

Bump to Baby

A short guide to eating well during pregnancy and breastfeeding

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This little guide, based on current government advice, covers the basics about eating well during pregnancy. The best people to give you more detailed advice are your GP, midwife and dietitian.



A pregnant pause for thought

Eating a well-balanced diet is important for health, whatever your age, but particularly if you are pregnant (or planning to have a baby in the near future). This is because your baby can reap the benefits of your healthy diet while he or she is growing in your womb.

The good news is that a healthy diet for pregnant women is similar to a healthy diet for everyone, there are just a few additional important things to keep in mind.

You might feel hungrier than usual, but you don't need to "eat for two". It's only in the last 3 months of pregnancy that you need an extra 200 calories a day – that's a large banana and a glass of semi-skimmed milk or a piece of fruit and 30g hard cheese.

It's a great idea to have a good breakfast every day. If you struggle to eat something in the morning, you could try having a smoothie or something light or plain to help keep your energy levels up.

Healthy diet guide

A healthy diet contains a variety of foods from each of the groups in the table below.

	Examples	Quantity
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods	Bread, breakfast cereals, potatoes, rice, pasta, couscous, cornmeal, yams and sweet potatoes	Make these a main part of every meal and eat wholegrain or high-fibre varieties when you can
Fruit and vegetables	Oranges, apples, bananas, mangoes, carrots, peas and tomatoes	Try to eat at least five servings a day
Milk and dairy	Milk, cheese, yogurt and fromage frais	Three servings per day will provide enough calcium and iodine to meet your requirements
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Beef, lamb, pork, chicken, beans, lentils, nuts, eggs and fish	Eat some protein every day. Try to eat two portions of fish every week, and to make one of these oily fish (see page 5)
Oils and spreads	Olive oil, rapeseed oil, sunflower oil, spreads	Use sparingly
Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar	Crisps, fizzy drinks, chocolate, sweets, cakes, pastries and biscuits	If you're having these foods, try to have them less often and in small amounts.

Keeping active during pregnancy

It's important to stay active during pregnancy - it's good for you and your baby! Weight-bearing exercise (where your feet support your whole body weight) may help reduce labour time and other complications. It can also help:

- control weight gain
- improve fitness, mood and sleep
- reduce risk of pregnancy problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes

Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Try to do a mixture of aerobic and muscle strengthening activity. Don't overdo it - you should be able to hold a conversation without becoming breathless. If you take part in a class, let your instructor know that you are pregnant so they can suggest adaptations where necessary.

If you weren't already active before you got pregnant, don't worry! Start slowly and listen to your body, and don't do any strenuous exercise.

For more information and helpful tips on staying active in pregnancy, visit Tommy's: www.tommys.org



Mighty minerals



Iodine

Iodine supports normal cognitive function, as well as normal growth of the baby.

Milk and yogurt are good sources of iodine. Eggs and fish are also good sources.

Three portions a day will provide enough iodine to meet your requirements.

Other foods that can help towards calcium intake include white bread, some types of nuts and seeds, green leafy vegetables, some types of beans and peas and tinned fish with bones (like sardines and pilchards).

Calcium

Calcium is needed for normal growth and development of bone in children.

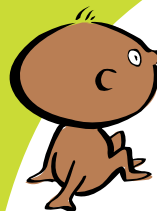
Having a glass of milk, a pot of yogurt and a small piece (about the size of two thumbs) of hard cheese a day will help provide most pregnant mums with enough calcium. **Teenage mums need more calcium to meet their needs.**

Iron

If your diet is lacking in iron, you may feel very tired and become anaemic.

A good source of iron is red meat e.g. beef and lamb. Try to eat lean versions or trim the fat off.

Alternatively, foods such as green leafy vegetables, breakfast cereals with added iron, beans, lentils and nuts also contain some iron. To make the most of iron, eat these foods with vitamin C-rich foods (e.g. kiwis, tomatoes) at the same meal, as vitamin C boosts iron uptake. Avoid drinking tea or coffee at mealtimes as they can reduce iron absorption.



Vital vitamins

Folic acid (Folate)

Ideally, you should take a 400µg (microgram) folic acid tablet every day from the time you start trying to conceive until the 12th week of pregnancy. This may help reduce the risk of neural tube defects (NTD) such as spina bifida. If you or your partner have a family history of NTD, you're taking anti-epileptic medication or you have diabetes, speak to your GP as you may need a higher dose.

It is also a good idea to eat foods that are high in folate (e.g. green leafy vegetables) or foods with added folic acid (e.g. some breakfast cereals) - check the label to see if they contain folic acid.

Vitamin D

Pregnant women are advised to take a 10µg vitamin D supplement daily. These are available in pharmacies and under the Healthy Start Scheme - contact your midwife or GP for advice.

Getting outdoors regularly in the spring and summer will also help keep your vitamin D levels topped up. Most of our vitamin D comes from the action of summer sunlight on our skin. But always remember to cover up or protect your skin before your skin starts to turn red or burn.

You can also get small amounts of vitamin D from oily fish (e.g. mackerel, salmon), eggs and foods with added vitamin D.

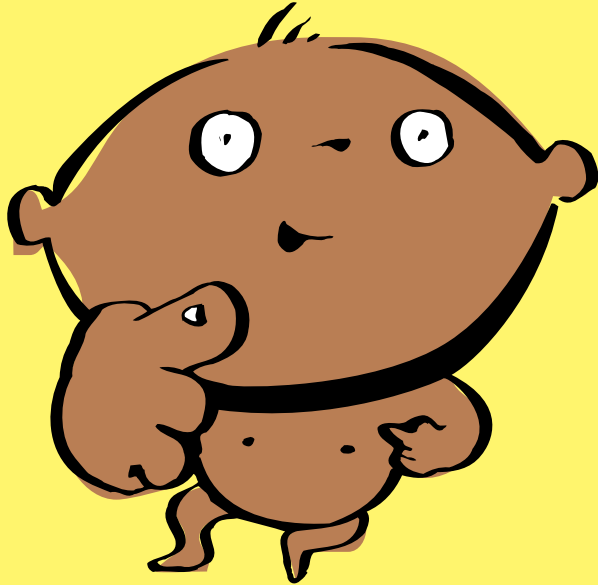
Oily fish also provides essential fatty acids. Eat one or two (but no more than two) portions a week.

Food for Thought

The yes/no guide
to eating during pregnancy



Now that your baby has arrived...



Phew! With the birth to get over, a new baby to look after and disturbed sleep – you've got a lot on your plate. With so much to do, you need to look after yourself.

What is a healthy diet for a new mum?

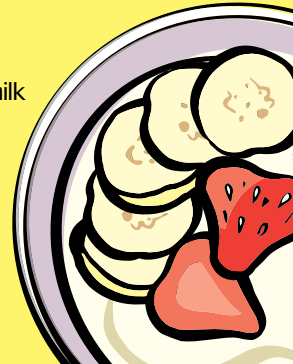
Your diet while breastfeeding should look the same as a healthy, balanced diet for everyone. This will help ensure you get all the nutrients you and your baby need.

Breastfeeding will probably make you a bit hungrier and thirstier than usual. Be guided by your appetite, and choose a variety of foods from the table on page 3. Drink plenty of fluids, keep a drink nearby when you settle down for a feed – water and milk are good choices.

It is recommended that everyone, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement of 10µg. Breastfed babies are recommended to be given a daily vitamin D supplement from birth. However, babies having 500ml or more a day of formula don't need additional vitamins as formula already contains vitamin D and other nutrients.

Mini bites

- Bowl of calcium-fortified bran cereal and milk
- Berries with natural yogurt
- Sardines on toast
- Hard cheese and crackers
- Mini pasta bowl with cheese
- Toasted pitta bread with houmous



Foods to avoid

Foods high in vitamin A

Liver, liver sausage, and pâté, fish liver oil supplements or any supplements containing vitamin A and high-dose multivitamin supplements.

All types of pâté

Soft cheese with blue veins

e.g. Danish blue, Roquefort, Gorgonzola

Mould-ripened cheese

e.g. Camembert, Brie, Chevre (unless cooked thoroughly)

Uncooked or undercooked ready meals

Undercooked poultry

Raw and undercooked meat, game, poultry

Unpasteurised goat's, sheep's and cow's milk or foods made out of them

e.g. soft goat's cheese

Unwashed fruit and vegetables

Raw shellfish

e.g. oysters

Shark, swordfish and marlin

Raw fish sushi (when the fish used to make it has not been frozen first – ask in restaurants)

Why?

◀ **May contain too much vitamin A**
Very high levels of vitamin A could be harmful to your unborn baby.

◀ **Risk of listeria**
Listeria is a bug that can lead to miscarriage or severe illness in the newborn. Thankfully it is very rare.

◀ **Risk of salmonella**
These foods are best avoided when pregnant as salmonella is a common cause of food poisoning.

◀ **Risk of toxoplasmosis**
Toxoplasmosis is caused by a bug that has been found in raw meat and cat faeces in cat litter and soil. This infection has been known to cause harm to the unborn baby. Thankfully it is very rare.

◀ **Risk of food poisoning**

◀ **Contains higher levels of mercury**
This can be harmful to an unborn baby's nervous system.

◀ **May contain a small parasitic worm**
These can make you ill.

Similar safe foods

Any other red meat

Cold roast beef or ham

Cheese without blue veins

e.g. Cheddar, Double Gloucester, Cheshire, Red Leicester

Cheese without a mould rind

e.g. Mozzarella, cream cheese, cottage cheese, soft herb and garlic cheese, cheese spread triangles

Ready meals that are cooked thoroughly until they are piping hot

Well-cooked poultry (with no traces of pink or blood)

Well-cooked meat, game, poultry and cured meat*

Pasteurised or UHT milk, yogurt (including bio-yogurt)

Washed fruit and vegetables that are free of soil

Cooked fish and well-cooked shellfish

Other cooked fish

Tuna (no more than 2 steaks or 4 medium-sized tins a week)

Ready-made sushi that you can buy in supermarkets (it is a requirement that the raw fish used to make it must have been frozen first)

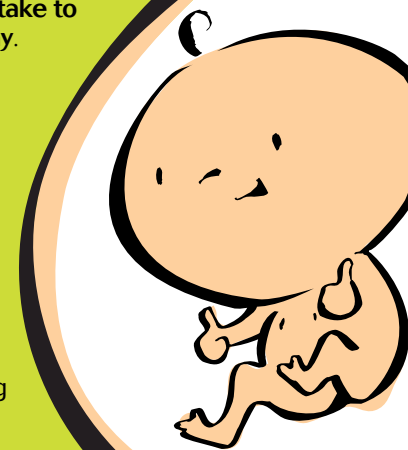
*If you plan to eat cured meat cold then freeze it for four days before eating; this kills most parasites. If you are concerned you may choose to avoid cold cured meat.

Caffeine

Consuming large amounts of caffeine during pregnancy has been linked to some health problems such as miscarriage and low birth weight, so it's best to limit how much you eat or drink.

Caffeine is found in many foods, such as coffee, tea, sugary drinks and chocolate. Caffeine is also added to some medications including cold and flu remedies. Try to **limit your caffeine intake to no more than 200mg a day**. To give you an idea:

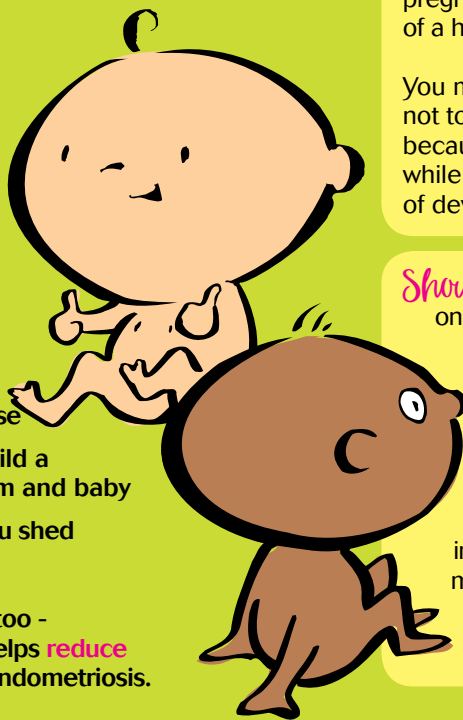
A mug of instant coffee	100mg
A mug of filter coffee	140mg
A mug of tea	75mg
Cola and energy drinks	40mg-80mg
50g milk chocolate	10mg
50g dark chocolate	25mg



Why is breastfeeding simply the best?

There are lots of reasons. Here are a few:

- breastmilk is the **perfect** food for a baby – it contains exactly what they need
- it helps to **protect** a baby from infection
- breastmilk is **easy** for a baby to digest
- it is **hygienic** and **fresh**
- breastmilk can help to **protect** a baby against developing eczema and asthma
- with breastfeeding, there are no feeds to prepare or bottles to sterilise
- breastfeeding helps to build a **strong bond** between mum and baby
- breastfeeding may help you shed the **extra baby weight**
- it's good for mum's health too - breastfeeding for longer helps **reduce risk** of breast cancer and endometriosis.



Pregnancy & breastfeeding

Your questions answered

Should I avoid peanuts? If you would like to eat peanuts or foods containing peanuts, such as peanut butter, during pregnancy and breastfeeding you can choose to do so as part of a healthy balanced diet unless you are allergic to them.

You may have heard in the past that some women chose not to eat peanuts. However, government advice changed because there was no clear evidence that eating peanuts while pregnant or breastfeeding affects your baby's chances of developing a peanut allergy.

Should I avoid milk and dairy? Mums-to-be should only avoid dairy if they have a medically diagnosed cow's milk allergy. Breastfeeding mums should only avoid it if they or their baby have a diagnosed cow's milk allergy.

It is important to get enough calcium in your diet, because along with vitamin D, it is needed for the growth and development of your baby's bones. Milk, hard cheese and yogurt all provide calcium as well as other important nutrients including protein, potassium, iodine and many of the B vitamins. If you are breastfeeding you'll need even more calcium than when you were pregnant, so make sure you have enough calcium-rich foods in your diet.

Is yogurt safe?

Yogurt is made from heat-treated milk. The bacteria that are added are a special 'friendly' type that are not harmful. So it's safe and nutritious.

Should I avoid caffeine while breastfeeding?

Caffeine can be passed through your milk and may make your baby restless. Try to limit caffeine to less than 200mg a day, which is 2 mugs of tea and a plain chocolate bar, or 2 mugs of instant coffee. Try decaffeinated tea and coffee, or a glass of water or milk instead.

Can I drink herbal tea?

You can drink these in moderation; no more than four cups a day. And stick to those made with ingredients that are a normal part of the diet – for example mint or blackcurrant tea.

I think I've put on too much weight. Should I go on a strict diet?

Every woman gains a different amount of weight during pregnancy. Be guided by your appetite and don't try to 'diet' while pregnant or breastfeeding. Focus on a variety of foods from the table on page 2. For advice, contact your GP or midwife.



How can I stop feeling constipated?

Think fibre, fluid and activity. Eat plenty of high-fibre food such as wholemeal bread, high-fibre breakfast cereals, baked beans, fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of liquid. Keeping active is also important.

I've heard oily fish is good for me and my baby. but what is it and how much should I have?

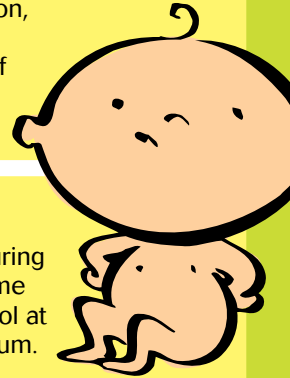
We should eat at least one portion of oily fish a week. These include mackerel, pilchards, salmon, sardines, trout, fresh tuna and whitebait. Tinned tuna does not count as oily fish. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding only eat up to two portions of oily fish a week.

Can I drink alcohol?

Experts recommend avoiding alcohol during pregnancy or if you're planning to become pregnant. It's safest to not to drink alcohol at all to keep risks to your baby to a minimum.

Drinking in pregnancy may harm a baby, with the more consumed, the greater the risk.

If you have already drunk alcohol during your pregnancy, you should avoid drinking any more and talk to your GP or midwife if you're worried.



Information sources

NHS Choices. Have a healthy diet in pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/have-a-healthy-diet/> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Foods to avoid in pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/foods-to-avoid/> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Vitamins, supplements and nutrition in pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vitamins-supplements-and-nutrition/> [accessed 01/2021]

BDA Food Fact Sheet. Pregnancy and diet

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/pregnancy-diet.html> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Drinking alcohol while pregnant

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/drinking-alcohol-while-pregnant/> [accessed 01/2021]

Department of Health. Healthy Start

www.healthystart.nhs.uk/ [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Breastfeeding and diet

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding-and-lifestyle/diet/> [accessed 01/2021]

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2018) Alcohol and Pregnancy

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-alcohol-and-pregnancy.pdf> [accessed 01/2021]

First Steps Nutrition Trust (2017) Eating Well for a healthy Pregnancy. A practical guide

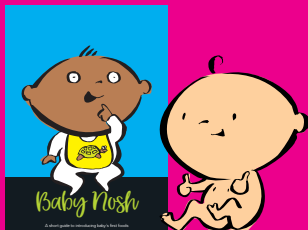
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First Steps Nutrition Trust (2020) Eating well for new mums

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-infants-new-mums> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Start4Life Getting ready

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/getting-ready/> [accessed 01/2021]



For details on additional information sources please contact Dairy UK

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