

Meal Planning Guidelines

- Eat at least 5 to 7 ounces of grains, such as whole grain bread, cereal, or pasta.



- Have at least 3 cups of low-fat dairy foods for adequate calcium and vitamin D intake.

- Eat at least three servings of iron-rich foods, such as lean meats, spinach, beans, and breakfast cereals each day. For vegetarians (or those who do not eat a lot of meat), increase iron absorption by combining plant-based sources of iron with vitamin C-rich foods (ex. spinach salad with mandarin oranges or cereal with berries).



- Eat at least 5 to 6 ounces of protein, such as lean meat, fish, poultry, beans or lentils, tofu, eggs, nuts, or peanut butter.

- Eat 8 to 12 ounces per week of seafood, such as cod, salmon, and shrimp, to provide omega-3 fatty acids.
- Choose at least one good source of folic acid every day, like dark green leafy vegetables and legumes.

- Eat at least 3 cups of vegetables (including at least 1 cup of dark-green or orange vegetables that are high in vitamin C).
- Have at least 2 cups of fruit, such as oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, or honeydew. Limit juice intake.

Nutritional Concerns

During pregnancy, some foods can cause harm to a developing baby, and you should limit or avoid consuming such foods when you are pregnant. These foods include:

Alcohol. There is no established safe level of alcohol during pregnancy. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages while you are pregnant.

Fish that may have high levels of mercury. Avoid eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish while pregnant (and breastfeeding). These fish have high levels of mercury, which could harm your fetus's nervous system. Some experts now say to eat no more than 6 ounces of albacore (white) tuna or tuna steaks per week and to be mindful when eating farm-raised fish as it may contain elevated levels of dioxin. You can safely consume up to 12 ounces of fish that is lower in mercury and high in omega-3 fatty acids. Examples include: wild Alaskan salmon (fresh, frozen or canned), Atlantic mackerel, herring, canned light tuna (safer than albacore), shrimp, pollock, catfish, sardines and anchovies. Fish oil supplements are also safe.

Soft cheeses, cold lunch meats, hot dogs, and deli meats. Soft cheeses (such as Brie, feta, Camembert, Roquefort, and Mexican-style soft cheese), cold lunch meats, hot dogs, and deli meats can contain bacteria that can harm your unborn baby.

Raw fish, meat, or poultry. These foods can result in food poisoning that may cause harm to your baby.

Caffeine. Consider limiting your intake of caffeine. This includes coffee, tea, and soft drinks with caffeine. Chocolate also contains small amounts of caffeine. Caffeinated beverages cause your body to lose water through urination and can lead to dehydration. A reasonable caffeine limit for both pregnant and breastfeeding women is around 300 mg or less per day. That could look like having two cups of coffee per day. Most healthcare professionals believe that limit will not harm your baby.

Nonfood items. Some pregnant women crave nonfood products, such as clay. This condition is called pica. You should avoid consuming these things and tell your doctor if you are having cravings for nonfood items.

If you are a vegetarian, are lactose intolerant, or have other dietary restrictions, consult your doctor or a dietitian. Advice can be given to help you plan a well-balanced, healthy diet to fit your lifestyle and needs.

RESOURCES:
American Pregnancy Association
<www.americanpregnancy.org>

EBSCO host Research Database
< www.ebscohost.com>

American Dietetic Association. Pregnancy Nutrition - Good Health for You and Your Baby.

Fit Pregnancy <<https://www.fitpregnancy.com/nutrition/prenatal-nutrition/mercury-rising-0>>

