

PREGNANT + POWERFUL:

Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a powerful time, and what you eat plays a major role in supporting both you and your growing baby. Focusing on the right nutrients, food safety, and healthy habits can help promote a healthy pregnancy.



Key Nutrients During Pregnancy

Folate (Folic Acid)

Function: Prevents serious birth defects of your baby's brain and spine

When it matters most: Before pregnancy and during the first few months

Food sources:

- Enriched bread, pasta, and rice
- Beans and legumes
- Dark leafy greens (kale, spinach, broccoli)
- Citrus fruits

Iron

Function: Helps your blood carry oxygen to your body and your baby

Need: About twice as much during pregnancy

Food sources:

- Lean meats, poultry, fish
- Iron-fortified breakfast cereals
- Dark leafy greens
- Dried fruit
- Beans

Protein

Function: Builds, repairs, and maintains body tissue

Important: Especially in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters

Food sources:

- Animal: Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs
- Plant: Beans, lentils, peas

Calcium + Vitamin D

Function: Work together to build and strengthen your baby's bones

Your baby pulls these nutrients from your body, so it's important to replace them daily.

Food sources:

- Dairy foods and drinks
- Dark leafy green vegetables
- Eggs (yolk contains vitamin D)
- Calcium-fortified juice, milk, plant-based milks, and cereal
- Mushrooms
- Fish

Fish recommendation:

- 8–12 ounces per week during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Mercury can harm your baby's nervous system

Low Mercury (Best Choices)

- ✓ Tilapia, Salmon, Shrimp, Smaller Fish

High Mercury (Avoid)

- ✗ Shark, King Mackerel, Swordfish, Larger Fish

Serving guide:

- 1 serving = 4 ounces (about the size of your palm)
- Aim for 2 servings per week

Daily Food Group Recommendations

FOOD GROUP	1st TRIMESTER	2nd & 3rd TRIMESTER
Vegetables	2½ cups	3 cups
Fruit	2 cups	2 cups
Grains	6 oz	8 oz
Protein	5.5 oz	6.5 oz
Dairy	3 cups	3 cups



Managing Common Pregnancy Discomforts

Nausea

- Avoid strong smells
- Eat small, frequent meals
- Don't skip meals
- Get plenty of rest
- Avoid sudden movements

Constipation

- Stay physically active
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat fiber-rich foods

Heartburn

Avoid:

- Spicy foods
- Acidic foods (citrus, tomatoes)
- Caffeine
- High-fat foods
- Mint

Tips:

- Sit upright after eating

Supplementation

If you're not meeting nutrient needs through food alone, supplements may help.

- Always talk to your health care provider first
- Options include pills or nutrition shakes



Food Safety During Pregnancy



Certain foods can carry bacteria that may harm your baby—even if you feel fine.

Avoid or Modify:

- Raw or undercooked meat, eggs, seafood
- Deli meats and hot dogs (reheat to 165°F until steaming)
- Soft cheeses and unpasteurized dairy
- Raw sprouts
- Unwashed produce

Listeria Risk Foods:

- Raw meat
- Deli meat and hot dogs
- Soft cheeses
- Unpasteurized milk

Prevent Cross-Contamination

Separate

- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart
- Store foods on different refrigerator shelves
- Use clean plates and utensils after cooking

Clean

- Wash hands, surfaces, and utensils with hot soapy water
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with cold water
- Do not wash raw meat (can spread bacteria)

Healthy Weight Gain & Activity

- Recommended weight gain (if starting at a healthy weight): 25–35 pounds
- Aim for ~30 minutes of moderate activity most days (if approved by your provider)
- Stay hydrated before, during, and after activity

Safe activities:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Prenatal yoga

