

# Pregnancy and nutrition

Information for expectant mothers and those considering pregnancy



## Healthy eating

You do not need to follow a special diet when pregnant, simply follow general healthy eating advice. The Eatwell Guide is a clear way of showing how to achieve a balanced diet. Try and eat regularly, aiming for three meals a day (with snacks if needed) and avoid leaving 12 hours between eating. Try and have a small snack in the morning if you don't usually have breakfast.

Fluid is very important for hydration. Water, decaffeinated tea/coffee, milk, and fruit juice can all contribute to your fluid intake. Fluid can also help relieve nausea. It is especially important to drink more fluids if: you are suffering from morning sickness, you are exercising, or the weather is hot.

## Food safety

This means avoiding any risks of food poisoning which could be harmful to you or your baby.

Risk	Avoid	Top tips
Salmonella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raw shellfish</li> <li>Raw/undercooked meats</li> <li>Unpasteurised dairy products</li> <li>Raw/undercooked eggs <b>without</b> the Lion Code</li> </ul>	<p>Wash hands after handling raw meats and store raw and cooked foods separately.</p> <p>Look for the red lion stamp on eggs – these can be consumed raw/lightly cooked.</p>
Listeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpasteurised dairy products</li> <li>Blue cheeses (e.g. stilton)</li> <li>Soft ripened cheeses (e.g. Brie, Camembert)</li> <li>Any pâté</li> <li>Soft serve ice cream (from ice cream vans)</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure all takeaway/ready meals are thoroughly cooked and piping hot. Do not reheat.</p>
Contaminants (e.g. mercury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shark, marlin, swordfish</li> </ul>	<p>Limit tuna to 4 medium cans/2 steaks per week.</p> <p>Have oily fish (e.g. salmon/mackerel) no more than twice per week</p>

Risk	Avoid	Top tips
Vitamin A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multivitamins with excess retinol (form of vitamin A)</li><li>• Fish liver oils with more than 700mcg/day</li><li>• Liver/liver products (e.g. pâté)</li></ul>	Excess vitamin A can be toxic to the liver.
Caffeine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anything labelled with high caffeine content</li></ul>	No more than 200mg caffeine per day (e.g. 2 mugs instant coffee or 1 mug filter coffee or 3 mugs of tea per day) – choose decaffeinated versions.  Chocolate, fizzy juice and energy drinks all contain caffeine.

## Lifestyle Choices

### Alcohol

UK guidelines recommend the safest option is to avoid alcohol when pregnant or planning pregnancy. Alcohol can increase the risk of miscarriage or Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (a group of problems which include poor growth and learning/behavioural difficulties). Speak to your midwife if you have any concerns about alcohol consumption and pregnancy.

### Smoking

You and your partner should not smoke during or before planned pregnancy. Smoking during pregnancy can harm your unborn baby by causing premature birth, low birth weight and other long-term health problems.

### Physical activity

If you are pregnant, you should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity per day. One way to tell whether you're working at moderate intensity is if you can still talk, but not sing. Examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Water aerobics
- Cycling
- Dancing
- Hiking.

## Summary

- Eat a varied and balanced diet including all the main food groups as shown in the Eatwell Guide
- Include plenty of iron and calcium every day
  - Sources of iron include: fortified cereals, green leafy vegetables, nuts, dried apricots, and beans (e.g. red kidney beans, chickpeas, and edamame beans)
  - Sources of calcium include: dairy (and fortified non-dairy) products, green leafy vegetables, and fish where you can eat the bones (e.g. sardines and tofu)
- Eat regularly- this can help relieve nausea as well
- Take a daily supplement of 400mcg folic acid and 10mcg vitamin D
  - If you wish to take a multivitamin, choose one without vitamin A in it
- If following a plant-based diet, you need to take a vitamin B12 supplement (100mcg daily or at least 2000mcg weekly)
- If choosing a plant-based milk (as dairy alternative), make sure this is fortified with calcium and iodine
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Be mindful of the food safety points listed in this leaflet
- Exercise regularly.

If you are having a multiple pregnancy or have a body mass index (BMI) of below 18.5kg/m<sup>2</sup> or above 25kg/m<sup>2</sup> and wish for support with maintaining your weight, ask to be referred to a dietitian.

## Reference

British Dietetic Association: [www.bda.uk.com/resource/pregnancy-diet.html](http://www.bda.uk.com/resource/pregnancy-diet.html)

This leaflet was given out by: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_



# Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal	3.0g LOW	1.3g LOW	34g HIGH	0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day

Fruit and vegetables

Frozen peas

Raisins

Chopped tomatoes

Potatoes

Whole grain cereal

Cous Cous

Porridge

Whole wheat pasta

Bagels

Rice

Spaghetti

Lentils

Beans lower salt and sugar

Tuna

Plain nuts

Chick peas

Lean mince

Low fat soft cheese

Semi skimmed milk

Soya drink

Plain Low fat Yoghurt

Veg Oil

Lower fat spread

Oil & spreads

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week, one of which is oily. Eat less red and processed meat

Dairy and alternatives

Choose lower fat and lower sugar options

Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS