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Guidelines to improve nutrition during pregnancy



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Guidelines to improve nutrition during pregnancy

A modified diet is a basic component in life to benefit from good health at any time. During pregnancy, your diet is even more important. The food that you eat is the main source of nutrients for your baby.

Before becoming pregnant

The best time to begin eating a healthy diet is before becoming pregnant. This way both you and your baby will receive the nutrients that you need. If it is planned before pregnancy, consult your doctor.

A healthy diet

The first step towards a healthy diet is to analyze the food that is part of your daily diet. During the first stages of pregnancy, it is possible that your nutrition habits may be the cause for possible nausea. Therefore you may want to eat certain food or do not want to eat at all. If this happens, you should always try to eat a variety of food every day in order to assure that you get an adequate amount of nutrients. also significantly avoids things that could be harmful. Alcohol is included in this (wine, beer, or mixed drinks) and illegal drugs, of which can cause congenital defects and other problems for the baby. Smoking cigarettes is particularly harmful for pregnant women and their babies.

· Make between 5/6 small meals throughout the day, instead of 3 big meals



Table 1. Daily food recommendations

This table suggests types of food and quantities. Pregnant women need to consume 300 additional calories every day. 300 calories are equivalent to a small snack, or a handful of almonds (40 g), and a cup of reduced fat milk.

Breads	6-8 portions		1 portion is equivalent to: 1 slice of bread, 1/2 cup* of ready to eat cereal or 1 cup* of rice, pasta, or cooked cereal, a small potato.
Vegetables	3 portions		1 portion is equivalent to: 1 cup* of raw or cooked vegetables, or creamed vegetables, or 2 cups* of raw green leaves.
Fruits	2 portions		1 portion is equivalent to: 1 cup* of fruits, 1 medium piece or a glass of 100% natural fruit juice.
Fish, Meats and Vegetables	2 portions		1 portion is equivalent to: 1 cut of meat, poultry or fish (110g), 1/2 cup* of cooked vegetables, 1 egg, or 25 g of nuts.
Milk Products	3 portions		1 portion is equivalent to: 1 glass of milk or yogurt, 80g of fresh cheese or 40g of cured cheese.

*the amount of a cup of coffee with milk

Meal planning and hygiene in the kitchen

Planning meals ahead can help to guarantee that you and your family are eating a balanced diet. The kitchen should be a clean place, so that you can avoid microorganisms from entering it (germs, bugs, refuse, ect.) that can cause illness and a pregnant woman is especially sensitive to this.

• Eating fruits and vegetable can prevent deficiency





Basic nutrients

All diets should incorporate proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals. In order to make sure that your diet is adequately proportioned with nutrients, you should know what foods are a good source from each one of them. The Recommended Daily Allowance or RDA, that are illustrated in food tables, show nutrient levels that are needed every day. During pregnancy, the recommended dietetic intake is increased for the majority of nutrients. Table 2 illustrates the key nutrients that you and your baby will need during pregnancy.

Additional nutrients

Pregnant women need more **iron** and **folic acid**. Generally these are prescribed as supplements in the form of tablets, if it is necessary. Ask your doctor or nurse how you can better satisfy your needs. Also, **iodine** and **calcium** increase importance during gestation. Women should take 400 micrograms of **folic acid** daily, besides having a balanced diet, during at least 1 month before becoming pregnant and during the first 3 months of pregnancy. This way you can help to prevent defects of the neural tube, that affect the vertebral column and cranium of the fetus.

Table 2. Essential nutrients for you and your baby during pregnancy

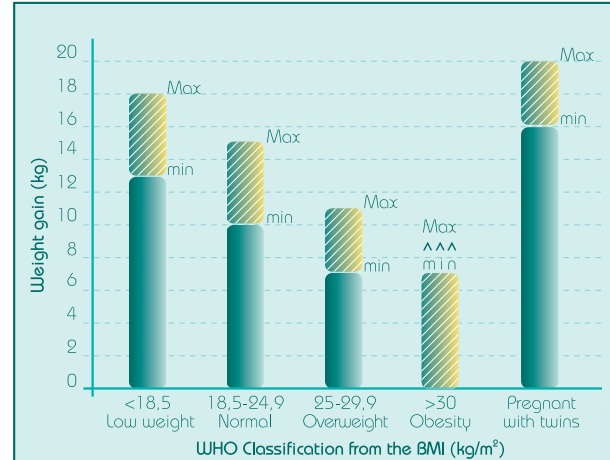
Nutrient (Recommended quantity)	That are necessary for you and your baby	Best sources
Calcium (1,000 mg) 	Helps to form strong teeth and bones.	Milk, cheese, yogurt, sardines, and white beans.
Iodine (200-300 µg) 	Helps to improve brain development in the baby and good intrauterine growth	Shellfish, garlic, oats, fruits, iodized salt, and some seaweed from the specie, <i>Fucus Vesiculosus</i> (also called bladder wrack).
Iron (27 mg) 	Helps to create red blood cells in the blood that gives oxygen to the baby and helps reduce fatigue.	Lean red meats, fowl, fish, broccoli, Savoy leaves, green beans and millet.
Vitamin A (770 µg) 	Forms healthy skin and helps vision. Promotes bone growth.	Carrots and vegetables from dark green leaves.
Vitamin C (85 mg) 	Promotes healthy gums, teeth, and bones. Helps the body to absorb iron.	Citric acid, broccoli and tomatoes.
Vitamin B6 (1.9 mg) 	Helps form red blood cells. Helps the body to use protein, fats, and carbohydrates.	Meat from cow, liver, pig, ham, essential breads, and bananas.
Vitamin B12 (2.6 µg) 	Maintains the nervous system. Necessary in forming blood cells.	Liver, meat, fish, fowl, milk (only in nutrients of animal origin. Vegetarians who don't consume nutrients of animal origin should take a supplement).
Folic Acid (400 µg) 	Necessary to produce blood and protein. Helps to implement the function of some enzymes.	Vegetables from dark green leaves, fruits and vegetables that are a rich yellow color, liver, legumes, and nuts.

In regard to **Iodine**, the **WHO** recommends using **iodized salt** in a routine diet before and during pregnancy.

ATTENTION: Consult your doctor before taking any type of vitamin, medical herbs or other supplements or medicines that haven't been prescribed.

Weight gain

Recommended weight gain during pregnancy according to the BMI



- Cook with less fat: steam, pan fry or bake

- Drink between 6-8 glasses of water every day





Special situations

1. Vegetarian diets

If you follow a vegetarian diet, you can continue with your diet during pregnancy. However, you will need to carefully plan your meals to guarantee that you and your baby receive the necessary nutrients. Be sure that you are receiving the quantity and adequate types of protein. You probably will need to take supplement, especially iron and vitamins B12 y D.

2. Lactose intolerance

Milk and dairy products are the best sources of calcium for your diet. Some women have symptoms like abdominal pain, diarrhea, gas and indigestion after drinking milk or consuming dairy products. This is called lactose intolerance. During pregnancy, these symptoms often improve. Nevertheless, if you still have difficulty eating or drinking dairy products, talk with your doctor or dietitian. Calcium is also found in cheese, yogurt, sardines, certain types of salmon, spinach and in enriched orange juices.

3. Mercury

Fish and seafood are good sources of protein and are high quality nutrients. However, pregnant women shouldn't consume certain types of fish because they contain elevated levels of mercury that can be harmful for the developing fetus. Avoid eating swordfish and tuna substituted with bonito or melva.

· Always wash fruits and vegetable well

· Always buy fresh foods to eat

