



Healthy Mums

Your guide to Eating Well during
Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

What should I be eating when I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?

Whether you are planning pregnancy, already pregnant or breastfeeding, healthy eating is important for you and your baby. Although some nutrient needs for pregnant and breastfeeding women are unique, the key to eating well is including a variety of nutritious foods from the four major food groups each day.

At least 6 serves Fruit & Veg <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fresh• canned• frozen• juice or dried	At least 6 serves Breads & Cereals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cereals, grains• rice, pasta• breads, crumpets• cous cous	At least 3 serves Milk & Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• milk• cheese• yoghurt, ice cream• soy milk	At least 2 serves Meats & Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• meat, chicken, fish• eggs• nuts, beans• tofu
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Are there any special nutritional requirements during pregnancy?

Energy

During pregnancy your body forms a growing baby and lays down energy stores for breastfeeding later on. In addition to fueling your own body and your growing baby, more nutrients are required for the increased tissue of the uterus, placenta and blood cells.

Consequently, your appetite may increase to ensure that you eat enough for you and your baby. This doesn't mean you need to eat twice as much, as later in pregnancy many women rest more. Your energy requirements will only increase by approximately 12% (about 1400-1900kJ per day by the third trimester). You might meet this by eating one extra sandwich, or an extra serving of yoghurt and fruit with a snack of cheese on crackers. The best way to gauge your energy requirement is to listen to your body and eat when you are hungry.

Remember, gaining weight is a normal part of pregnancy and helps to achieve a healthy outcome for you and your baby. Dieting is not recommended during pregnancy! A reasonable weight gain during pregnancy (if your pre-pregnancy weight was in the healthy range) is about 11.5-16kg, but can vary significantly from one woman to another. If you were underweight before pregnancy, you may need to gain more weight. If you were overweight then you may need to gain less.



Iron

At least a 2-3 times increased intake of iron, particularly in the last two trimesters of pregnancy, is required for your growing baby and to increase your blood iron carrying capacity. Your iron status will be checked early in your pregnancy and again in the third trimester.

Good sources of iron:

Lean red meats, chicken, fish, beans and lentils, nuts, green leafy vegetables like spinach.

Tips to boost iron intake:

- Eat 3-4 red meat meals per week (lamb, beef, venison).
- Include a meal of beans or legumes 1-2 times per week.
- Add plenty of leafy green vegetables or peas to your meals.
- Add vitamin C rich foods or juice to your meal to help absorption of iron e.g. oranges, kiwifruit, tomatoes, broccoli.
- Choose an iron-fortified breakfast cereal.
- Snack on dried fruit, nuts and seeds e.g. apricots, pumpkin seeds, cashew nuts.
- Avoid drinking tea with your meals as the tannins will reduce iron absorption.
- Discuss the need for iron supplements with your doctor if your blood iron levels are low.



One Pan Bolognese Recipe

2 Tbsp	olive oil
500-600g	lean minced beef
2	peeled and diced onions
¼ cup	Wattie's Tomato Paste
400g can	Wattie's Canned Tomatoes
2 cups	beef stock
1 ½ cups	(or 150g) broken dried spaghetti
2 cups	Wattie's Frozen Vegetable Mix



Method:

1. Heat oil in pan and brown mince over high heat, break up mince as it cooks. Once browned, set aside
2. Add the onions to the pan and cook until just beginning to brown.
Stir in the Wattie's Tomato Paste and cook for 2-3 mins until it darkens to a deep red colour.
3. Return the mince to the pan with the Wattie's Tomatoes, stock and spaghetti. Stir, cover and simmer for 10 mins. Stir in the Wattie's Frozen Vegetable Mix and cook for a further 5 mins. Season with salt and pepper.

Note: When using salt, choose iodised salt. Iodine is important for normal growth and development of baby.

Calcium

Calcium is important for the normal development of the bones and teeth of your baby and maintenance of your skeleton. Ensure that you eat at least three servings of calcium-rich foods every day. If using a soy milk, choose one that contains added calcium.

Good choice high calcium foods include:

Reduced or low fat milk, yoghurt, cheese (pasteurised), canned salmon, green vegetables, dried fruit and nuts e.g. almonds and dried apricots.

Tips for increasing calcium intake:

- Add extra milk or yoghurt on cereal
- Make a smoothie
- Eat yoghurt or low fat ice-cream with fruit for dessert
- Keep cans of salmon handy for salads or sandwiches

Smoothie Recipe

Combine the following in a blender:

125g	Wattie's Peach Slices in Clear Fruit Juice
220g can	Wattie's 99% Fat Free Vanilla Creamed Rice
½ cup	Yoghurt
½ cup	Milk



Folate

Folate (or folic acid) is a B-vitamin and is essential for the formation of red blood cells and the growth of new tissues. Increased folate intake is important throughout pregnancy but during early pregnancy your need for folate is even higher to reduce the risk of neural tube defects such as spina bifida in babies. Therefore a daily supplement of 0.8mg of folic acid is recommended starting four weeks prior to pregnancy and continued until the twelfth week of pregnancy in addition to increased dietary folate.

Good choice high folate foods include:

- Green leafy vegetables
- Wholegrain breads and cereals
- Legumes such as baked beans, cooked chickpeas
- Fortified breakfast cereal



Fat

It is not necessary to eat extra fat during pregnancy. However the polyunsaturated fatty acids have been shown to have essential roles in the growth and development of babies, particularly the brain and eyes. Among the polyunsaturated fatty acids that we consume are the omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. We generally consume a much greater proportion of omega-6, therefore it is good to boost your omega-3 intake by including:

- Oily fish e.g. canned tuna, salmon and sardines
- Soybeans
- Canola oil
- Some nuts e.g. walnuts and seeds e.g. flaxseeds

Italian Tuna Potato Cakes with Broccoli & Cauliflower Gratin Recipe

Ingredients for 2 people:

- 2 cups cold mashed potato
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh chives
- 1 egg beaten
- ¼ cup grated cheddar or Parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp chopped capers
- 95g can Greenseas 98% Fat Free Tuna
- portion Wattie's Broccoli & Cauliflower Medley
- sprinkle grated cheddar or Parmesan cheese
- sprinkle breadcrumbs



Method:

1. Mix mashed potato, chives, egg, Parmesan, capers and tuna, season with salt and pepper. Divide into 4 portions and shape into thick patties.
2. Heat a dash of oil or butter in a non-stick frying pan and cook patties over a medium heat for 6-8 minutes turning once until golden and piping hot.
3. Cook the Broccoli & Cauliflower Medley according to instructions on pack. Sprinkle with grated cheddar or Parmesan cheese and breadcrumbs. Microwave or grill to melt cheese.
4. Serve Tuna Cakes immediately with Broccoli & Cauliflower Gratin.

Tip: Leftover Tuna Cakes can be frozen and simply reheated to piping hot for a quick nutritious lunch.

Do I need to take supplements?

Using vitamin and mineral supplements will not give you extra energy. If you eat a variety of foods from the four food groups, supplements should not be necessary, with the exception of folic acid. A daily supplement of 0.8mg folic acid starting four weeks prior to pregnancy and continued until the twelfth week of pregnancy is recommended to help prevent neural tube defects.

Iron supplements may also be prescribed particularly during the last trimester if stores are low, so discuss this with your doctor. If you feel you need a boost you may try a nutritional drink, such as Complan, to provide extra nutrients, protein, carbohydrate and energy. Discuss with your health professional.



Are there any foods I should avoid?

There are some foods that are potentially harmful to an unborn baby. These foods may contain bacteria e.g. Listeria.

Foods to be avoided are:

- Sushi
- Bakery products containing cream or custard
- Salads not prepared immediately before eating
- Unpasteurised milk and milk products e.g. soft cheeses
- Raw eggs
- Raw seafood
- Undercooked meat and chicken
- Pâté, smoked salmon, hummus
- Deli meats
- Buffet style food

The following can be eaten if they are heated to above 75°C immediately before eating:

- Chilled, pre-cooked seafood and meat products eg. chicken and ham.
- Leftovers and takeaway foods that have not just been freshly cooked.
- Rice that has been left to go cold.

Any food should be eaten as soon as possible after cooking. If reheating food, it should be piping hot.

Alcohol should be avoided during pregnancy due to the risk of the baby developing mental and physical abnormalities which manifest as Foetal Alcohol Effects.

Any drinks containing caffeine such as tea, coffee, cola and highly-caffeinated energy drinks should be limited during pregnancy to no more than 300mg/day, which is approx three cups of espresso coffee per day.

What can I eat to help alleviate these pregnancy symptoms?



Morning Sickness

“Morning sickness” affects most women to some degree during pregnancy. Fortunately, for the majority of women, the nausea and vomiting occur in the first trimester only, peaking at week 9-10 and waning by weeks 14-16.

If you find yourself having a hard time eating a balanced diet in your first trimester, rest assured that you are not alone! Because of queasiness, some women eat all the time and gain a lot of weight. Others are hardly able to get anything down and subsequently lose weight. And for many women, only a limited number of foods seem tolerable.

Getting folate and preventing malnutrition and dehydration are the most important considerations in the first trimester.

Although there's no “cure” for morning sickness some women recommend the following tips to help alleviate the symptoms:

- If you feel sick in the morning, get out of bed slowly so your body doesn't change position too quickly.
- Have a cup of tea and/or a biscuit or some toast before you get up because morning sickness can often be exacerbated by low blood sugar levels.
- Try a salty cracker or toast.
- Try ginger biscuits or Ginger Ale.
- Eat small meals and snacks rather than big meals.
- Try a milky drink before you go to bed.
- Rest when you can, being tired makes the problem worse.
- Try sniffing a lemon - sometimes citrus smells can help.
- Avoid tight waistbands - pressure on your tummy can make you feel more nauseous.

Heartburn and Indigestion

Heartburn and indigestion are extremely common in pregnancy, more so during the later stages. It is typically an uncomfortable burning sensation due to acid passing up from the stomach into the oesophagus (food tube).

To help prevent heartburn try eating small amounts of food more often rather than large meals so the stomach has less to empty. Avoid spicy and fatty foods, and try a milky drink before bed time.

Constipation

Some women complain of constipation during pregnancy. Drinking plenty of fluid (at least 6-8 glasses each day), eating foods high in fibre, such as wholegrain breads and cereals and fruit and vegetables, and gentle regular exercise can help to prevent or ease symptoms.

Water and reduced fat milk are the best choices for your fluid intake.

Tips to increase fibre intake:

- Add fruit to cereal for breakfast or try banana on wholegrain toast.
- Bulk up your dinner with plenty of vegetables or salad.
- Keep a bag of corn in the freezer to add to stir fries or quick meals.
- Add baked beans to mince dishes or as a topping on baked potatoes.
- Snack on kiwifruit and raw nuts.
- Freshly squeeze some fruit juice and add the pulp back into the liquid.
- Use wholegrain bread instead of white.
- Choose bran muffins.



Cravings and Aversions

Often pregnant women experience strong likes and dislikes (cravings and aversions) for certain foods during pregnancy. These are unlikely to affect your pregnancy providing you eat a variety of foods from the four food groups.

Some women crave non-food items, such as clay. The craving and eating of non-food items is known as pica. Consumption of non-food items can be dangerous to both you and your baby, therefore seek medical advice if you are affected by this problem.

Cravings for and aversion to foods usually diminish about three months into the pregnancy.

Are there any special nutritional requirements while I'm breastfeeding?

Energy

Energy is needed for both the production of breast milk and the process of breastfeeding. An additional 2000 – 2,100 kJ per day is therefore required for most mums (a 25 – 30% increase). This could come from an extra bowl of cereal with milk, yoghurt and canned fruit, or a snack of baked beans and cheese on toast with a smoothie.

While breastfeeding you should maintain an adequate energy intake while aiming for a gradual loss of any excess weight gained during pregnancy. Excessive restriction of energy in order to revert to pre-pregnancy weight rapidly is discouraged, as very low energy intakes may reduce milk volume and a good nutrient intake is important for maternal health and breast milk quality.

Your hunger is your best gauge of your energy needs – you shouldn't be breastfeeding and feeling hungry.



Fluids

You may feel thirsty if you are breastfeeding and it is important you listen to your body and drink plenty of fluids. Drink about eight glasses of fluid each day although extra may be needed during hot weather or after activity.

Water and reduced fat milk are the best choices for your fluid intake.

Try drinking a glass of water or milk whenever you sit down to breastfeed. Most mothers find they are thirstier when they are breastfeeding their baby.



Your hunger is your best gauge of your energy needs – you shouldn't be breastfeeding and feeling hungry.

Snack and meal ideas when pregnant and breastfeeding

Snacks

Being organised with healthy snacks is often the key to eating well. Here are a few food suggestions and tips to make it easier for you:

- Dried fruit – sultanas, apricots, dates
- Sandwiches
- Vegetable sticks
- Fresh fruit or pottles of fruit
- Creamed rice
- Canned soup
- Popcorn
- Yoghurt
- Low fat crackers and cheese, tomatoes or avocado
- Nuts e.g. raw almonds



Lunches

Lunch-time, especially for those working away from the home throughout their pregnancy, can be a tricky time for making healthy, safe food choices. Here are some lunch ideas that are nutritious and safe:



- Sandwiches or toast using whole grain bread with the following toppings or fillings:
 - Peanut butter
 - Canned salmon or tuna
 - Washed lettuce, grated carrot, avocado
 - Baked beans
 - Cheese and tomato or celery
 - Mashed banana
- Canned or pottle soups, with toast
- Baked potato - microwaved and topped with cheese, beans or tuna
- Canned, pouch or frozen prepared meals to be heated at work

Evening meals

Preparing the family meal early in the day so it only needs cooking or reheating at night can be a life saver when dealing with the hectic 4.00pm – 7.00pm time. Casseroles and oven-baked products (e.g. lasagne) are ideal. Remember to always keep pre-prepared foods in the fridge, then re-heat until piping hot!

Frozen vegetables are also a life-saver as a quick way to ensure you are eating a nutritious, balanced meal, so keep plenty in the freezer.

Sweet and Sour Ginger Pork Casserole Recipe

Serves 4

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 500-600g pork diced
- 2 onions peeled and diced
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 420g can Wattie's Stir-Fry Sweet and Sour Sauce
- 1 cup orange juice, preferably freshly squeezed
- 10-12 dried apricots, halved
- 4-5 cups Wattie's Frozen Vegetable Mix



Method:

1. Heat oil in lidded frying pan and brown pork and onions.
2. Add ginger, sauce, orange juice and dried apricots. Cover and simmer for 40 minutes.
3. Stir in the frozen vegetables, cover and cook for a further 5 minutes until casserole is piping hot.
4. Serve on fluffy white rice and garnish with cashew nuts.



Casseroles and oven-baked products (e.g. lasagne) are ideal for re-heating at hectic dinner times

Rest & Activity... when pregnant and breastfeeding

Sport and Recreation NZ (SPARC) recommends pregnant women do moderate physical activity at least three times a week. Walking, jogging, swimming, low impact aerobics and yoga are best. Don't get too hot and watch your heart rate – around 140 beats per minute is the maximum heart rate or your baby may be deprived of oxygen.

Moderate exercise is also beneficial for breastfeeding mothers. Plan to exercise after feeding so your breasts won't be full and uncomfortable and wear a supportive sports bra. Drink plenty of water especially in hot weather.

Take walks with your baby. If you carry your baby in a backpack, their extra weight will use up even more energy.

It is equally important that new mothers and mothers-to-be take time out for themselves.

- Try resting while your baby sleeps during the day.
- Rest when your body tells you it is tired.
- Friends and family can help by bringing meals, helping with cleaning and washing and by watching your baby and other children so you can have a break.



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