



GENERAL NUTRITION  
TIPS FOR A

# HEALTHY PREGNANCY



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# GENERAL NUTRITION FOR PREGNANCY

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Good nutrition during pregnancy promotes the health of both mother and baby. It also helps with healthy weight gain, supports the development of your baby, and lowers the risk of complications during your pregnancy and the birth of your baby. This guide will explore five components of good nutrition for pregnant individuals:

- 1 GENERAL HEALTHY EATING**
- 2 WEIGHT GAIN**
- 3 MINERAL AND VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTATION**
- 4 FOOD SAFETY**
- 5 COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF PREGNANCY**

The topics discussed here are general nutrition recommendations. **Your nutritional needs may change depending on a variety of factors, including you and your baby's current health, where you are in your pregnancy, and other health conditions such as nausea, gestational diabetes, or pre-eclampsia.** Talk with a dietitian to get nutrition recommendations tailored for your specific needs.

# GENERAL HEALTHY EATING

Good nutrition means consuming enough nutrients to support your body's functions and overall health. Eat a variety of foods to help your body get all the nutrients it needs. Nutrient-dense foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that promote health while being low in saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium. Eating too much added sugar, sodium (salt), and saturated fats can contribute to negative health conditions.

## BONUS TIP: STAY HYDRATED



Hydration is an important part of good nutrition. Stay hydrated by drinking at least 8-12 cups (64-96 ounces) of water per day.

## RECOMMENDED FOODS LIST FOR HEALTHY EATING

### FOOD GROUP:

### FOCUS ON:

#### FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables.

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Canned, packaged, or frozen fruits and vegetables with reduced or no added salt, sugar, or fat

#### GRAINS

Make whole grain foods half of your grain intake.

- Whole-wheat pasta
- Whole-grain breads
- Brown or wild rice
- Oats
- Other whole-grain cereals including barley, rye, quinoa

#### PROTEIN

Choose protein foods that are lower in saturated fats and sodium.

- Leaner cuts of meat or poultry such as chuck roasts, skinless chicken breasts, turkey cutlets, pork loin
- Trim or remove skin and fat on meats
- Lean roast beef or ham
- Fish and seafood low in mercury
- Plant-based proteins such as beans, tofu, nuts/nut butters, seeds, legumes

#### DAIRY & DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

Choose non-fat or low-fat dairy or dairy products.

- Non-fat or low-fat dairy products such as 1% or skim milk
- Fortified plant-based milk such as rice, soy, and almond milk
- Non-fat or low-fat dairy yogurt
- Fat-free and low-fat cheeses such as mozzarella, feta, or goat cheese

# WEIGHT GAIN IS NORMAL AND HEALTHY

The extra weight gained during pregnancy nurtures your baby, prepares your body for breastfeeding after delivery, and prevents pregnancy complications such as gestational diabetes and preeclampsia. The recommended amount of weight gain during pregnancy depends on your pre-pregnancy Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a number calculated from an individual's weight and height to assess whether they are at a healthy weight. The table below states general recommendations of the amount of weight gain needed during pregnancy.

PRE-PREGNANCY BMI	RECOMMENDED WEIGHT GAIN
Under 18.5	28 - 40 lbs.
18.5 - 24.9	25 - 35 lbs.
25 - 29.9	15 - 25 lbs.
Over 30	11 - 20 lbs.

This weight gain can be achieved by adding an extra 300 calories per day during your second and third trimester.

The above are general recommendations. Your ideal weight gain and calorie needs may vary. Consult your doctor or a registered dietitian to determine the best weight goal for you and how to achieve it.



# ADD VITAMIN & MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS AS NEEDED

During pregnancy, your body's need for specific vitamins and minerals increases. Prenatal vitamins contain a variety of vitamins and minerals needed for your health and the development of your baby, and they are recommended to those who are pregnant or may become pregnant. Not all prenatal vitamins are the same. Talk to your doctor about which prenatal vitamin would be best for you.

Below are some examples of vitamins and minerals, their importance, and which foods you can find them in.

	IMPORTANCE	FOOD SOURCES
<b>IRON</b>	Doubles the amount of blood in your body to supply more oxygen to your baby	Meat, seafood, fortified cereal and bread, spinach, nuts, seeds
<b>CALCIUM</b>	Builds strong teeth and bones for your baby	Dairy or dairy products, fortified orange juice, leafy greens, tofu
<b>FOLIC ACID</b>	Promotes proper spine and brain development	Asparagus and broccoli, fruits, nuts, beans, peas, and fortified grains



# KEEP YOUR FOOD SAFE

During pregnancy, you and your baby are at a high risk for foodborne illnesses, which can cause serious health problems. Foodborne illnesses occur when you eat or drink foods that contain harmful agents such as bacteria or viruses. Food safety is important for preventing foodborne illness. Below are some food safety tips for preparing and cooking meals.



## CLEAN

Wash your hands, tools, and counters often when working with food.



## SEPARATE

Keeping foods separate will prevent germs from spreading. One way to do this is to keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs apart from foods that are ready-to-eat, such as fruits, vegetables, and breads.



## COOK

Avoid raw or undercooked eggs, including hollandaise sauce or Caesar dressing as these contain raw or uncooked eggs. Avoid raw or undercooked meats including sushi, oysters and shellfish. Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked properly.

**STEAK & ROASTS** Internal temperature of **145°F**

**GROUND MEATS** Internal temperature of **160°F**

**WHOLE CHICKEN & TURKEY** Internal temperature of **165°F**

**EGGS** Until the yolks are firm at **145°F**

**FISH** Until it begins to flake at **145°F**



## CHILL

Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, produce, and other foods that may spoil within hours of buying or cooking.

## MERCURY IN SEAFOOD

Seafood is recommended as part of a healthy eating pattern; however, seafood contains mercury, which if eaten in excess can cause harm to your baby. Therefore, it is recommended to eat seafood that is lower in mercury and to have no more than 12 ounces of fish per week, which is about 3 servings. One serving is about the size of your palm.

### SEAFOOD LOWER IN MERCURY:

anchovy, catfish, clam, cod, crab, crawfish, oyster, pollock, salmon, sardine, scallop, shrimp, and tilapia

### SEAFOOD HIGHER IN MERCURY:

bigeye tuna, king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, shark, swordfish

# COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF PREGNANCY

Nausea and constipation are common pregnancy symptoms experienced by many pregnant individuals. Fortunately, these symptoms are usually not serious and can usually be managed through diet and lifestyle.

## NAUSEA

Feeling sick in the stomach, with the urge to vomit.

- Try ginger candies or ginger tea to help relieve nausea.
- Choose bland foods such as toast, plain meat, unseasoned rice or pasta, bananas, applesauce.
- If the smell of food bothers you, eat cold or room temperature foods.
- Eat smaller, but more meals throughout the day (about 6-8 small meals per day).
- Drink beverages that have calories like 100% fruit juice or sport drinks.

## CONSTIPATION

Unable to or having difficulty passing stools.

- Add fiber. Fiber increases the size and weight of your stool, making it easier to pass.
- Hydrate! Drink 10-12 cups of fluids each day. In addition to fiber, plenty of fluids will make your stools softer, making it easier to pass.
- Move! Being active encourages your stool to move, so take part in a physical activity that you enjoy such as walking, swimming, or riding a bike.

# OPEN ARMS IS HERE TO HELP

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Open Arms does not have a menu specifically for pregnant individuals, but all of our meals follow the guidelines of a healthy eating pattern as outlined in this guide. Open Arms also has dietitians on staff that can help determine what menu may be best for your specific needs.

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## OTHER RESOURCES

For more information about pregnancy and nutrition, scan the QR codes or visit these sites:



American Pregnancy Association: <https://americanpregnancy.org/>



Advice for Eating Fish: <https://www.fda.gov/food/consumers/advice-about-eating-fish>



Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020 – 2025:  
[https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Americans\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf)



A Food Safety Booklet: <https://www.fda.gov/food/people-risk-foodborne-illness/food-safety-booklet-pregnant-women-their-unborn-babies-and-children-under-five>



My Plate for Pregnant & Breastfeeding Individuals: <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>

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## GET IN TOUCH WITH OPEN ARMS

Open Arms has a team of Registered Dietitians that provide free-of-cost nutrition education and counseling to Open Arms clients over the phone. If you have a question about your meals or want to schedule a one-on-one call, contact the Open Arms nutrition team!

### Our Registered Dietitians can help:

- Recommend a menu based on your needs and preferences
- Answer your questions about food, nutrition, and health
- Provide nutrition coaching to support you in reaching your health goals
- Suggest additional food resources if you need them
- Give you meal and snack ideas according to your likes, dislikes, and medical needs
- Provide nutrition information about Open Arms meals, such as calorie, nutrient, and allergen information



**612-767-7333** Ask to speak with a registered dietitian



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