



MATERNAL HEALTH NUTRITION GUIDE

Special thanks to Haddi Ceesay and Erin Shahid for their insight on this document.

The most critical structural developments of the fetus occur within the first 100 days, which includes the development of the brain and spinal cord. Some people may not even know that they are pregnant during this time, so it's important to get started on a healthy diet before pregnancy.

A healthy pregnancy diet consists of consuming foods with high iron, protein, omega-3's, calcium, fortified grains, and other vitamins and minerals. Folic acid intake is also extremely important for a healthy pregnancy. The preferred source of folic acid should be the biologically available L-Methylfolate, as a majority of prenatal vitamins contain the synthetic version of folic acid, which is not well absorbed by approximately 30% of the population.

CALORIE & PROTEIN INTAKE

During the second and third trimesters of pregnancy, pregnant people need up to an extra 350-500 calories a day to house and feed a growing fetus and placenta. The average pregnant person also has a daily protein requirement between 75-100g. Low protein has been linked to preeclampsia, premature birth, low birth weight, poor placenta growth, edema (swelling of the feet and legs as the body tries to break down muscle tissue to obtain enough protein) and other issues.

COMPLETELY AVOID:

You should never consume the following foods, as none are safe to consume during pregnancy.

- Raw meat
- Deli meat
- Fish with high levels of mercury
- Raw eggs
- Smoked seafood
- Raw shellfish
- Soft cheeses
- Unpasteurized milk
- Caffeine
- Alcohol (*no level of alcohol is safe to consume during pregnancy.*)

THE DIRTY DOZEN*:

Thoroughly clean the produce with water and vinegar (3 cups water and 1 cup white vinegar, then rinse with cold water).

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Nectarines
- Apples
- Peaches
- Pears
- Cherries
- Grapes
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Sweet bell peppers
- Potatoes
- Hot peppers

THE CLEAN FIFTEEN*:

Consume as many of these safe foods as you want!

- Sweet corn
- Avocados
- Pineapple
- Cabbage
- Onions
- Frozen sweet peas
- Papayas
- Asparagus
- Mangoes
- Eggplant
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi
- Cantaloupe
- Cauliflower
- Grapefruit

*Source: Environmental Working Group (EWG): <https://ewg.org/foodnews/summary.php>

NEXT STEPS FOR EXPECTING OR PLANNING TO EXPECT

Once you decide on having a child or are already expecting, it is important to find a healthcare provider who may better assist you to achieve a safe and healthy pregnancy and birth.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America*, 52% percent of people who have been pregnant reported increased anxiety or depression while pregnant. Poor mental health may impact a pregnant person's diet. Therefore, it is important to speak to a healthcare provider about your emotional and mental health so they can help guide you to more fitting resources.

Here is a list of websites you can visit to get more information on pregnancy and the importance of proper nutrition during pregnancy.

- **U.S. Dept. of Agriculture:** <https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/resources-educating-pregnant-women>
- **Choose My Plate:** <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/moms-pregnancy-breastfeeding>
- **Healthy Eating:** <https://www.healthyeating.org/Health-Wellness-Providers/Nutrition-Education-Booklets/Pregnancy>
- **Nutrition.gov:** <https://www.nutrition.gov/subject/life-stages/women/pregnancy>
- **Fit Pregnancy:** <https://www.fitpregnancy.com/nutrition>
- **American Pregnancy Association:** <http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/pregnancy-nutrition/>
- **The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists:** <https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Nutrition-During-Pregnancy>
- **World Health Organization:** <http://www.who.int/topics/pregnancy/en/>
- **Folic Acid:** <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3250974/>

