

Nutrition for Pregnancy

Eating healthy during pregnancy will benefit you and your baby. Eat a balanced diet with no more than 30% of your calories from fat and avoid simple sugars. Reducing your salt intake and drinking plenty of water will help reduce swelling. Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. This can help reduce constipation and can prevent pre-term labor. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and avoiding sweets and starchy foods. Limit your caffeine intake to less than 200 milligrams per day.



You need to make sure you get enough protein by eating lean meats, eggs, legumes and fish. However, fish consumption should be limited to 12 ounces per week of store bought fish, including shellfish, or 6 ounces of fresh-caught fish. There are certain fish you should avoid because of their high mercury content. These fish include tilefish, swordfish, king mackerel and shark. For more information, go to ewg.org

You should limit your cheese intake to pasteurized cheeses only and avoid soft imported cheeses. Also, avoid cold hot dogs and cold lunch meats and uncooked smoked seafood. These foods may carry a bacteria called Listeria that could be harmful.

Make sure you get between 1200-1500 mg of calcium per day. Skim milk and leafy greens are a good source of calcium but if you can't get enough from food, taking a calcium supplement is sometimes necessary.

A good goal for your pregnancy diet is to eat foods that are high in nutrition, like fruits and vegetables. Avoid foods that are empty calories like sweets and sodas. Don't attempt a weight loss diet without discussing it with your doctor.

Taking a prenatal vitamin is usually recommended for all pregnant and breastfeeding women. Over-the-counter prenatal vitamins are essentially the same as prescription prenatal vitamins. Folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube defects and if possible should be taken three months before a woman becomes pregnant. Sometime vitamins can make nausea worse. If taking prenatal vitamins makes you too nauseated, try to at least take some folic acid instead. Folic acid can be found in orange juice and fortified cereals.

