Healthy food during pregnancy





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"Your balanced diet is one of the greatest gifts you give your child."

A healthy, balanced diet is preferred before pregnancy because it helps maintain woman's health. Pregnant woman should ensure a balanced diet of carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals for supporting her health and the child's health.



Benefits of proper nutrition in pregnancy:

- Reduces the risk of congenital disabilities.
- Improves placental function.
- Reduces postpartum depression.
- Improves the health of the expectant mother and the fetus.
- Relieves fatigue.

How many calories should a pregnant woman eat?

A pregnant woman needs about 300-350 additional calories per day from the beginning of the second trimester and almost 400 extra calories from the third trimester compared to pre-pregnancy due to increased nutrient needs. For a pregnant woman with twins, her needs exceed 700 calories compared to pre-pregnancy calories requirements. In addition, a pregnant woman needs to focus on eating dietary fiber from 20-30 grams daily to maintain a healthy digestive system.



Health Food Guide for Pregnant Woman:

Essential Nutrients	Food Sources	Importance	Advice
Carbohydrates	**Bread and cereals:** Bread, rice, breakfast cereal, oats, pasta and bulgur. **Starchy vegetables:** Potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, and carrots. **Fruits.** **Milk and dairy products.** **Legumes:** Peas, beans, lentils, and other derivatives.	Major sources of energy.	Consume moderate intake of these food sources to avoid abnormal weight gain and high blood sugar.
Protein	**Animal protein:** Milk, dairy products, meat, poultry, fish and eggs. **Plant protein:** Nuts. Legumes: Peas, beans, lentils, and other derivatives.	A pregnant woman needs protein to grow and develop the fetal cells and tissues and form the nervous system of the fetus.	- Eat foods rich in vitamin C sources with plant protein sources that help absorb iron. - Eat fish twice a week and make sure you choose fish that is lower in mercury.
Fats	**Unsaturated fats:** Olive oil, avocado, peanut butter, nuts, corn oil, and sunflower oil. **Saturated fats:** Greases, animal fats, butter, ghee, and palm oil. **Trans fats:** In processed food, ready-made food, and fast food.	Essential for absorbing insoluble vitamins in fat.	Reduce/stay away from frequent consumption of animal fats, saturated fats, and trans fats.



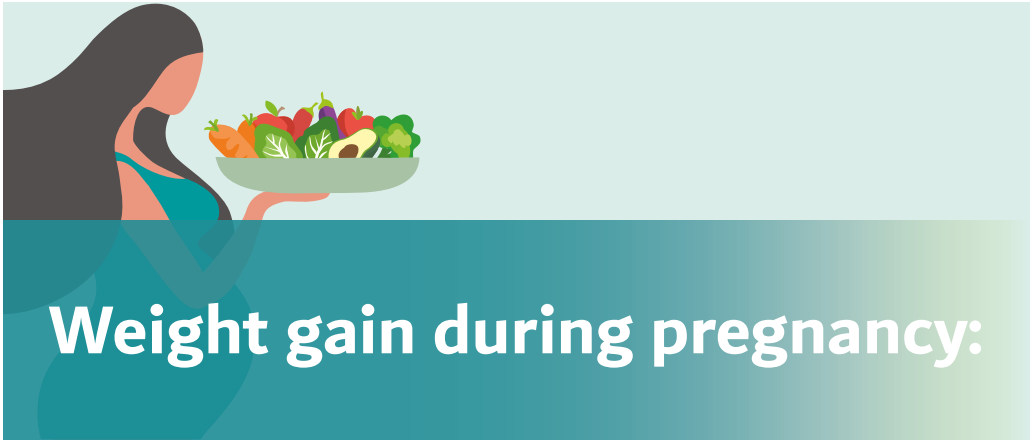
The essential vitamins and minerals for pregnant woman:

Nutrients	Food sources	Health benefits	The daily needs of pregnant women
Calcium	Almonds, spinach, broccoli, soymilk, and dairy.	The fetus needs calcium to build strong bones and teeth, to develop the heart, muscles, and nerves, regulate the heartbeat and blood clotting process.	≤ 18 years: 1300 milligrams 19-50 years: 1000 mg
Iron	Meat, leafy vegetables, cabbage, beans, pumpkin seeds, figs, dried apricots, and parsley.	Iron helps carrier oxygen between cells, increases blood volume and prevent anemia.	27 milligrams
Folic acid	Liver, lentils, milk, vegetables, egg yolks, legumes, avocado, citrus fruits, seeds, and nuts.	Contributes to the normal growth of cells during pregnancy, maintains healthy baby brain, reduces the risk of birth defects, and the formation of red blood cells.	600 micrograms
Iodine	Dairy products, vegetables, fruits, egg, and tuna.	Plays an important role in regulating thyroid function and metabolism, and iodine also helps develop the child's brain and nervous system.	220 micrograms
Zinc	Leafy vegetables, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, lentils, almonds, whole grains, and beef.	Zinc helps regenerate DNA functions and normal growth during pregnancy. It also helps support the immune system and heal wounds.	≤ 18 years: 12 milligrams 19-50 years: 11 milligrams



The essential vitamins and minerals for pregnant woman:

Nutrients	Food sources	Health benefits	The daily needs of pregnant women
Vitamin C	Melons, oranges, broccoli, green peppers, red cabbage, kiwi, strawberries, and tomatoes.	Vitamin C is necessary for collagen production, bone growth, skin health, wound healing, as well as helping to fight infection, and to protect cells from the damages.	≤ 18 years: 80 milligrams 19-50 years: 85 mg
Vitamin A	Fish, meat, milk products, cheese, egg, carrots, spinach, red and yellow peppers, sweet potatoes, leafy vegetables, and pumpkin.	Plays an important role in enhancing pregnant women's immunity, in the development - of fetal organs and skeleton, and in ensuring healthy fetal development.	≤ 18 years: 750 micrograms 19-50 years: 770 micrograms
Vitamin D	Fortified orange juice, fortified cereals, soymilk, egg, tuna, salmon and fortified milk.	Helps maintain appropriate levels of calcium and phosphorus, which help build the bones and teeth of the child and pregnant woman.	600 IU
Vitamin B (6)	Meat, chicken, fish, chickpeas, whole grains, nuts, bananas, potatoes, and fortified grains.	Vitamin B6 helps in the metabolism of protein, fats, and carbohydrates in the body. It also helps form new red blood cells, antibodies, and neurotransmitters and develops the fetal brain and nervous system.	1.9 milligrams



Weight gain during pregnancy:

"Weight gain during pregnancy is important, but to a certain extent."

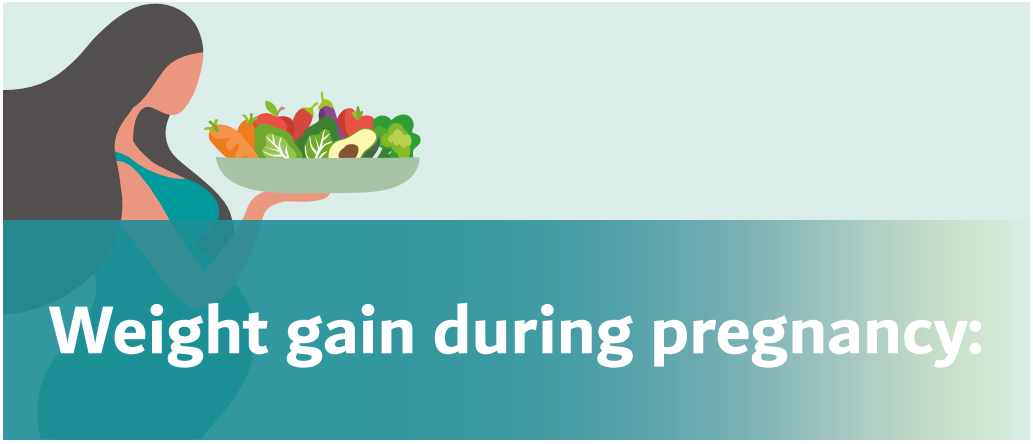
Weight gain during pregnancy:

The normal and healthy weight gain during pregnancy is suitable for changes during fetal development.

Excess weight more than the normal range during pregnancy raises the risk of complications and can lead to:

- High blood pressure.
- Gestational diabetes.
- Cesarean delivery.

It is recommended not to reduce the calorie intake or skip main meals, as it may affect the pregnant mother's and the fetus's health.



Weight gain during pregnancy:

Recommendations for total weight gain during pregnancy, through BMI before pregnancy:

Pre-pregnancy BMI	BMI Weight (kg)/Height (m2)	Weight gain rate	Weight gain rate Twins
Underweight	<18.5	13-18 kg	< 25 kg
Normal	18.5-24.9	11-16 kg	15-17 kg
Overweight	25.0-29.9	7-11 kg	14 -23 kg
Obesity	≥30.0	5-6 kg	11-19 kg

BMI = BMI (weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters).



Dealing with pregnancy's problems:

Symptoms of pregnancy disorders vary from woman-to-woman, and here are some health problems that a pregnant woman may experience:

The problem	Tips
Morning Sickness: Most pregnant women sometimes suffer from nausea and vomiting in the morning in the first trimester, and it may continue throughout pregnancy due to changes in hormone levels.	• Eat several small meals instead of three large meals during the day. • Eat dry toast, biscuits, or dry breakfast cereals in the morning. • Eat low-fat and easy-to-digest foods, such as cereals, rice, and bananas. • Stay away from foods with strong smells.
Constipation: Constipation may occur due to eating habits such as not eating enough dietary fibers, stress, and taking medications such as calcium and iron.	• Drink plenty of fluids, especially water (at least 8 cups per day). • Eat foods rich in dietary fibers, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole-grain products (e.g., whole wheat, bread, brown rice, and oats).
Acidity, indigestion: Due to fetal pressure on the mother's stomach, constipation, and nausea.	• Avoid fatty and fried foods. • Eat small meals instead of large meals. • Do not lie down directly after eating. • Limit eating certain foods such as citrus, spicy foods, and chocolate.



Dealing with pregnancy's problems:

The problem	Tips
Gas and stomach bloating: During pregnancy, transient food through the intestine can increase by 30%. This allows gas to build up easier and creates bloating and flatulence. Gas during pregnancy can also increase as the fetus grows in the uterus, which puts pressure on your abdominal cavity.	• Avoid chewing gum and drinking soft drinks. • Reduce milk intake, and eat more yogurt. • Reducing the intake of legumes, radishes, and cabbage. • Soak the foods that cause gases before cooking them, like (peas and beans.) • Eat slowly, and chew well. • Avoid talking while eating to reduce the amount of air swallowed.

Gestational diabetes: Higher blood glucose (sugar) levels than usual during pregnancy; gestational diabetes may disappear after the birth of the child and may continue to be converted to type 2 diabetes.	• Eat healthy food.
	• Avoid/ reduce eating the following foods:
	  ○ Sweets, sugars, soft drinks, sweetened juices, and energy drinks.
	  ○ Fatty, fried, and fast foods.
	• Follow-up with the dietitian to maintain normal sugar levels.

High blood pressure: Factors that can cause high blood pressure include excess body weight, hormonal changes that accompany pregnancy, and the presence of a genetic factor.	• Limit to add of salt to foods. • Avoid fast-food and ready-made food containing excess salt.



Misconceptions

Misconceptions about how to choose food for a pregnant woman can be harmful:

Belief	The Truth
You should eat twice as much (for two).	The pregnant woman needs an increase in daily caloric need of 300 to 400 additional calories per day, not more, from the beginning of the second trimester of pregnancy.
Not gaining weight during pregnancy makes childbirth easier.	A pregnant woman who does not gain enough weight during pregnancy is at risk of premature birth or an underweight child.
Pregnant women are just eager for the food they need.	A pregnant woman can crave any food, but cravings should not be the only indicator of nutritional needs.
A healthy pregnant woman will not has any problems during pregnancy.	Nausea, heartburn, and constipation affect some women regardless of their level of health.



Foods that a pregnant woman should avoid:

- Smoked food.
- Raw foods.
- Foods or beverages contain uncooked, raw eggs because they contain salmonella bacteria such as mayonnaise, crema, etc.
- Ready-made salads.
- Unpasteurized dairy products contain listeria monocyte germ that causes fetal abortion.
- Do not eat liver in large quantities.
- All sprouts include clover, broccoli, onion, sunflower, radish, and soy (soft or cooked).
- Seafood and large fish are higher in mercury.



Food safety tips to keep a pregnant woman healthy:

- Store raw and cooked foods separately and do not use the same tools, such as knives and chopping boards.
- Do not defrost frozen food by leaving it at room temperature throughout the day.
- Wash vegetables and fruits thoroughly before eating them.



Healthy plate for a pregnant woman:

Water:

8-12 cups

Drink mainly water, decaf tea, or decaf coffee, and avoid sugary beverages.

Milk and dairy products:

Choose 2-3 servings

of low-fat milk or dairy products.

Meat and its alternatives:

3 servings daily

Choose protein sources such as poultry, beans, nuts, low-mercury seafood, eggs, tofu or low-fat cheese. Limit red meat and avoid cold cuts and other processed meats.

Non-starchy vegetables:

3-4 servings daily

Choose large portions of a variety of non-starchy vegetables, such as leafy greens, broccoli, carrots, peppers, or cabbage.

Starches and starchy vegetables:

9 servings daily

Choose whole grains, such as whole wheat bread or pasta, brown rice, quinoa or oats, and other healthy starches like beans, lentils, sweet potatoes, or acorn squash, and limit white bread, white rice, and fried potatoes.

Fruits:

2-3 servings daily

Choose a variety of whole fruits and limit juice and dried fruits. Fruit is great for snacks and dessert, too.

Choose healthy fats such as:

Olive oil, and other sources such as avocado and nuts.

Exercise if possible

for 30 minutes a day