IU Vitamin A daily.
- Best sources include: carrots, squash, orange sweet potatoes, yellow/orange/red bell peppers

Vitamin C

- 1000mg of Vitamin C + 400mg Vitamin E from week 20 on decreases risk of preeclampsia (pregnancy induced hypertension), and prevents premature rupture of the membranes.
- Best sources include: citrus fruits, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, kiwi, parsley and broccoli

Vitamin D

- Vitamin D is required for proper fetal development of bones, teeth, and the nervous system. It is common for both pregnant women and newborn babies to be deficient in Vitamin D.
- Pregnant women require a minimum of 1000-2000IU per day (20 minutes of sunlight = 300-400IU). You may want to consider Vitamin D supplementation as part of your pregnancy treatment plan.
- Best sources include: sunshine, fish oil, egg yolk, sprouts.

B-Vitamins

- Vitamin B1 – Thiamine
 - 25-100mg per day can prevent nervousness, anxiety, depression, weakness and anemia; no risk of toxicity



- Sources – green peas, peppers, sunflower seeds, beans & legumes, oats, brown rice, red clover tea, raspberry leaf tea
- Vitamin B2 – Riboflavin
 - 25-100mg per day; no risk of toxicity
 - Sources – yogurt, broccoli, almonds, wild rice, watercress, parsley, rosehip tea, dark leafy greens.
- Vitamin B3 – Niacin
 - 50-200mg/day to prevent nervousness, anxiety, depression, and support nervous system and brain development in fetus; no risk of toxicity
 - Sources – chicken, brown rice, sunflower seeds, almonds, soy, eggs, wheat germ, garlic, parsley, dark leafy greens
- Vitamin B6 – Pyridoxine
 - An important nutrient in liver function (which is vital during pregnancy), and in protein synthesis. Helps to prevent preeclampsia and nausea during pregnancy. Deficiencies show decreased APGAR scores at birth and neurological impairments.
 - 25-100mg per day; use P5P form for supplementation
 - Sources – bran, banana, avocado, chicken, turkey, sunflower seeds, broccoli, sweet potatoes.
- Vitamin B12 – Methylcobalamin
 - 250-500mcg per day helps to prevent anemia, miscarriage, and neural tube defects; necessary for cell division & replication
 - Sources – animal protein, spirulina, chlorella, fermented soy products
- Vitamin B5 – Pantothenic Acid
 - 25-100mg/day; see other B Vitamins above
- Folic Acid
 - 800-2000mcg/day; folic acid before, during and after pregnancy prevents neural tube defects, toxemia, premature birth and premature rupture of placenta; important to include pre-conception as most neural tube defects occur in weeks 4-8 of gestation
 - Sources – dark leafy greens, milk, organ meats, salmon, whole grains, dates
- Iron
 - 30-60mg/day with increased need in 2nd and 3rd trimesters; required for maternal and fetal hemoglobin production (blood cells). Have blood work done during your 1st trimester to see if you are deficient
 - Sources – blackstrap molasses, eggs, fish, organ meats, red meat, poultry, wheat germ

- Calcium
 - 1000-1200mg/day can be taken for healthy bones, teeth, heart and prevention of muscle spasms
 - Sources – canned salmon with bones, dark leafy greens, dried beans/legumes, almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, full fat dairy products
- Magnesium
 - Normally, we require about half as much magnesium as calcium but during pregnancy, one requires more like 60-80% as much magnesium as calcium. Important for a healthy baby weight, and to prevent toxemia, constipation, muscle spasm or cramps, fatigue and insomnia.
 - Sources – beans, nuts, whole grains, unrefined sea salt, bone broth, seaweeds.

Nutritional Supplements

Make sure to speak to your health care practitioner before taking any nutritional supplements, especially during pregnancy.

Pre-Natal Multi-Vitamin & Mineral Formula

A broad spectrum multi-vitamin/mineral supplement designed for pregnancy that covers a large portion of the minimum requirements is important during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Eating a whole food diet covers the rest.

Fish Oil – Essential Fatty Acids

essential fatty acids are important to overall health and wellbeing of both Mom and baby during pregnancy. These nutrients are also anti-inflammatory, immune boosting and aid in readying the cervix for labor and delivery. They are critical for neurological and brain development during pregnancy.

- EPA – 1000-2000mg/day
- DHA – 400-900mg/day

Iron, B12, Folic Acid

Some women may have needs beyond those offered by diet and multi-vitamin. Consider blood work to determine your needs and speak to your doctor to help you determine if you need additional supplementation.

