

HE-431

# Nutrition For A Healthy Pregnancy & Healthy Baby



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# Nutrition For A Healthy Pregnancy & Healthy Baby

Pregnancy is a time to take a close look at what you are eating, because you are now eating for two. You are maintaining the health of your own body and providing for the growth of your baby. Having a healthy baby means you have to be healthy yourself.

Good nutrition during your pregnancy will make a difference in your baby's health and your own health. If you are well nourished before your pregnancy and if you eat well during pregnancy, you will have less danger of complications, a safer delivery, and a better chance to nurse your baby successfully.

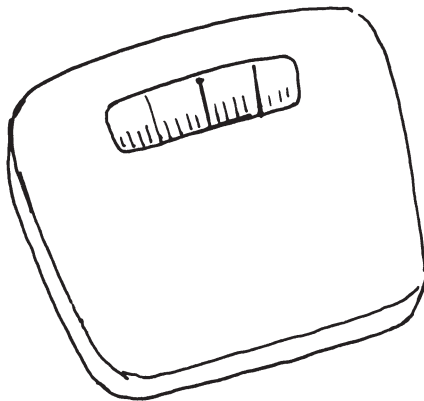
## How Much Weight

Fortunately, you needn't worry as much about gaining weight as women did in the past. From the early 1950s until the early 1970s, pregnant women were told to gain no more than 15 pounds during pregnancy. The old recommendations were based on the idea that what was best for the mother was best for the baby. Small babies were easier for the mother and doctor to deliver. Now we know that larger babies are healthier and have fewer problems. Medical studies show that women who do not gain enough weight when they are pregnant are more likely to have premature babies, full-term babies who do not weigh enough, or babies who have health problems.

In fact, one of the most important things to do when you are pregnant is to gain weight! If you are of normal weight, it is recommended that you gain 25 to 35 pounds. If you are underweight, you will probably be told to gain 28 to 40 pounds. If you are overweight, you will probably be told to gain 15 to 25 pounds. If you are a teenager or a black female, you need to gain at the upper end of the range. Shorter females should aim for gains at the lower end of the range. If you are a teenager, ask your county Extension agent for a copy of HE-432, "Nutrition For The Teenage Mother-To-Be."

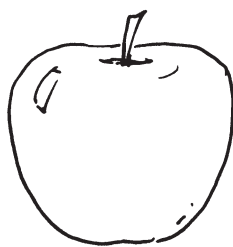
Where does the weight go? Most goes for the growth of your baby and to your own body changes. Some of the weight goes to store nutrients necessary for you and your baby. Here is a listing of the average weight of fetal and body tissues gained during pregnancy.

<b>Where the Weight Goes</b>	<b>Approximate Weight (pounds)</b>
Baby	7 to 8
Placenta	2
Increase in blood volume	7
Increase in uterus	2
Increase in breast tissue	1 to 2
Amniotic fluid	2
Mother's stores	4 to 7
Total	25 to 30



Your rate of gaining weight is very important. You should gain about 2 to 4 pounds the first 3 months, gaining at a slow, steady rate. During the last 6 months, you should gain about 3 to 5 pounds each month or about 1 pound each week. Your weight should steadily increase.

If you gain within the recommended amounts, you will lose about half of it by the time the baby is a week old. You will lose another 4 to 6 pounds by the time the baby is 6 weeks old. When your baby is 4 to 8 months old, you should be back to your regular weight. Exercise and a proper diet will help you get back into shape. Ask your doctor or counselor about exercises. To lose weight, watch out for fats and sweets. These give extra calories without extra nutrients. If you are breastfeeding, you will need extra calories to make breast milk, so you will want to wait a while before starting a weight-loss diet.



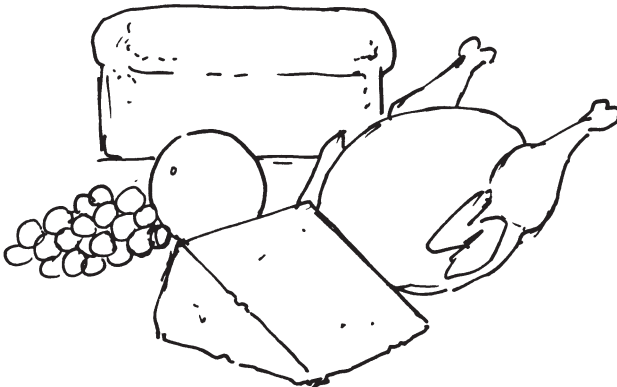
## **What Foods**

The foods you choose during pregnancy are very important. In addition to providing calories for weight gain, they must also provide vitamins, minerals, and protein. These nutrients must meet the needs of your growing baby and get your body ready to deliver and nurse your baby.

Food is the source of these nutrients. But no one food can supply them all. Too much of one nutrient will not make up for too little of another one. To help you make wise choices, foods have been divided into the following groups that contain similar nutrients.

These foods supply the basic nutrients you need during pregnancy. You will want to pay special attention to certain nutrients and add about 300 extra calories to your diet. The recommended daily intake during pregnancy is 2,100 to 2,400 calories. Your weight gain is a good guide to how many calories you are taking in. If you aren't gaining enough, eat more servings from the food groups listed below.

<b>Foods</b>	<b>Eat At Least</b>
Milk and cheese	3 servings a day
Meat, poultry, fish and beans	3 to 4 servings a day
Enriched or whole grain breads and cereals	5 servings a day
Vegetables and fruits	5 servings a day
Vitamin A food	several servings a week
Vitamin C food	1 serving a day
Others	3 to 4 servings a day
Fats (including vegetable oil) and sweets	USE WITH CARE



# Milk and Cheese

Milk and cheese have many nutrients. They are especially good for giving you calcium, vitamin A, riboflavin, and protein. Most milk has vitamin D added to help you use the calcium to make strong bones and teeth.

Milk comes in many forms: whole, skim, 1 percent low-fat, 2 percent low-fat, chocolate, buttermilk, evaporated milk, and dry milk powder. If you did not like milk before you became pregnant, try again now. Many women are surprised to find that they like milk during pregnancy.

Lactose, the sugar in milk, causes problems such as gas, bloating, and cramping for some people. This is known as lactose intolerance and is common among black Americans. If you cannot drink milk, then use cheese, yogurt, or buttermilk to get the calcium you need.

Pregnant women need at least three servings of milk and cheese foods daily. A serving is:

- 1 cup of whole, low-fat, skim, or chocolate milk or buttermilk
- ½ cup of evaporated milk
- ⅓ cup of non-fat dry milk powder

Other foods that also provide the same amount of calcium as a cup of milk are:

- 1½ ounces of cheddar cheese
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1½ cups of ice milk or ice cream
- 2 cups of cottage cheese

Even ¼ of a 14-inch cheese pizza will give you one serving of milk!

# Meat, Poultry, Fish, And Beans

Meats, poultry, fish, and beans are good sources of protein. Your baby needs protein to grow. Protein provides the basic structure for all cells in the body. You need extra protein for the changes taking place in your own body plus protein to build your baby's body.

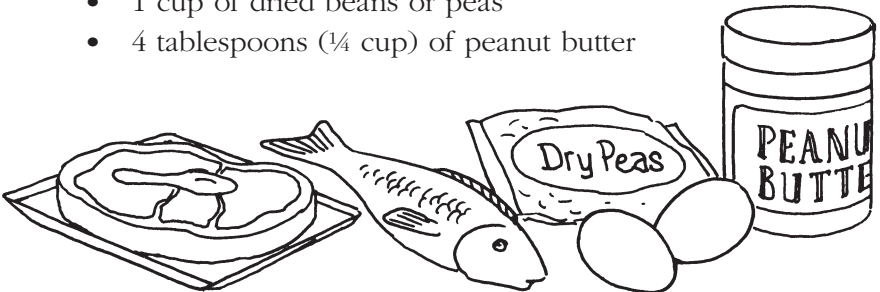
Good vegetable sources of protein are cooked dried beans, lima beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, dried black-eyed peas, lentils, and peanut butter.

If you are a vegetarian, you must eat a variety of vegetable proteins each day to meet your protein needs. Ask your Extension home economist for a handout on vegetarian diets (HE-470).

Unlike plant proteins, animal proteins are excellent sources of iron and B vitamins. Iron is needed to make blood for the baby and for you. If your diet is low in iron, you may feel tired, be more likely to get sick, and not have enough iron for the growing baby. Your body also needs B vitamins to help use your food for energy, to support a healthy nervous system, and to keep your appetite and digestion normal.

When you are pregnant, you need at least two to three servings of protein daily. One serving is:

- 2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, about the size of a deck of cards
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup of dried beans or peas
- 4 tablespoons ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) of peanut butter



# Enriched Or Whole Grain Breads And Cereals

Breads and cereals supply carbohydrates, which are important for energy. They also supply some protein and are good sources of B vitamins and iron. Whole grain breads and cereals also provide fiber.

Read the label to be sure of what you're getting when you buy breads and cereals. Look for enriched, fortified, or whole grain products. Enriched bread or cereal has some of the vitamins and minerals which were lost in milling added back to the flour to make it as nutritious as the original grain. Fortified bread has nutrients added that were not in the original grain. Whole grain bread has all parts of the grain in the flour or bread. To get fiber and trace minerals, try to eat whole grain breads and cereals at least half of the time.

If the first ingredient listed on the food label is whole wheat or whole grain of some other type, then it's a whole grain product. "Wheat flour" is not whole grain, nor is "unbleached flour." Whole grains provide fiber. Fiber helps prevent the constipation that often comes with pregnancy. During pregnancy, digestion slows down. At the same time, your baby grows and causes crowding in the abdomen. These two things contribute to constipation, which can cause hemorrhoids. Exercise and lots of liquids, especially fruit juices, will help with this problem. Whole grain foods appear to help the most. For example, bran cereals for breakfast provide fiber at an important meal.

Foods in this group are rice, cornbread, bread, rolls, buns, biscuits, muffins, crackers, noodles, spaghetti, macaroni, and cereals such as oatmeal, grits, and shredded wheat. You need at least five servings a day. A serving size is usually one piece, such as:

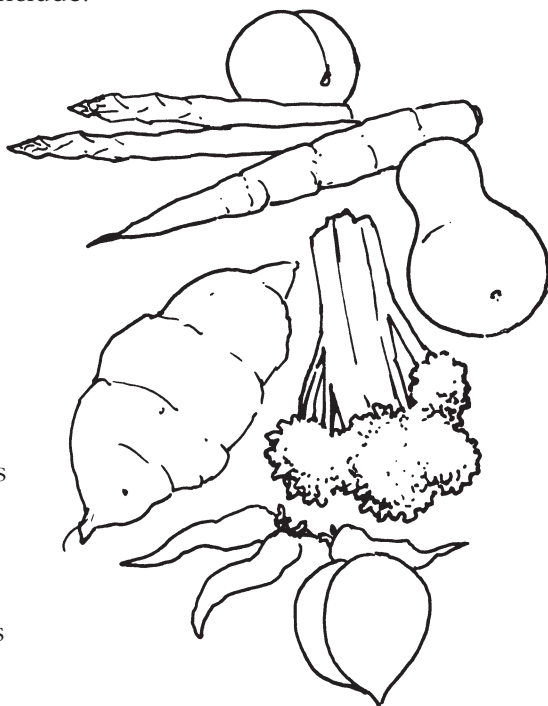
- 1 slice of bread or piece of cornbread
- 1 biscuit
- ½ cup of cooked cereal, noodles, or spaghetti
- ½ to 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal

## Vegetables And Fruits

While you are pregnant, it is especially important to eat a variety of vegetables and fruits, which are the main sources of vitamins A and C. They contain other nutrients as well, such as B vitamins, iron, calcium, and fiber. Vitamin A is necessary for growth and for healthy eyes – both your own and your baby's. The dark green leafy vegetables high in vitamin A also contain folic acid. This vitamin is important for making new cells for your baby. Also, your own need for folic acid doubles when you are pregnant. Vitamin C helps your body use iron, keeps gums healthy, and is needed for your baby's tooth development and cell growth. Fruits and vegetables also give you fiber and water for good bowel function.

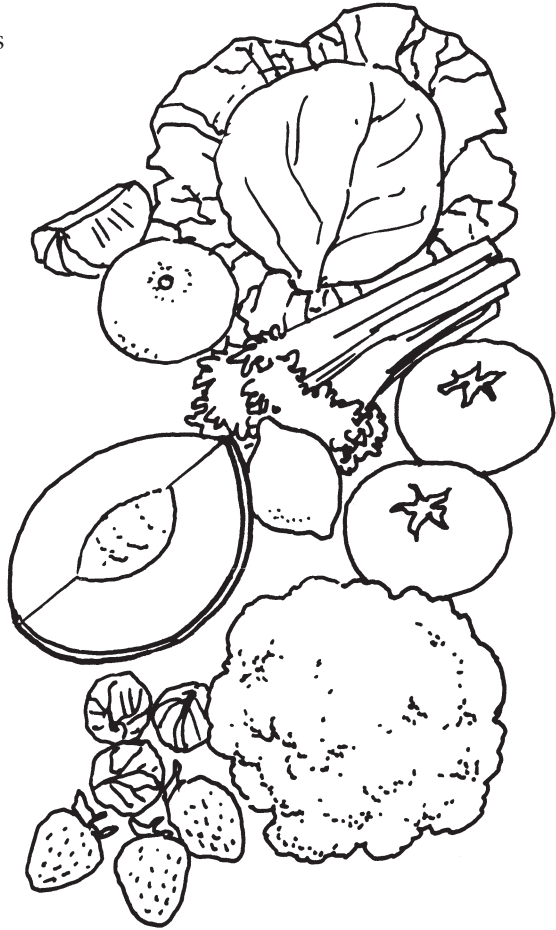
Many fruits and vegetables are good sources of vitamin A. Liver is also a good source. Some of the fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin A include:

- Apricots
- Cantaloupe
- Carrots
- Collards
- Chard
- Beet greens
- Winter squash
- Asparagus
- Purple plums
- Red peppers
- Kale
- Mustard greens
- Turnip greens
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Sweet potatoes
- Pumpkins



These fruits and vegetables are good sources of vitamin C:

Broccoli  
Brussels sprouts  
Cabbage  
Cantaloupe  
Oranges  
Orange juice  
Grapefruit  
Grapefruit juice  
Green peppers  
Strawberries  
Spinach  
Cauliflower  
Mustard greens  
Kale  
Collards  
Turnip greens  
Tangerines  
Tomatoes  
Lemons



While you are pregnant, you need five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. One serving a day should provide vitamin C. One serving several times a week should be a food with vitamin A. A serving is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or a single piece of fruit or vegetable such as one banana or sweet potato. The remaining servings can include these and other fruits and vegetables.

## **Fats And Sweets**

If you eat at least the suggested amounts of food from each of the four main food groups, you will get the nutrients you and your baby need to stay healthy, but you may not get enough calories. You will probably need to eat more than the recommended servings to get the extra calories. You can also use the fifth food group for extra calories, but easy does it.

This fifth group includes snack foods, sweets, and fats such as salad dressings, mayonnaise, and margarine. Most of these foods are high in fat, sugar, or salt. If you fill up on these foods, you may get too many calories and not enough of the nutrients you need.

Fats have more than twice as many calories as carbohydrates and proteins. Limiting your intake of visible fat can help control your weight gain without cutting out important nutrients from your diet. Some fats are obvious, such as butter, margarine, salt pork, bacon, oil, salad dressings, and mayonnaise. Other fats are less obvious, such as the fats in meats, eggs, whole milk, cheese, pastries, nuts, and snack foods. Fats are important for flavor and making us feel satisfied after eating. But they contribute very few nutrients. Enjoy fats in moderation.

The same can be said for sweets – candy, cakes, cookies, soft drinks. These foods are high in calories and usually low in nutrients. These are not junk foods if your body needs more calories, but make sure you have met all of your other nutritional requirements first.

## **Water**

Water helps your body cells work properly, keeps your temperature normal, and helps prevent constipation. You need to drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquids a day when you are pregnant. This can be water, fruit and vegetable juices, and milk.

# Special Considerations

## Weight Gain During Pregnancy

As mentioned before, you should gain 25 to 35 or even up to 40 pounds when pregnant. Your weight gain is important because it means your baby is gaining also. Your baby's weight is important, because a low birth weight can be a threat to life. If you do not gain while you are pregnant, your baby will suffer.

## Iron Needs

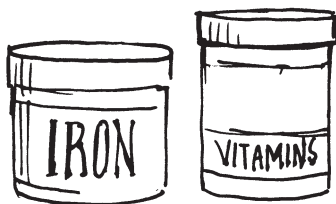
Your need for iron increases about three or four times during pregnancy. Iron is necessary for the formation of hemoglobin, the red substance in blood that carries oxygen from the lungs to the body tissues. During pregnancy, you make up to 4 pints of additional blood. Your baby, of course, is adding blood cells, too. During the last 3 months of pregnancy, your baby draws iron from you. These iron reserves will help keep him or her from becoming anemic during the first 4 to 6 months of life. If you don't get enough iron, you will become anemic. This means your blood will not have enough oxygen and you will feel tired. The reason you will feel tired is that your heart must beat faster to get oxygen to your uterus and baby.

Because your need for iron increases about three or four times, most doctors prescribe an iron supplement during pregnancy. In addition to your own blood, you must think about your baby's needs.

Where do you get iron? Meat, eggs, fish, and poultry all have iron. The best sources are liver, lean beef, and egg yolks. You can get some iron from vegetables, but meats are the best sources. When snacking, eat foods with some iron, such as dried fruits and enriched crackers.

## Vitamin And Mineral Supplements

Ordinary diets rarely have all the iron you need during pregnancy. Iron supplements, which your doctor can prescribe, are therefore recommended. Other dietary supplements, such as vitamins, may also be helpful. Talk to your doctor about your need for additional vitamins and minerals.



## Low-Salt Diet

Don't go on a low-salt diet or take "water pills" (diuretics) unless your doctor tells you to. You need some salt, but you don't need a lot of salty foods such as pickles, chips, and luncheon meats. Watch out for very salty foods.



## Things To Avoid

Too much wine, beer, or hard liquor can cause serious harm to your unborn baby. When you drink, your baby drinks. An occasional glass may do no harm, but most doctors recommend that you not drink at all while you are pregnant. We don't know how much is too much!

Drinks and foods with caffeine should be used in moderation. Some of these are coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, and many soft drinks. Check the label to see if the drink contains caffeine. Caffeine is a powerful stimulant which goes directly to your baby when you drink it. Again remember, what you drink, your baby drinks.

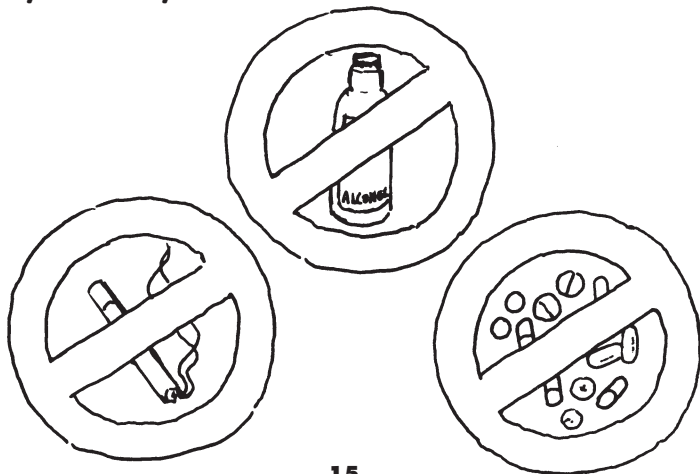
Aspartame and saccharin are the two major low-calorie sweeteners in wide use today. Saccharin is known to be a weak carcinogen (causes cancer) in rats. Most experts feel small amounts are safe for you, but why take a chance with your baby? Moderation is the key. Read the label of low-calorie drinks and foods, and limit your intake of low-calorie products.

Scientists say that some other things, such as cigarettes, will harm your unborn child. Babies born to mothers who smoke during pregnancy are smaller and more likely to have other problems. Do yourself and your baby a favor. Don't smoke while you are pregnant.

The same is true of other drugs or pills. Don't take any drug without your doctor's approval. This includes drugs that can be purchased without a prescription, such as aspirin. Some drugs that people take every day may be harmful to pregnant women and their unborn babies.

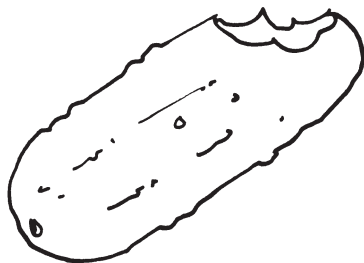
Drugs that were safe before you were pregnant may no longer be safe for you (or your baby) to take. Be sure to tell any doctor who prescribes medication for you that you are now pregnant.

Some of the most dangerous drugs are illegal drugs. If you are using any illegal drugs, **stop now**. If you can't stop, tell your doctor or health counselor right away! Whatever drug you are taking, your baby is also taking. **If you are addicted, your baby is addicted, and your baby's health is very seriously at risk!**



## Cravings

Many pregnant women get cravings or suddenly can't stand a certain food. Cravings are a normal part of pregnancy because your hormones have changed. Cravings do not mean your baby needs a certain nutrient. Cravings can be harmful if you eat things that aren't food, such as laundry starch or clay. Cravings are not harmful as long as you don't gain too much or eat only that food. If you find yourself craving a non-food item, don't give in to the craving. Talk to your doctor.



## Easing Discomforts of Pregnancy

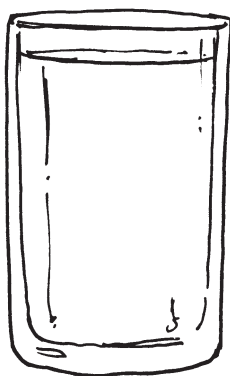
**Morning Sickness.** Some pregnant women have nausea and vomiting in the first 3 months. This may last all day or just when you get up in the morning. This usually is gone by your fourth month. If you have morning sickness, try these tips:

- Eat small meals about 2 hours apart.
- Have crackers or toast before getting up in the morning or whenever you have that sick feeling. Some women carry crackers in their purses in case they start to feel sick.
- Change your diet to avoid foods that are difficult to digest. Eat more starches, breads, cereals, potatoes, rice, and fruits.
- Skip caffeine, spicy foods, and foods with a lot of butter or fat.
- Drink a glass of milk first thing in the morning.
- Try to keep from having an empty stomach.

**Gas, “Heartburn,” Or Indigestion.** Early in your pregnancy, you may feel bloated after eating or may burp frequently. You may also have a burning sensation in your upper abdomen or chest. This is not always caused by your diet. The increased pressure on your stomach from the growing baby and the changes in your hormones contribute to these discomforts. Relax, eat slowly, chew your food well, and take frequent, small meals. Avoid spicy, fatty, and fried foods that are hard to digest or cause gas and heartburn.

**Constipation.** This is a common complaint during pregnancy. The muscles in your intestines become more relaxed. Also, the growing baby increases the pressure on the lower intestines. Simple changes in your diet can help. Eat laxative foods such as prunes or high-fiber foods such as whole grain breads and cereals, raw vegetables, fresh fruit, bran, cooked dried beans, and black-eyed peas. Drink 8 or more glasses of liquids a day – milk, water, soup, and juices, especially natural, unsweetened fruit juices. Exercise each day. Never take a laxative unless your doctor tells you to.

**Frequent Urination.** This is a normal part of pregnancy, especially in the early part of pregnancy and again in the last month. This is because the baby is pressing on your bladder. Remember to keep drinking plenty of liquids during your pregnancy.



Eating the right food is always important. It is even more important during pregnancy for these reasons:

- You will stay healthier and be better prepared for the stresses of pregnancy and delivery.
- Your baby is more likely to be born healthy, at the normal time, and at the normal weight.
- Your baby will be healthier during the first few months of life.
- Developing the right eating habits now will benefit your family for a lifetime.



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## HE-431

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