



THE PREGNANCY FOOD GUIDE



Developed by a scientific panel organized by the Brigham and Women's Hospital, a Harvard teaching affiliate.

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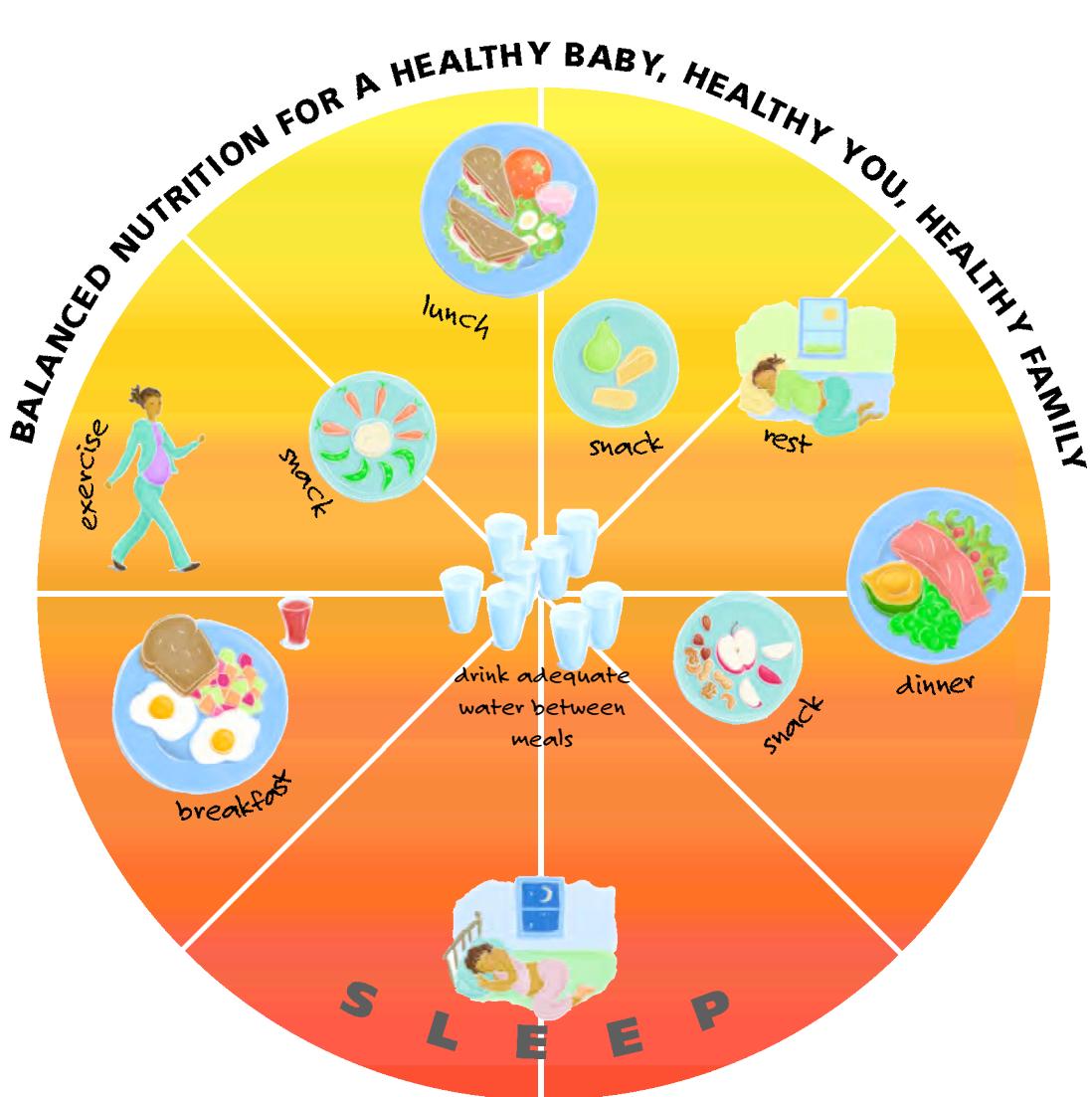


Introduction

What you choose to eat when you're pregnant may influence you and your baby's health now and for years to come. Pregnancy is a good time to review your nutrition.

Weight Gain

- ★ Steady, gradual weight gain achieved through balanced and healthy nutrition is best for you and your baby
- ★ Pregnancy is not a time to lose weight
- ★ Consult with a health care provider right away if you have nausea, vomiting, lose your appetite or lose weight



Pregnancy Food Guide Chart

Stay energized. Include protein (like egg, poultry or fish), carbohydrate (like fruit, vegetables or cereal) and healthy fat (like olive oil or nuts) in every meal & snack

While awake, try to eat every three hours

Enjoy healthy foods first and plan for an occasional treat

Drink plenty of water; Limit soda, coffee, juice drinks and other sweetened beverages

Try to be physically active at least 30 minutes each day.
Avoid exercising on your back

Every pregnancy is unique; Consult with a registered dietitian (R.D.) for your personal nutrition needs

Eat enough for a healthy weight gain but you do not need to "eat for two"

Sample Meals and Snacks



BREAKFAST

- Whole grain cereal with berries, low fat milk
or
- Low fat yogurt and granola, orange juice
or
- Hard cooked egg, 2 slices whole grain toast, cut oranges, tomato juice

SNACKS

- Pudding with nuts
or
- Low fat yogurt with fruit
or
- Hummus with carrots



LUNCH

- Turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato on whole grain bread, low fat yogurt, apple,
or
- Taco with low fat cheese, greens, tomatoes and a side of beans, banana
or
- 1 slice pizza, salad, watermelon

SNACKS

- Peanut butter on apples
or
- Low fat cheese and crackers
or
- Small handful of nuts and raisins

DINNER

- Chicken, rice and beans, carrots, green salad
or
- Fish, broccoli, sweet potato, three bean salad
or
- Tofu, bowl of vegetables, buckwheat noodles, cucumber and tomato salad

SNACKS

- Hard cooked egg with carrot sticks
or
- Whole grain cereal with low fat milk and berries
or
- Low fat cheese and pear

Estimating Portion Sizes



FIST = 1 CUP
(1 serving of cereal)



HANDFUL = 1 OR 2 OZ.
(1 serving of nuts)



PALM = 3 OZ.
(1 serving of meat or fish)



THUMB = 1 OZ.
(1 serving cheese)



THUMB TIP = 1 TSP
(1 serving mayonnaise)

Food Groups

Healthy Protein

★ Good sources of protein are chicken, turkey, fish, low fat dairy products, eggs, beans, nuts, peanut butter, lean meat, tofu

★ Fish – Eat about 12 ounces, 2 average meals, a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock and catfish. If you are not able to eat fish or choose not to, try eating other sources of DHA including walnuts, wheat germ, canola oil, flaxseed oil and omega 3 enriched eggs or consider taking a supplement with DHA

Healthy Fats

- ✿ Pregnant and breastfeeding women need healthy fats for baby's development
- ✿ Eat healthy fats throughout the day such as fats found in olive and canola oil, fatty fish (salmon, herring and sardines), avocados, peanut butter, salad dressings, nuts and seeds
- ✿ Avoid trans fat or foods with "hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fat" (like many packaged and processed foods, fried foods and fast foods)
- ✿ Limit saturated fat (like butter, lard, whole milk dairy products, high fat meats such as sausage and bacon)

Healthy Carbohydrates

- ✿ Fruits and vegetables are healthy sources of carbohydrates. Eat them often and throughout the day. Try for five to nine servings a day. Eat dark and brightly colored fruits and vegetables because they are richer sources of vitamins and minerals. Choose whole fruit rather than juice whenever possible. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are acceptable. However, canned fruits in syrup are higher in sugar and canned vegetables are higher in salt.
- ✿ Eat whole grain products including whole wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain pasta, seeded rye, barley, quinoa, wheat berries, bulgur, millet and kasha. Limit instant grains and refined carbohydrates (like cookies, soda, instant rice and instant oatmeal)

Fluid

- ✿ Drink enough water to never feel thirsty and so urine is light in color
- ✿ Choose pasteurized low fat milk and lightly flavored waters
- ✿ Limit juices and other sweetened beverages, which are high in calories



Food Safety and Preparation



- ✿ When you're pregnant, you're at an increased risk for foodborne illness because hormonal changes during pregnancy weaken your immune system.
- ✿ Remember to:
 - Wash your hands before and after food preparation
 - Cook well and properly handle meat, fish, eggs and poultry. Eggs should be cooked until firm.
 - Wash fruits and vegetables well
- ✿ Avoid:
 - Unpasteurized brie, feta, camembert, blue cheese and all soft cheeses
 - Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish and solid white albacore tuna because they contain mercury*
 - Unpasteurized milk and juice
 - Cold cuts (unless reheated to steaming hot)
 - Cooked foods and foods requiring refrigeration that have been left unrefrigerated for more than two hours



Nausea and Vomiting

- ✿ Pregnancy isn't a time to lose weight. Consult with a health care provider right away if you have vomiting, lose your appetite or lose weight.
- ✿ Don't stop eating. Try different textures (such as smooth pudding or a crunchy cereal) and experiment with different tastes (such as sweet, salty or spicy). Pleasant smells such as lemons or orange peels may help reduce nausea.
- ✿ Stay hydrated (try lemonade or ginger tea).

Breastfeeding

- ✿ Breast milk is the perfect food for babies
- ✿ Most women will produce sufficient milk even if their diet is not perfect
- ✿ The same nutrition recommendations apply to pregnant and nursing mothers: Eat well and stay hydrated
- ✿ Prenatal vitamins have more iron than breastfeeding mothers need. Breastfeeding women should consider taking a multivitamin-mineral supplement for non-pregnant women

Multivitamin and Mineral Supplements

- ✿ If you're planning to become pregnant, take a multivitamin and mineral supplement that includes at least 400 mcg of folic acid (to prevent birth defects) and 200-400 IU of Vitamin D
- ✿ Once you're pregnant, ask for a prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement that includes 220 mcg of iodine and does not contain more than 30 mg of iron, unless your health care provider specifies otherwise
- ✿ Check the package insert or ask your pharmacist to ensure the vitamin and mineral supplements meet recommendations
- ✿ Take multivitamin and mineral supplements with meals to avoid stomach upset
- ✿ Many dietary and herbal supplements are not safe during pregnancy
- ✿ To get the calcium you need, drink 2-3 cups of skim or low fat milk a day. If you can not or choose not to get your needed calcium through food, take a calcium supplement



Choline

When consumed during pregnancy, choline may promote brain development and memory function early in life. The richest sources of choline are eggs, beef liver and chicken liver. One egg provides about half the recommended daily intake of choline for pregnant women.

Sodium



Salt does not need to be restricted in pregnancy for most women. Foods that are less processed will contain less salt. To avoid excessive salt, limit intake of highly processed foods such as canned soups, boxed pasta and rice mixes, salted snacks, and salty seasonings.

Dining Out

Eating out can be challenging especially when you are trying to eat healthy. Portion control is key since the servings at most restaurants are often times 2 to 3 times larger than at home. Use the portion guide available on page 3. Selecting the right restaurant and planning ahead are important ways to eat out more healthfully.



- ★ Choose lean meats that are baked, broiled, or grilled
- ★ Include vegetables and a whole grain starch like brown rice or whole wheat pasta
- ★ Drink low fat milk as a beverage whenever possible
- ★ Enjoy a fresh fruit cup for dessert
- ★ Limit foods that are fried and prepared in butter or cream sauces
- ★ Be mindful of the calories from the bread basket.



Sample Healthy Meals Out

- ★ Grilled chicken on salad greens with dressing on the side
- ★ Turkey breast with lettuce and tomato on a whole wheat roll-up
- ★ 2 slices of vegetarian pizza with a side green salad
- ★ Beef, chicken, or shrimp fajitas
- ★ Chicken or seafood stir-fry and specify "light on the oil and sauces."

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I get enough calcium if I do not drink milk?

Yes. In addition to milk, you can also get calcium in fortified orange juice, cheese, yogurt, sardines, soups cooked with bones or through a calcium supplement.

Are artificial sweeteners safe to use while I am pregnant?

Yes, except saccharin.

I am a vegetarian. Do I have to eat meat?

There are many alternative sources of protein such as dairy products, soy beans and nuts. See a registered dietitian (R.D.) to address your individual needs.

How can I reduce my constipation?

Drink 8 glasses of water a day. Have 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Include whole grains in each meal and snack. Be active every day.

Can I eat spicy food while I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Yes, if it is comfortable for you. Spicy foods will not harm your baby.

Can I have caffeine?

Limit your caffeine to 1 small cup of coffee (10 ounces) or 2 cups of light tea (20 ounces) a day.

Can I eat eggs when I'm pregnant?

Yes. Eggs are a low-cost, nutritious food to eat when pregnant. Eggs provide the highest quality protein available, along with 18 vitamins and minerals. Eggs are also an excellent source of choline, a nutrient that, when consumed during pregnancy, may be key in the brain development and life-long memory capacity of your infant. As always, do not eat raw or undercooked eggs.

How are my nutrition needs different if I am pregnant with twins?

You should eat a meal or snack every two hours while awake and consult with a registered dietitian (R.D.) about your individual needs.

I've heard I can't drink alcohol while I'm pregnant or breastfeeding. Is that true?

Do not drink alcohol while you are pregnant. During lactation, if you choose to have a drink, wait a few hours before nursing.

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