

## Prenatal Nutrition

### Did you know?

Healthy eating plays a very important role in a healthy pregnancy. You need to eat foods from a variety of sources to ensure your baby gets all the vitamins, minerals and nutrients he needs for healthy growth and development.

### What should I eat?

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends "following the rainbow" to healthy eating.

- Eat 5 to 12 servings of grain products (yellow in Canada's Food Guide) each day. Choose whole grain and enriched products more often. A serving is one slice of bread, 125 mL (½ cup) of cooked rice or pasta, half a bagel or pita or one small muffin. (Note: serving sizes could be better shown with art than copy).
- Eat 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables (green in Canada's Food Guide) each day. Choose brightly coloured vegetables and fruit (such as romaine lettuce over iceberg lettuce) more often. Dark-green and orange-coloured vegetables and fruits contain more of the key vitamins you and your baby need. A serving is 250 mL (1 cup) of salad, 125 mL (½ cup) of juice, 1 medium-sized fresh fruit or vegetable, or 125 mL (½ cup) of fresh, canned or frozen fruits or vegetables.
- Eat 3 to 4 servings of milk products (blue in Canada's Food Guide) each day. Choose lower-fat milk products more often. They provide the high quality protein, calcium and Vitamin D you need but they contain less fat and calories. A serving is 250 mL (1 cup) of milk, 175 g (¾ cup) of yogurt or 50 grams of cheese (the size of 6 dice).
- Eat 2 to 3 servings of meat and alternatives (red in Canada's Food Guide) each day. Choose leaner meats, poultry and fish, as well as dried peas, beans and lentils more often. A serving is 1 to 2 eggs, 30 mL (2 tbsp) of peanut butter, 100 g (⅓ cup) of tofu, and 50 to 100 grams of fish, poultry or meat (the size of a deck of cards).

### Can I eat more, now that I'm expecting?

During your first trimester, you need about 100 extra calories each day-to support the growth of your baby. In the second and third trimesters, you need about 300 extra calories per day. Get the extra nutrition you need by choosing foods from the four food groups!

### What else can I do?

- During pregnancy, special attention should be given to iron, folic acid, calcium, vitamin D and essential fatty acids. You may need to take a vitamin/mineral supplement in order to get enough. Talk to your health professional about how you can best meet your needs for these important nutrients.
- Aim for three meals with healthy snacks in between.

- Choose whole grains such as whole wheat, rolled oats, oat bran and barley over more processed grains such as white flour. They provide more fibre which can help with constipation.
- Taste and enjoyment can come from other foods and beverages that are not part of the four food groups. Some of these foods are higher in fat or calories and should be used in moderation.
- Choose highly processed foods such as bologna, wieners, bacon and other canned or cured meats less often, as they are high in fat, salt and additives.
- Consider breastfeeding as it provides optimal nutrition for your child, talk to your health care professional to get more information.

### **For more information**

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food\\_guide\\_rainbow\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html)

Folic Acid

[www.healthcanada.ca/folicacid](http://www.healthcanada.ca/folicacid)

BMI Nomogram

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/bmi\\_chart\\_java\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/bmi_chart_java_e.html)

Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy - National Guidelines for the Childbearing years

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/national\\_guidelines\\_tc\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/national_guidelines_tc_e.html)

Canadian Health Network - A consumer health information service brought to you by the Public Health Agency of Canada and major health organizations across Canada.

[www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca)

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. How much weight should I gain while pregnant?**

It depends on your weight before pregnancy.

- If your Body Mass Index (BMI) prior to pregnancy was between 20 and 27, the recommended weight gain is between 25 and 35 pounds.
- If your BMI prior to pregnancy was over 27, the recommended weight gain is between 15 and 25 pounds.
- If your BMI prior to pregnancy was below 20, the recommended weight gain is between 28 and 40 pounds.
- If you are expecting multiple births (twins, triplets) you will need to gain more weight, depending on the number of babies you are carrying. Your health care provider will be able to advise you.

**2. Is there anything I shouldn't eat while I'm pregnant?**

Yes. Avoid the following foods which may be contaminated by bacteria:

- Raw fish, especially shellfish such as oysters and clams
- Undercooked meat, poultry, seafood and hot dogs
- All foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs
- Unpasteurized milk products and foods made from it
- Unpasteurized juices, such as unpasteurized apple cidre
- Raw sprouts, especially alfalfa sprouts

**3. I often have to eat on the run. What should I grab for a snack?**

These days, the supermarket is full of foods that are easy to eat on days you're on the run. Try the following:

- Pre-washed baby carrots, cauliflower and broccoli
- Raisin boxes
- Low-fat cottage cheese bowls
- Low-fat yogurt containers
- Mixed vegetable juice or fruit juice
- Trail mix (raisins, dried fruit, nuts and seeds)
- Cheese