

Nutrition recommendations during pregnancy

To eat well during pregnancy is a very important matter for you and your baby. But the best is to consider what you eat. Although you do not need any extra calories for the first trimester, your requirements raise to about 330 extra calories a day during the second trimester and to 440 calories during the third one, when your baby grows quickly. Those calories should come from nutritious foods so they can contribute to your baby's healthy growth and development.

Scientists know that your diet can affect your baby's health even before you become pregnant. For example, recent research data showed that folic acid helps in preventing neural tube defects from occurring during the earliest stages of fetal development, so it's important for you to consume plenty of it before you become pregnant and during the early weeks

* Here are some of the most common nutrients you need and the foods that contain them: **Proteins, Carbohydrates, Fat, Calcium, Iron, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, Zinc and Folic Acid.**

Food and Drinks to Avoid During Pregnancy

Although many doctors feel that one or two cups per day of coffee, tea, or soda with caffeine to less than 300mg per day won't harm your baby, it's probably wise to avoid caffeine altogether if you can and switch to decaffeinated products.

Caffeine can cross the placenta and affect your baby's heart rate and breathing. Some studies suggest that drinking too much caffeine may be associated with a small decrease in birth weight or an increased risk of miscarriage and stillbirth.

-Herbal teas

Avoid herbal teas unless your health care provider advises you to consume them. Some research data states that large amounts of some herbal teas, may cause contractions.

-Alcohol

No level of alcohol has been proved safe during pregnancy. The safest bet is to avoid alcohol entirely.

Studies showed that mothers who drink alcohol have a higher risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. Excessive alcohol consumption may result in fetal alcohol syndrome, which can cause facial deformities, heart problems, low birth weight and mental retardation.

-Specific food groups

When you're pregnant, it's also important to avoid food-borne illnesses, such as listeriosis and toxoplasmosis, which can be life-threatening to an unborn baby and may cause birth defects or miscarriage. Foods you'll want to steer clear of include:

- soft, unpasteurized cheeses (often advertised as "fresh") such as feta, goat, Brie, Camembert, and blue cheese
- unpasteurized dairy products
- unpasteurized milk, juices, and apple juice
- raw eggs or foods containing raw eggs, including deserts such as mousse and tiramisu
- raw or undercooked meats, poultry, fish or shellfish
- processed meats such as hot dogs and deli meats (they should be very well-cooked)
- fish that are high in mercury, including shark, swordfish, king mackerel

Note: The FDA states that you can safely eat the FDA says you can safely eat up to 400g a week (two average meals) of:

- Shrimp
- Canned light tuna
- Salmon
- Catfish

