

There are some vitamins and minerals your body needs more of in pregnancy, such as folic acid, iron, calcium and vitamin D. The best way to make sure you are getting all the nutrients you need to grow a healthy baby is to eat a variety of healthy whole foods every day. Eating well and staying active will also help you to feel better during pregnancy and prepare your body for labour. After you have your baby, continuing to make healthy choices helps you have the energy you need for breastfeeding, and for taking care of yourself and your family.

You need some extra food while you are pregnant, but eating for two doesn't mean eating twice as much. You only need to add 100 calories a day during the first three months and 300 calories a day after that - an extra snack is usually enough. Allow your appetite to guide how much you eat and make sure you eat regular meals and snacks - at least every 3 to 4 hours. Also make sure you drink at least 1-2 liters of water every day.

A prenatal vitamin pill cannot replace the benefits of eating healthy whole foods. Eating a balanced diet is the best way to get all the nutrients that you and your baby need. However, nobody eats perfectly all the time - supplements can help you get the extra vitamins and minerals you need for pregnancy and breastfeeding.

## PROTEIN SOURCES

Your protein requirement during pregnancy increases to 80-100g per day. Protein is important for your baby's growth, and for the changes taking place in your body as well.

### If you eat meat

Chicken - approximately 25g/90g  
Pork - approximately 25g/90g  
Beef - approximately 25g/90g  
Salmon, halibut - 23g/90g

### If you're vegetarian

Skim milk - 9.2g/1 cup  
Cottage cheese - 15g/0.5 cup  
Eggs - 6g/egg  
Tofu & "veggie-burgers"

### If you're vegan

Brewer's yeast - 16g/2 Tbsp  
Soy beans - 10g/0.5 cup  
Navy beans - 8g/0.5 up  
Peanut butter - 8g/2 Tbsp



# HEALTHY EATING IN PREGNANCY



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## FOLIC ACID

Folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube defects, birth defects that affect the baby's brain and spine, such as spina bifida. Taking a prenatal vitamin-mineral pill that has at least 0.4mg of folic acid is especially important before you become pregnant and during the first few weeks of pregnancy, but it is good idea to keep taking it until you finish breastfeeding.

## IRON

Your iron needs are higher when you are pregnant – 27mg per day. Foods high in vitamin C, such as orange or cranberry juice, help your body absorb iron better. Iron helps build healthy blood for you and your baby, and if you don't get enough, you may feel tired and weak.

### Best choices

- \*Clams (canned, drained) – 25mg/90g
- Tofu (firm, raw) – 13.2mg/0.5 cup
- Black strap molasses – 10.1mg/2 Tbsp
- Pumpkin seeds (dried) – 8.6mg/0.5 cup
- Quinoa (dry) – 7.8mg/0.5 cup
- White beans – 7.8mg/0.5 cup
- Dulse seaweed (dried) – 7.1mg/5g
- Wheat germ – 5.2mg/0.5 cup
- Spinach (cooked) – 3.2mg/0.5 cup
- \*Shrimp – 2.4mg/90g
- \*Beef – 2.4mg/90g
- \*Turkey, lamb – 2.0mg/90g
- \*Pork, chicken, fish – 1.0mg/90g

### If you can't get enough from food

Your midwife may recommend testing your hemoglobin levels or your ferritin (iron stores) if you are feeling symptoms of low iron. If these tests show you have low iron, she may recommend taking an easy to tolerate iron supplement such as Floradix, Hemoplex or Palafer C-F.

\* = Heme iron sources (more easily absorbed by the body)  
 Note: 90g = 3oz = about the size of a deck of cards

## CALCIUM + VITAMIN D

Calcium and Vitamin D work together to build strong bones and teeth for your baby. They also help prevent osteoporosis later in life and calcium helps your uterus to contract during labour. Women often don't have enough calcium in their diet, and the needs and demands on the body increase in pregnancy and breastfeeding. Vitamin D increases absorption of calcium and is essential for body to use calcium efficiently. It is hard to get enough Vitamin D from sunlight in northern climates.

### Best choices for calcium

- Yogurt (plain, low-fat) – 415mg/1 cup
- Ricotta (part-skim) – 335mg/0.5 cup
- Banana (dried) – 310mg/0.5 cup
- Skim milk – 302mg/1 cup
- Brazil nuts, chestnuts – 300mg/0.5 cup
- Black strap molasses – 273mg/2 Tbsp
- Figs – 269mg/10 pieces
- Edamame (soy beans) – 225mg/0.5 cup
- Cream of wheat – 185mg/1 cup
- Collard greens (cooked) – 179mg/0.5 cup
- Sesame seed butter – 128mg/2 tbsp
- Prunes – 100mg/8 pieces

### Best choices for vitamin D

- Sunlight – 15 min/day outside (UV index  $\geq$  3)
- Salmon (canned pink) – 530 IU/90g
- Milk (fortified) – 100 IU/1 cup
- Soy/rice milk (fortified) – 100 IU/1 cup
- Margarine (fortified) – 56 IU/2 tsp
- Egg yolk – 25 IU/1 yolk

### If you can't get enough from food

Calcium citrate (with magnesium):  
 1200mg per day (in capsule or liquid)

Liquid calcium/magnesium supplements not only work well to boost your calcium intake, but can also help with sleeplessness (if taken before bed) and heartburn in pregnancy.



### If you can't get enough

Vitamin D: 1000 IU per day (such as Ddrops 1000 IU)

Note: it is common to supplement from fall to spring when the sun is not strong enough and it is too cold to be uncovered, or all year if you don't spend time outside regularly

## ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS

Essential fatty acids (also known as Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids) are a type of fat that is especially important for your baby's brain development. Omega 3 fatty acids may also help prevent post-partum depression. Pregnant & breastfeeding women should try to use fats that are good sources of essential fatty acids (see below) instead of hydrogenated fats. Most people get enough Omega 6 fatty acids from oils (sunflower, safflower, sesame, corn) and beef, pork, poultry & eggs.

### Best choices for Omega 3

- Flaxseeds – 3.51g/2 Tbsp
- Walnuts – 2.27g/0.25 cup
- Salmon (baked/broiled) – 1.57g/90g
- Edamame (cooked soybeans) – 0.5g/0.5cup
- Scallops (baked/broiled) – 0.27g/90g

### If you can't get enough from food

Flaxseed or fish oil (preferably containing Vitamin E) as capsules or bottled liquids: as per instructions on bottle

These oils are highly sensitive to damage from heat, light and oxygen, so make sure the supplement is packaged in a dark glass jar and refrigerated. Store it in your refrigerator or freezer.



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