Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy

TAHOE FOREST HEALTH SYSTEM

Eating for Two

You do not need to double the amount of food you eat when you are pregnant. Typically adding in an extra snack or two is enough to meet your calorie needs during pregnancy.

Calories need to go up by 200/day starting in the second trimester, and an additional 100-200 calories starting in the third trimester.

200-calorie snack ideas:

- 1 medium apple with 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 10 carrot sticks with 2 tablespoons dip/dressing
- 2 cups of popcorn with ½ tablespoon butter
- ½ whole wheat pita with ¼ cup hummus
- 1 cup of fruit with string cheese
- ¼ cup nuts or trail mix
- 2 hardboiled eggs
- ¾ cup Greek yogurt with ½ cup berries
- ½ turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread

General Recommendation:
You don't need to count calories.
Honor your hunger and fullness.

Hormone changes during pregnancy can slow digestion. The good news is that during pregnancy, our bodies absorb more nutrients from the same foods compared to when we're not pregnant — this means more nutrients for your baby! Your body will prioritize your baby's nutritional needs, so if you're experiencing morning sickness or a low appetite, don't worry about the baby. Do your best to eat — something is better than nothing. Talk to your provider if you're concerned.

Key Nutrients for Pregnancy

Here is a list of important nutrients for you and your baby. Try to get these nutrients from foods and use supplements on the side. As you read the lists below, ask yourself:

Am I eating some of these foods regularly? Are there foods that I can add to my diet?

Folate/Folic Acid (Vitamin B9)

Function: Needed throughout pregnancy, but especially important during the first 28 days.

- Prevents neural tube defects, heart abnormalities, cleft palate, and cleft lip
- Lowers risk of preterm delivery, low birth weight, and miscarriage

Sources: leafy greens, beans, lentils, peas, nuts, citrus, melons, bananas, and fortified foods like breads and cereals

Needs: 400-600mcg per day

Folate is not stored in the body, so it's important to meet your needs daily.

Look for a prenatal vitamin that contains 400 mcg of folic acid to supplement your dietary intake.

Calcium

Function: Needed for the development of bones and teeth. Also supports heart, muscles, nerve and hormone formation.

Sources: milk, yogurt, cheese, kefir, spinach, broccoli, almonds, canned salmon with bones, kale, beans, sesame seeds, sea vegetables, and tofu

Needs: 1,000-1,300mg per day
Aim for 2-3 servings of high calcium foods per day

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Iron

Function: Needed to make hemoglobin, a protein in your blood that carries oxygen throughout the body (blood volume doubles during pregnancy). Overall, iron is essential for GROWTH.

Sources:

- **Heme (animal) - beef, liver, lamb, pork, chicken, tuna, eggs**
- **Non-heme (plant) - beans, dried fruit, whole grains, baked potato, broccoli, almonds, spinach, dark chocolate, fortified products like cereal and breads**

Needs: 27mg per day

Note: Heme iron (from animal sources) is more easily absorbed by the body. Non-heme iron (from plant sources) requires a larger quantity of food and should be paired with a vitamin C-rich food (see below) to boost absorption. Aim to get iron from a variety of sources.

Low iron/Anemia: Your provider will check your iron levels during pregnancy. If your iron is low, a supplement may be needed to bring levels up to support growth. Iron supplements can cause constipation. Contact a dietitian for support with supplementation and to incorporate iron rich foods.

Vitamin C

Function: Needed for the formation of teeth and bones, and helps the body absorb iron.

Sources: Citrus fruit, broccoli, bell peppers, tomatoes, avocado, mango, berries, and kiwi

Needs: 80-85mg per day, ideally, meet needs through foods. One medium-sized navel orange contains about 50mg. High levels of vitamin C supplementation is not necessary.

Vitamin D

Function: Needed for fetal skeletal development and healthy teeth, and promotes absorption of calcium.

Sources: 5–10 minutes of sunlight on the face and arms, 3–4 times per week, can help meet vitamin D needs. Sunscreen blocks vitamin D production, but it's still important to protect your skin from sun damage. It can also be difficult to make enough vitamin D during the winter months, so a supplement may be needed for some individuals.

Needs: It's best to have your blood levels of vitamin D checked to determine if you're meeting your needs. If levels are low, supplementation is recommended. Research shows that up to 2,000 IU per day of vitamin D is safe during pregnancy.

Choline

Function: Supports brain and spinal cord development.

Sources: Egg yolks are the best source; be sure to cook them thoroughly to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Other sources include lean red meat, fish, poultry, nuts, and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts

Needs: 400 mcg per day (one egg has around 150 mcg)

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Iodine

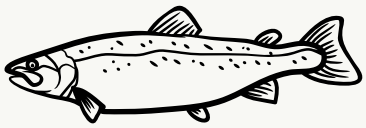
Function: Supports thyroid gland function and the production of thyroid hormones in both mom and baby; also important for baby's brain and nervous system development.

Sources: Using *iodized salt* is best - look for the word iodized on the label. Sea salt contains only trace amounts of iodine and is not a reliable source. Other sources include seafood, sea vegetables, eggs and dairy products.

Needs: 250mcg per day
You do not need to add extra salt or limit salt during pregnancy. Salt food to taste to meet needs.

Omega-3 Fats

There are different types of Omega-3 fats. DHA and EPA are especially important during pregnancy and breastfeeding.



Function:

- DHA - critical building block for fetal brain/central nervous system and eye development
- EPA - supports heart, immune system, and inflammatory response

Sources:

- **S.M.A.S.H Fatty Fish: Salmon, Mackerel, Anchovies, Sardines, and Herring. These are the fish that are nutrient-rich, high in omega-3s, and are low in mercury.**

Needs: 1000mg total daily, containing at least 300mg DHA per day. Aim to eat 2-3 servings of SMASH fish per week or consider a fish oil supplement. **If you do not eat fish, a daily algae oil omega-3 supplement is recommended.**

Here are some ways to add SMASH fish to your meals:

- Use canned sardines or salmon instead of tuna for sandwiches or dips.
- Enjoy salmon patties (easy to stock in freezer) as a burger or protein option on salads.
- Keep frozen single-serve salmon fillets in freezer.
- Cube salmon fillets into 1" cubes, toss with seasonings of choice, and air fry or roast. Use on top grain bowls or salads.
- Pan-sear SMASH fish in olive oil with a sprinkle of your favorite seasoning like lemon pepper.
- Enjoy "hot" smoked salmon (avoid lox) as your protein for a meal.

Fun Fact

Your baby can taste amniotic fluid, which takes on the flavors of the foods you eat. Research shows that exposure to flavors positively influences your baby's food preferences when they start eating solid food. This is another great reason to eat a wide variety of nutrient-dense foods while pregnant. How cool is it that moms can already influence their baby's food preferences and help set them on the path to lifelong healthy eating!

For information on Baby & Me programs offered by Tahoe Forest Wellness, call (530) 587-3769 or visit TFHD.com/baby-me.