

Healthy Eating Habits During Pregnancy



It's important to develop healthy eating habits while you are pregnant, for you as well as for your baby. Here are some ways to stay healthy.

Aim for a healthy weight

A slow, steady rate of weight gain is often best. After the first trimester, you may gain about a pound a week. If you were overweight before pregnancy, you need to gain fewer pounds. Your healthcare provider can give you a healthy weight goal for your pregnancy.

Don't diet

Now is not the time to diet. You may not get enough of the nutrients you and your baby need. Instead, learn how to be a healthy eater. Start by doing it for your baby. Soon, you may do it for yourself.

Vitamins and supplements

Talk with your healthcare provider about taking these and other prenatal vitamins and supplements.

- **Iron** makes the extra blood you need now.
- **Calcium** and **vitamin D** help build and keep strong bones.
- **Folic acid** helps prevent certain birth defects.
- **Iodine** helps the thyroid work right.
- Some vitamins may **not** be safe to take. Your healthcare provider will tell you which ones to avoid.

Fluids



Drink at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid daily. Your baby needs fluids. Fluids also decrease constipation, flush out toxins and waste, limit swelling, and help prevent bladder infections. Water is best. Other good choices are:

- Water or seltzer water with a slice of lemon or lime. (These can also help ease an upset stomach.)
- Clear soups that are low in salt
- Low-fat or fat-free milk, soy or rice milk with calcium added
- Ice pops or gelatin

Things to avoid

Some things might harm your growing baby. Don't eat or drink:

- Alcohol
- Unpasteurized dairy foods and juices
- Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, or eggs
- Unwashed fruits and vegetables
- Prepared meats, like deli meats or hot dogs, unless heated until steaming hot
- Fish that are high in mercury, like shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish, and albacore tuna

Things to limit

Ask your healthcare provider whether it's safe to eat or drink:

- Caffeine
- Artificial sweeteners
- Organ meats
- Certain types of fish
- Fish and shellfish that contain mercury in lower amounts, like shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish

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