

Feeding Pregnant Women

Good nutrition is important during pregnancy to maintain the health of the mother and fetus, as the quality of food is more important than its quantity, so it is recommended to choose healthy foods of high nutritional value, and avoid unhealthy foods.

The importance of good nutrition during pregnancy:

- Building bones and blood cells for the fetus.
- Reduce pregnancy troubles and problems.
- Strengthening immunity for the prevention of infectious diseases.
- Prevention of iron deficiency anemia.
- Strengthening the body in preparation for childbirth.
- Promoting milk formation for breastfeeding.

Weight gain during pregnancy:

Healthy weight gain varies depending on the mother's BMI and health before pregnancy, if the BMI is normal, it is recommended to gain 11 to 15 kg during pregnancy.

The impact of obesity on pregnancy:

If your BMI is higher than normal or reaches obesity, it negatively affects pregnancy, as women are more likely to develop the

following problems:

- Gestational diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Pregnancy poisoning.
- Premature birth.
- Caesarean section.

In addition, newborns may develop the following problems:

Birth defects.

Large fetal size (gigantism), with the possibility of injuries during childbirth.

Childhood obesity.

Foods recommended:

- Proteins: It is recommended to obtain them from lean meats (e.g. chicken, fish, pulses, etc.) everyday.
- Carbohydrates (e.g. bread, cereals, potatoes, rice and pasta).

- **Fat:** It is recommended to obtain them from plant sources (e.g. olive oil), and to avoid saturated fats of animal origin (e.g. butter).
- **Pasteurized dairy products:** (e.g. yogurt, milk and cheese).
- **Vitamins and minerals.**
- **Too much fiber.**

Foods to avoid:

- **Avoid uncooked meat or eggs** as they may contain listeria, which is transmitted to the fetus through the placenta causing miscarriage, or the birth of a deceased fetus.
- **Fish:**
 1. **Avoid eating raw fish or uncooked oysters** that may contain germs (bacteria, viruses or parasites).
 2. **Avoid certain fish species** because they contain a high level of mercury that can damage the nervous system of the fetus (e.g. shark, swordfish, marlin).
 3. **Limit tuna intake** and not more than four medium-sized cans (net weight = 140 grams per can) per week.
 4. **Some types of oily fish** that may contain chemicals from pollution, may accumulate in the body over time and be harmful, so it is recommended not to exceed two servings per week (e.g. mackerel, sardines, salmon and fresh tuna, where canned tuna is not considered oily fish).
- **Caffeine:** A substance naturally found in foods (e.g. tea, coffee, chocolate), some soft drinks, energy drinks or some

analgesics, is recommended to reduce intake during pregnancy, as it increases the risk of miscarriage and low child weight at birth.

- **Unpasteurized milk and all its products.**

Supplements:

- **Good supplements:**

Iron: To prevent the mother from developing iron deficiency anemia, in addition to helping to transfer blood to the largest amount of oxygen to the fetus.

Folic acid: to prevent the fetus from developing clefts.

- **Harmful supplements:**

Avoid too much vitamin A, whether with food or supplements, because it can harm the fetus.

Supplements do not eliminate healthy nutrition.

Food poisoning:

It is abdominal pain accompanied by diarrhea and vomiting, caused by a bacterial infection or bacteria in the stomach, and to avoid food poisoning is therefore recommended:

- **Cook food and meat well.**
- **Wash fruits and vegetables well.**
- **Keep the kitchen clean and the tools of eating and cooking.**
- **Wash your hands after exiting the toilets, before and after eating, after handling raw meat, after touching the animals.**

- **General guidelines:**
- **Avoid fried foods and replace them with grilling.**
- **It is recommended to eat well-washed fruits and vegetables.**
- **Avoid starting a diet to lose weight (diet) during pregnancy, as this affects the mother and child's access to important nutrients.**
- **Reducing salt in food, as it causes fluid retention, leading to high blood pressure**
- **Misconceptions:**
- **Pregnant women should be fed by two people.**
- **Fact: Pregnant women should focus on the quality of food that benefits their fetus and not on their quantity.**
- **Stop eating caffeine (found in coffee, tea, etc.) during pregnancy.**
- **Fact: It is required to be mitigated as much as possible, especially in the first trimester of your pregnancy, i.e. the first three months of fetal formation.**