

Healthy Eating in Pregnancy

GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS-TO-BE

Pregnancy and breastfeeding requires extra nutrients to support your growing baby. However, unlike the popular saying “eating for two”, your nutrient needs do not double during this time – doing this can lead to unnecessary weight gain that can lead to big babies, increased risk for diabetes and difficulties losing weight after pregnancy is done. **Rather than eating for two, think about eating twice as healthy during this period of rapid growth and change.**

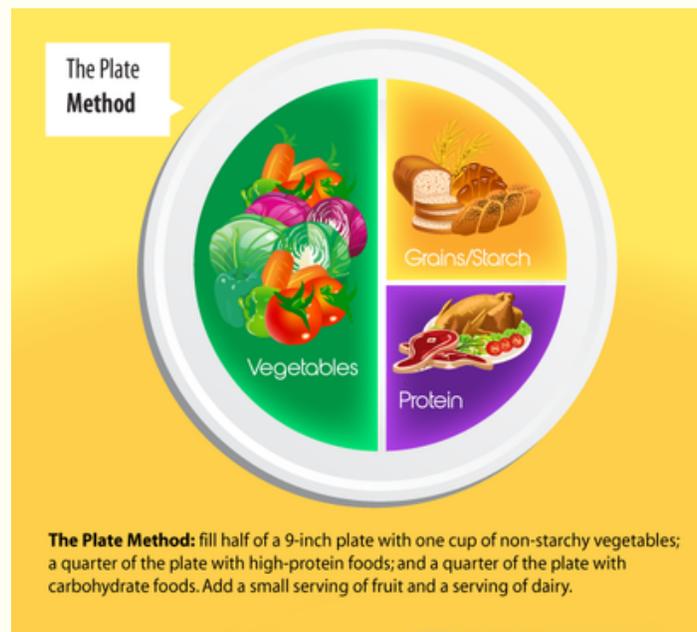
Often, simply adding in a 2-4 extra servings above your usual intake from a variety of food groups each day is enough to support the additional energy and protein required during the **second and third trimester.**

Some examples of what this looks like:

- * An extra piece of whole grain toast at breakfast with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- * An extra daytime snack of ½ cup yogurt and 1 fruit
- * An evening snack of 1 cup of cereal with 1 cup of milk
- * A whole grain english muffin with 50 g (1.5 oz cheese) and 1 fruit
- * An extra 1 cup of pasta at supper with an extra serving of meat and an extra ½ cup tomato sauce
- * An evening snack of 2 cups of popcorn, 1 teaspoon of butter and ½ cup orange juice and an extra daytime snack of 8 crackers with or without 1.5 ounces of cheese
- * A snack of ¼ cup nuts with 1 cup yogurt and ½ cup blueberries and another snack of cut up vegetables

Aim to have a regular meal routine which includes three balanced meals and one to two planned snacks per day. A healthy balanced meal looks like:

Aim to fill 1/2 of your plate with vegetables or a combination of fruit and vegetables; fill 1/4 of your plate with whole grains (whole grain bread, pasta, rice, quinoa, oats) or starches (potatoes, sweet potato, corn or squash); and fill 1/4 of plate with protein (meat such as beef, chicken, pork, fish, eggs; meat alternatives such as beans/lentils/legumes; nuts/seeds or dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt)



Healthy Eating in Pregnancy

GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS-TO-BE

Nutrients of particular concern during pregnancy

Folic Acid helps with baby's proper growth and is needed to prevent neural tube defects such as spina bifida. Food sources: green leafy vegetables, liver, legumes, and fortified grain products. You need 0.6 mg during pregnancy.

Iron is needed to make red blood cells which carry oxygen through the blood to our cells. Baby takes what they need from mom, but if there is not enough iron, iron deficiency (anaemia) can occur for mom. Food sources: Meat, chicken, fish, beans/lentils/legumes, nuts/seeds, eggs, apricots, dates, peas, spinach, fortified grains (breads, cereals), dark chocolate, molasses. You need 27 mg per day during pregnancy.

Vitamin D supports the development of baby's bones and teeth. Vitamin D also supports the immune system. Baby's Vitamin D levels are dependent on mom's Vitamin D intake. Fortified products (milk, yogurt, orange juice); salmon, mackerel, tuna are good food source however the sun is the best source of Vitamin D. You need 600-2000 IU each day.

For many moms-to-be, it is easiest to take a prenatal multivitamin to ensure these additional nutrients needs are met during pregnancy.

Weight Gain

Adequate weight gain is important to the growth of your baby. However, it is just one component to health and well being during pregnancy for both you and your child. The ranges of weight gain given are meant to be a guide, and they should be used in conjunction with how well your baby is growing and how you feel. While there can not be complete disregard for weight gain (either too much or not enough), it is important to focus on improving or continuing quality eating during pregnancy – and the weight that follows that should be appropriate for your body and for the health of your baby.

Recommended weight gains during pregnancy is based on your pregnancy weight, or Body Mass Index (BMI). If you are unsure what your BMI is, ask your health care provider.

BMI less than 18.5 – recommended weight gain is 12.5-18 kg (28-40 pounds)

BMI 18.5 to 25 – recommended weight gain between 11.5-16 kg (25-35 pounds)

BMI 25-29.9 – recommended weight gain is about 7-11.5 kg (15-25 pounds)

BMI greater than 30 – recommended weight gain is about 5-9 kg (11-20 pounds)

The Institute of Medicine, 2009.

If you want additional information on nutrition in pregnancy, ask about booking an individual consultation with the Registered Dietitian at Greenbelt Family Health Team.

Healthy Eating in Pregnancy

GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS-TO-BE

Food Safety

Pregnant women are much more susceptible to food borne illness because of changes in their immune system. Food borne illness can cause gastro intestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach discomfort for mom. For baby, it can be much more serious: in the first trimester it can cause miscarriage; and the second and third trimester can cause premature birth.

To minimize your risk, avoid raw or unpasteurized dairy (milk and cheese); raw eggs; raw or undercooked fish or seafood; meat spreads and processed meats; any undercooked meal/meat and unpasteurized honey.

It is important to take general precautions to make sure your food supply is safe: washing your hands during food preparation; following best before dates on packaged foods; storing food at proper temperatures in the fridge; avoiding refreezing thawed foods; ensuring to thaw foods in the fridge or in the microwave (do not leave out at room temperature).

Mercury in Fish

Methyl mercury is an organic form of mercury. It is the form of mercury found in fish. If humans are consistently exposed to high levels of mercury, toxicity can occur. Methyl mercury can be dangerous for the central nervous system, particularly for the developing brain of growing babies. Mercury can cross the placenta. Fish acquire methyl mercury from the water which they swim.

The amount of mercury in fish increases as the size of the fish increases, or the age of the fish increases. During pregnancy, it is recommended to avoid, or limit the amount of fish that have the highest level of mercury.

Low mercury fish to eat:

Light tuna (such as skipjack), salmon, Atlantic mackerel, pollock (Boston bluefish), rainbow trout, lake whitefish, blue crab, shrimp, clam, mussel and oyster. Because fish is a great quality protein along with being an excellent source of heart healthy omega 3 fats, it is important to include low mercury fish 1 to 3 times per week if possible.

High mercury fish to avoid:

Fresh and frozen white albacore tuna, shark, swordfish, marlin, orange roughy and escolar.

Healthy Eating in Pregnancy

GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS-TO-BE

Natural treatments for Nausea and Vomiting

Many women do experience some degree of nausea/vomiting during pregnancy – particularly during the first trimester. Generally, you should eat those foods which appeal to you and bring you some comfort.

There is not strong evidence to support particular changes in eating to help with nausea and vomiting associated with pregnancy however many women feel the following tips can help:

- *Try to eat small amounts of food every 1 to 2 hours as this will help balance your blood sugar levels.
- * Try not to eat or drink too much at one time.
- * Don't wait to be too hungry or too thirsty, as this may cause you to feel sick.
- * Keep solids and liquids separate by drinking your fluids 20 to 30 minutes before and after you eat.
- * When you eat and drink at the same time, your stomach may feel too full which may cause you to feel ill.
- *Do not skip meals.
- * Try to eat high-carbohydrate, low-fat foods and low-fat dairy products, as they are easier to digest.
- * Try to add any source of protein to each meal and snack.
- * Try to eat bland, dry or salty foods such as crackers, noodles, soups, cereals
- * Try to minimize or avoid spicy, fried and/or high fat foods.
- * Try ginger supplements with 250 mg, four times a day or try ginger tea (fresh ginger root steeped in hot water)

Sometimes, the multivitamin with iron can make nausea and vomiting worse. Always take the vitamin with food to help alleviate this affect. If this still does not help, try taking a multivitamin without iron until your first trimester is complete.

If you want additional information on nutrition in pregnancy, ask about booking an individual consultation with the Registered Dietitian at Greenbelt Family Health Team.