

Pregnancy and Nutrition

Nutrition During Pregnancy

What you eat during your pregnancy has a profound effect on your baby's health and your own well-being. It is natural and important to gain weight during pregnancy. On average, a gain of 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy is recommended. If you are carrying twins or more, the recommended weight gain is 35 to 45 pounds.

Minimum Servings Each Day

Foods Groups	Single Birth	Twins	Triplets
Grains	5 to 7 ounces	at least 5 to 7 ounces	at least 5 to 7 ounces
Vegetables	at least 3 cups	at least 3 cups	at least 3 cups
Fruits	at least 2 cups If you drink juice, make sure to have only 1 cup of 100% fruit juice a day.	at least 2 cups If you drink juice, make sure to have only 1 cup of 100% fruit juice a day.	at least 2 cups If you drink juice, make sure to have only 1 cup of 100% fruit juice a day.
Dairy	3 cups	at least 3 cups	at least 3 cups
Proteins	6 ounces	at least 7 to 9 ounces	at least 7 to 9 ounces
Fats and oils (including sweets)	use sparingly	use sparingly	use sparingly

Special Information About Iron

Your body needs iron to make hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that transports oxygen. Iron comes from foods you eat and by the recycling of red blood cells. Anemia occurs when the amount of red blood cells or hemoglobin becomes low. When this happens, your blood has trouble carrying oxygen to your tissues and organs. Anemia puts you at risk for weakness, fatigue, poor appetite and increased chance of infection.

It is common to have a low hemoglobin during pregnancy. A normal hemoglobin level is important to ensure adequate oxygen supply to your baby as well as to avoid anemia. Try to eat at least 30 milligrams (mg) of iron each day. Sources of iron include red meat, chicken, wheat germ, Cream of Wheat®, soybeans, dried apricots, spinach, baked beans, raisins and prune juice.

Talk with your dietitian if you have questions about how to get enough iron during pregnancy. **(over)**

Folic Acid

One simple way to reduce your risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect is by getting enough folic acid. It is recommended to have 0.4 mg of folic acid each day. Sources include:

- dark green leafy vegetables
- citrus fruits (including orange juice)
- whole grains (including fortified cereals)
- potatoes
- beans
- nuts and seeds.

Fish and Seafood

Fish is a good source of protein and it is low in saturated fat. To avoid fish that may have high levels of harmful mercury or PCBs, choose wisely and know where the fish was caught.

Limit yourself to 12 ounces of fish each week. Of the 12 ounces a week, do not eat more than 6 ounces of tuna. Tuna has more mercury than any other fish or seafood you eat. Avoid:

- fish caught commercially: king mackerel, swordfish, tilefish and shark
- these fish caught in Minnesota or Wisconsin: walleye larger than 20 inches, northern pike larger than 30 inches and all muskellunge
- uncooked fish: raw fish, sushi and sashimi.

Low-mercury fish you can eat include shrimp, salmon, pollock and catfish.

Luncheon Meats and Listeria

Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by eating food contaminated with the listeria bacteria. Listeria may be found in luncheon meats. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pregnant women are about 10 times more likely than other healthy adults to get listeriosis.

Do not eat hot dogs, luncheon meat or deli meat unless they are reheated until steaming hot.

Sugar Substitutes

- It is recommended to avoid saccharin (Sweet 'N Low®) during pregnancy. It can cause problems in your baby's development.
- Aspartame sweeteners (NutraSweet® or Equal®) are believed to be safe by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for use as a sugar substitute, but only in moderation. Limit the use of aspartame sweeteners to two servings a day.
- Sucralose (Splenda®) is believed to be safe.

How to Manage Upset Stomach (Nausea) or Throwing Up (Vomiting)

- Eat a few soda crackers before you get out of bed. Rise slowly out of bed.
- Add protein to snacks (a slice of turkey or a scoop of cottage cheese with crackers).
- Eat small, frequent, dry meals.
- Sip liquids between snacks and meals.
- Drink very hot or very cold beverages.
- Drink acidic fruit juices, like orange or pineapple juice (but not first thing in the morning).
- Avoid the smells of foods that make you feel queasy.

How to Manage Constipation

Your growing baby is taking up your abdominal space and pregnancy hormones can slow down your digestion. Both things can lead to constipation. The following can help to prevent constipation.

- Drink 2 to 3 quarts of liquids each day: water, milk, juice and soup.
- Drink a hot or warm beverage first thing in the morning.
- Eat high-fiber cereals and whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables.
- Walk, swim or exercise.

Do not take laxatives unless your health care provider recommends it.