



Motherhood Midwifery

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NUTRITION GUIDELINES

How to Eat for a Healthy Pregnancy

Good nutrition is the foundation for a healthy mama and healthy baby

Protein

I recommend aiming to consume 80-100 grams of protein each day for the average pregnant woman. Some women may need more, such as those showing signs of gestational diabetes, hypertension or preeclampsia. **Foods high in protein include:**

- **Dairy:** milk, cheese, cottage cheese, eggs, yogurt (particularly greek yogurt). If you eat yogurt, choose one low in sugar; avoid one with aspartame or other artificial sweeteners.
- **Meats:** beef, chicken, turkey, pork
- **Seeds and Nuts:** peanuts, almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, cashews, quinoa
- **Legumes:** pinto beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans (hummus), navy beans, lentils, and quinoa.
- **Soy:** Tofu is a protein source for clients who are vegetarian; however we do not recommend excessive consumption of soy.
- **Fish:** should be eaten 1-2 times a week unless it is wild-caught (then can be eaten more), and small fish, such as salmon, tuna, and tilapia are best.

Green Leafy Vegetables

I encourage two good sized servings of dark green leafy greens per day, such as Romaine or green leaf lettuce, spinach, kale, swiss chard, turnip greens, collard greens, and broccoli. Avoid iceberg lettuce, as it has little to no nutritional value. Look for the darkest greens you can find as those are highest in vitamins!

Other Vegetables

Strive to eat lots of fresh or frozen vegetables every day. Include all the color you can when choosing vegetables. Here are some colorful suggestions: tomatoes, carrots, red/orang/green/yellow bell peppers, squash, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, broccoli, green beans, celery, asparagus, okra, and zucchini.

Fats

Fats are especially important for the proper development of your baby's nervous system, but it is very important that the fats are GOOD fats. Use healthy fats such as: olive oil, grape seed oil, coconut oil, and flax seed oil. Full-fat dairy products, avocado, meats, and nuts are sources of good fats.

Complex Carbohydrates

Whenever you consume grains, focus on eating only 100% whole grains, such as old fashioned or steel-cut oats, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, whole sprouted grains, quinoa etc. Avoid white flour, white rice, white tortillas, white bread, and non-organic cornmeal.

Fruit

Pregnant women can eat 2 servings of fruit to obtain vital minerals and vitamins contained within colorful fruits. A serving of fruit is 1 cup or 1 piece of the fruit. I suggest those that give you the best nutritive value while remaining lower on the glycemic index. Examples are: cherries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, apricots, grapefruit, kiwi, peach and tangerines. Fruit juices are high in sugar and should be limited to 4 oz. a day and should be considered a fruit serving.

Foods to Avoid

- **Sugars and Refined foods**, such as white sugar/refined white flour/white rice/white pasta.
- **Sugary drinks**, such as soda, lemonade, high quantities of fruit juices
- **Artificial sweeteners**, such as Splenda, aspartame, etc.
- **Processed foods**, such as box mixes, cold cereal, etc.

Drinking Water

Hydration is vitally important during pregnancy. Dehydration is a major factor in many complaints and symptoms of pregnancy, including irritable uterus, headaches, increased blood pressure, urinary tract infection, and preterm labor and birth. To get an idea of the approximate amount of water you should drink daily, take your weight and divide it by 2. This will be the number of ounces of water you should aim to drink each day. Or, just aiming for 100 oz. or around 1 gallon of water a day are good rules to follow. Other drinks are not to be included in this amount, with the exception of herbal teas.

Timing Meals When Pregnant

Some women find that they are unable to eat much at one sitting and find better results when they try to eat smaller meals more frequently. This will serve to keep your blood sugar stable and reduce the feelings of nausea, fatigue and indigestion that many women believe are just part of pregnancy. Allowing yourself to get too hungry causes blood sugar to drop, which can aggravate nausea and fatigue. *Making sure to have something to eat every 2 hours is the best plan for these purposes.* Make sure to have protein bars and protein shakes (low in sugar ones) for snacking when you find yourself busy, but these should not replace meals. It is also important to have a combination of a Protein/Complex Carbohydrate/Fat with every meal or snack.

Supplements

Prenatal Vitamins: I recommend a natural food-based prenatal vitamin during pregnancy. Try to find one that contains folate instead of folic acid. Pregnant women should salt food to taste. Salts that I recommend are Himalayan salt and Celtic sea salt.

Iron: Current research does not support routine iron supplementation (other than the amount in your prenatal vitamin). If your iron levels are low in pregnancy, we will discuss the best supplement for you to take.

Probiotics: I highly recommend regular consumption of probiotics in the form of Kefir, yogurt, fermented foods, kombucha, or good quality supplement. Probiotics promote good digestion, good gut flora and overall good health.

Herbs and Teas

Herbs are part of an optimal nourishment plan for pregnancy. They contain healing properties to soothe many of the most common discomforts of pregnancy and also are often rich in vitamins and minerals that support total health and well-being. The following is a list of some of the best herbs to promote and maintain a healthy pregnancy. **The best way to take these herbs is as a tea.** Simply mix the dried herbs together (roughly equal amounts of each, or whatever proportion you would like) and add about one ounce of herbs to one quart of boiling water; steep overnight and drink throughout the day. If you don't like the taste, try adding honey, fruit juice, milk, or peppermint tea bags or loose leaf min to make it more palatable. Feel free to drink up to 1 quart per day of pregnancy teas. You can often find these herbs in individual tea bags in natural foods stores and some grocery stores. It is more cost effective, however, to buy them in bulk in loose leaf form on Amazon or Vitacost.

Red Raspberry Leaf: This herb is a nourishing source of vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A, B, C and E, easily assimilated calcium, iron, phosphorous, and potassium. Red raspberry tones the uterus and helps prevent morning sickness, nausea, indigestion, miscarriage and hemorrhage.

Nettle: It is reputed to have more chlorophyll than any other herb. Vitamins A, C, D and K, calcium, potassium, phosphorous, iron and sulphur are particularly abundant in nettles. Nettle can aid in proper kidney function, ease muscle cramps, prevent hemorrhage, promotes breastmilk production, and strengthen blood vessels.

Dandelion Root and Leaves: Highly nutritious, dandelion is rich in calcium, potassium, and iron as well as vitamins A, B complex, C, and D. It is a powerful digestive tonic, liver strengthener, and aids the kidneys and bladder. It helps regulate blood sugar and blood pressure. It can help relieve nausea, sour stomach, itchy skin, and prevent gallstones, indigestion, fatigue, and possibly even preeclampsia. It is a mild diuretic, so is recommended for edema.

Alfalfa: Extremely nutritious, alfalfa is high in protein, vitamins A, D, E, B6, and K, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, trace minerals and digestive enzymes. It is the most common source of chlorophyll and is high in carotenes as well. It is effective in preventing anemia and other vitamin and mineral deficiencies, prevents postpartum hemorrhage and strengthens the body systems.

Oatstraw: Oatstraw is rich in calcium and magnesium. It promotes relaxed nerves and healthy muscle functioning, and prevents insomnia and cramps. It also strengthens the capillaries and therefore helps prevent and treat varicosities.

Yellow Dock Root: Prepared as a tincture or syrup, Yellow Dock root is an excellent source of fully absorbable iron. It helps to reduce anemia, supports the liver, and prevents and remedies constipation.