

Nutrition and Exercise in Pregnancy

Healthy nutrition is an important part of a successful pregnancy. Everything you eat helps to nourish your body and helps your growing child. If you started out at a normal pre-pregnant weight, we would like to see you gain between 25-35 pounds. Most women gain about a pound per week, on average, during the second half of pregnancy. If you started out your pregnancy overweight, we would like to see you gain about 15 pounds, and if you started out underweight, we would like to see you gain about 30-35 pounds, to ensure your baby gets enough calories and nutrition to thrive. Please discuss your pre-pregnant weight and recommended weight gain with your doctor or midwife, if you have questions. Here is a helpful website: <http://www.webmd.com/baby/guide/healthy-weight-gain>

Try to eat mostly fresh, unprocessed foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, legumes, low-fat dairy (good source of calcium) and unprocessed lean meats. Drink mostly water and skim or low-fat milk.

Limit or avoid over-packaged, high fat, fried, junk food or fast food and also try to limit your soda intake.

Water

More water is often the solution to many problems and complaints in pregnancy. Pregnant women need to drink at least 10 cups (2.3 liters) of fluids daily. The best fluid to drink is water. Avoid sodas and juices. You have more blood volume in your body when you are pregnant. You need to drink enough water to keep up with this increased volume. If you do not, you will get dehydrated quickly and experience cramping, dizziness, constipation, leg cramps, headaches, low amniotic fluid and many more symptoms. Water also helps flush out waste products from cells so it aids in liver and kidney function for you and your baby. Always carry water with you. If you have trouble drinking water, try adding lemon to flavor the water or drink water in small sips throughout the day.

Pregnant women should drink at least 4.5 bottles of water per day!

Vitamins

We also recommend that you take a daily prenatal vitamin, containing iron, folic acid and DHA. You can buy an over-the-counter brand, or we can prescribe you a prenatal vitamin. If you are too nauseated to take a regular prenatal vitamin in early pregnancy, you can take two chewable children's vitamins, including Flintstones with iron. Sometimes that is easier on your stomach.

Iron Supplements

Usually your prenatal vitamin with iron is all you need to take in pregnancy. However, some women do develop anemia, or low iron, while pregnant. If you develop this condition, we will recommend an additional iron supplement. If we recommend this, you should take it at a different time than your prenatal vitamin. You can take it about 20 minutes before dinner time, with a small glass of orange juice or another source of vitamin C (which helps your body absorb the iron). Some women report dark stools, constipation or stomach upset with iron supplements. Be sure to drink plenty of water, eat a diet high in fiber and walk daily to help your bowels move normally. If the iron supplement is causing you problems, some women prefer Floradix brand iron (a liquid iron available at most natural food stores) – it is more expensive but easier on your stomach.

Exercise and Activity

Exercise is good for you and your growing baby. If you are already involved in a regular exercise routine, you may continue as long as you feel comfortable and we haven't placed you on any specific activity restrictions. We recommend that you avoid contact sports and sports that could be dangerous, including scuba diving, rock climbing, horseback riding, downhill skiing, mountain biking, etc. Low-impact activities such as walking, biking and swimming are highly recommended.



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