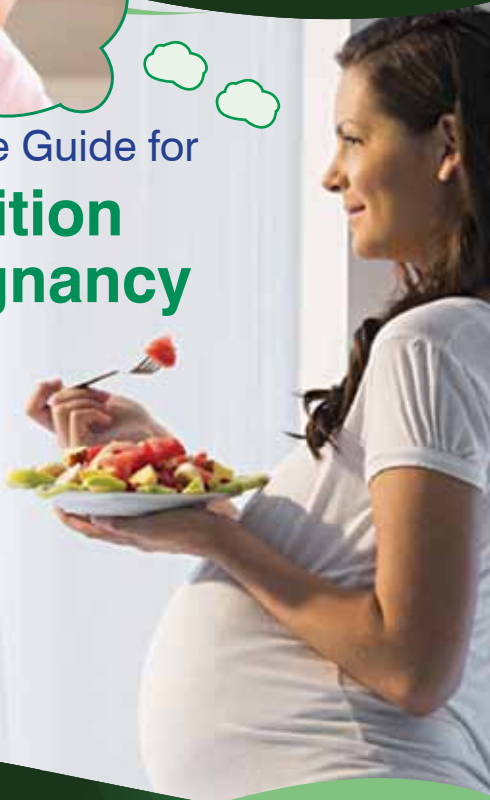




A Complete Guide for  
**Nutrition**  
in **Pregnancy**



Most Trusted for **Complete Pregnancy Care**



# Pregnacare

Prevents Pregnancy Complications & Low Birth Weight

## 17 Vital Micronutrients

Folic Acid + Zinc + Magnesium + 1000 IU Vit. D3 + Iron + Selenium + Vit. B12 + Vit. B1 + Vit. B6 + Vit. C

### Pregnacare benefits

#### For MOTHER

##### PREVENTS

- Pregnancy Complications
- PIH \*
- IUGR \*
- NTD\*
- Hyperhomocysteinemia
- Spontaneous Abortion

#### For FETUS

##### IMPROVES

- Birth Weight
- Neuro Behaviour

##### REDUCES

- Infant Morbidity



Cost Effective Therapy with 1000 IU Vitamin D3

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\* PIH = Pregnancy Induced Hypertension  
\* IUGR = Intra Uterine Growth Retardation

\* NTD = Neural Tube Defects

## Introduction

Pregnancy is an exciting time and a special journey for producing a new life. It is also a time when what you eat and drink becomes more important as you are providing two people - yourself and your growing baby - with the nutrition required every day. This practical guide is designed to help you understand what these nutritional needs are, how they change and the best foods to choose during preconception, pregnancy and breastfeeding. You don't need a special diet during pregnancy, but you do need to choose a diet that is healthy, balanced and full of the extra vitamins and minerals that you and your baby need.

As your baby grows his/her nutritional requirements will change, so your diet should reflect this. However, whilst you do need a diet that is packed with nutrients, vitamins and minerals, it is important not to fall into the trap of 'eating for two' as your need for extra calories only really increases during the third trimester of pregnancy, and even then, not by a great deal.

In addition to eating well it is also important to take care of yourself in other ways, such as ensuring adequate rest and relaxation time and keeping fit and active. Pregnancy is demanding, both physically and emotionally so don't be afraid to ask those around you for extra help and support, whether it be with household chores or at work. Every woman's experience of pregnancy is different, and it passes sooner than you think, so take the time to enjoy your changing body, to eat well and to pamper yourself – after all nothing is more special than bringing a new life into the world.



## Becoming pregnant - What to eat when you are planning to conceive

Making the decision to plan for a pregnancy is an ideal time for you and your partner to review your diet and lifestyle and make changes in order to achieve optimal health before conception. It is also a good time to ensure your intake of micronutrients are increased, particularly those known to be at greater demand during pregnancy e.g. folic acid, vitamin D, calcium and iron.

What you eat and drink can make a difference to both female and male fertility and the basics are the same for both mums and dads-to-be: Consume a balanced and varied diet, rich in vitamins and minerals:

- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions each day) to boost vitamin and mineral intakes.
- Choose iron rich protein foods such as lean meats, eggs, beans and lentils.
- Try to include one portion of oily fish each week e.g. salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines etc.
- Avoid shark, swordfish and marlin, and limit tuna (fresh and canned) due to high mercury content.
- Include low fat dairy foods every day for extra calcium e.g. low fat milk & yoghurts etc.
- Choose healthier snacks such as fruit, dried fruit, fortified breakfast cereals etc.
- Avoid (or limit) alcohol & give up smoking.
- Achieve an ideal body weight & be active on most days

## Additionally

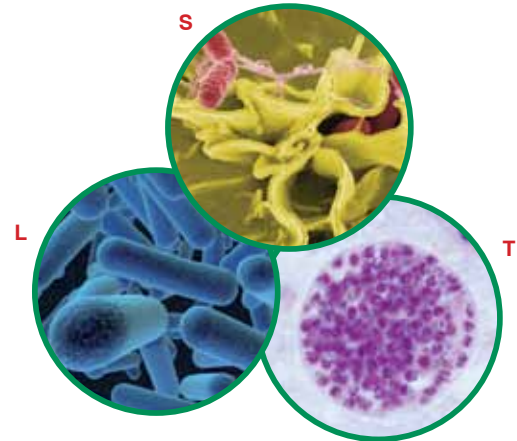
- Take a 400mcg (0.4mg) folic acid supplement and choose foods rich in folates from before conception until at least the twelfth week of pregnancy. (see page 14....).
- Avoid too much vitamin A.
- Take a daily supplement containing at least 10 mcg vitamin D.



In addition to eating a healthy diet, some women also choose to take a one-a-day multivitamin and mineral that is specifically designed for preconception and pregnancy, such as Meyer Vitabiotics' Pregnacare. You should avoid taking regular multivitamins as these may contain vitamin A and pregnancy specific supplements contain the recommended level of 400mcg folic acid and 10mcg vitamin D, plus the vitamins and minerals vital for mother and baby and are suitable for conception, for all of pregnancy and whilst breast feeding.

## Caution !!

Here are some harmful microbes which one needs to be cautioned about when pregnant



**S - Salmonella:** A common cause of food poisoning which can cause severe symptoms during pregnancy and can lead to miscarriage and stillbirth.

**L - Listeria:** A bacteria which causes mild tummy upsets or flu like symptoms. Can also lead to miscarriage and stillbirth.

**T - Toxoplasmosis:** An infection caused by a tiny parasite that is found in soil and cat faeces. In rare cases this can cause brain damage, blindness, epilepsy, miscarriage and stillbirth.

## Do's and Don'ts of Diet during Pregnancy

| Do's   | Reduces Risk of |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>Cook all meat and poultry thoroughly.</b> so that there is no trace of pink or blood, and wash all surfaces and utensils after preparing raw meat. Also use a separate chopping board for raw meats. Store properly in the fridge.    | T, S            |
| <b>Wash fruit, vegetables and salads thoroughly,</b> even pre-packaged types that are washed and ready to eat.   | T               |
| <b>Make sure eggs are thoroughly cooked</b> until the whites and yolks are solid, and avoid foods containing raw and undercooked eggs like fresh mayonnaise, uncooked cheesecake and mousse.   | S               |
| <b>Only drink pasteurized or UHT milk.</b> If only raw or unpasteurized milk is available, boil it first. Don't drink unpasteurized goat's or sheep's milk or eat their milk products.   | L               |
| <b>Reheat ready-to-eat poultry and cooked chilled meals thoroughly</b> and ensure that these are piping hot before they are eaten.   | S               |
| <b>Make sure that raw foods are stored separately from ready-to-eat foods to reduce the risk of food poisoning.</b>  | S               |
| <b>Wash your hands thoroughly</b> before and after handling any food, after going to the toilet and before eating.   | S               |
| <b>Wear gloves when gardening.</b>   | T               |
| <b>Limit caffeine to no more than 200mg/day.</b> This means no more than 2.5 cups of coffee or 4 cups of tea combined in any one day, and don't forget that cola, hot chocolate, chocolate bars and energy drinks also contain caffeine. |                 |

S - Salmonella

L - Listeria

T - Toxoplasmosis

Some foods pose a particular risk during pregnancy, either because of the way they are produced, or high levels of certain nutrients or substances they contain. The foods below are best avoided during pregnancy.

| Don'ts   | Risk of  |
|--|--|
| <b>Don't eat peanuts and foods containing peanut products</b> (e.g. peanut butter, peanut oil etc.) if mother, father or any previous children have a history of hayfever, asthma, eczema or other allergies.  | <b>Risk of peanut allergy</b>                            |
| <b>Don't have more than two portions of oily fish a week</b> Oily fish includes salmon, mackerel, sardines and trout. Do however include one portion every week for important Omega-3's.   | <b>High levels of contaminants</b>                       |
| <b>Don't eat raw shellfish.</b> This is because raw shellfish might contain harmful bacteria and viruses that cause food poisoning. However shellfish that is part of a hot meal and has been thoroughly cooked is fine.   | <b>Food poisoning</b>                                    |
| <b>Don't eat shark, marlin and swordfish &amp; limit tuna intake</b> (no more than 2 servings fresh) because the mercury levels in these fish is high & can damage the baby's developing nervous system. This also applies before conception and during breastfeeding. | <b>High levels of mercury</b>                            |
| <b>Don't eat liver or liver products</b> such as liver pate or liver sausage, as they may contain large amounts of vitamin A, which could harm the baby. Avoid supplements containing vitamin A – check the label. Betacarotene is safe.                               | <b>Vitamin A toxicity</b>                                |
| <b>Avoid alcohol.</b> The Department of Health advice is to avoid alcohol if pregnant or trying to conceive.   | <b>Alcohol affects the baby's growth and development</b> |
| <b>Don't Smoke.</b> Smoking can be very harmful to your baby.  | <b>Poor growth and low birth weight</b>                  |

## Dealing with Stretch Marks in Pregnancy

New and expecting moms-to-be worry about their physical appearance during and post pregnancy with stretch marks being one of the most worrisome issues with respect to their looks. As the baby grows inside the abdomen, the skin around it stretches. Though there is a certain amount of elasticity in the skin, the size of the abdomen and breasts grow enormously, stretching the skin beyond its usual capacity. With certain pregnancies, the pressure is greater if the baby is larger in size.

Post pregnancy, when the additional weight is lost, the stretched skin becomes loose, often leaving marks that are hard to get rid of. This is a common phenomenon and every pregnant woman's horror. Most women start getting these marks after sixth or seventh month of pregnancy and become more visible post pregnancy, once the woman starts to lose weight. Stretch marks can also be genetic, if your mother or sister had stretch marks, then you're more likely to have them too. It is not possible to fully prevent stretch marks. They are a part and parcel of pregnancy, irrespective of age or the number of pregnancies a woman has gone through. In some cases, they take as long as five to six years to disappear.

## Tips to manage stretch marks

Stay hydrated. Massage your body immediately after bath with olive, almond, castor or avocado oil. Cocoa butter is also known to be beneficial in reducing stretch marks. Aloe vera is also known to diminish stretch marks. Apply egg white, a rich source of protein, on your skin. Use sunscreen when going swimming or spending time in the sun during pregnancy. Include skin-nourishing foods rich in antioxidants like spinach, carrots, sweet potatoes, blueberries, strawberries, foods containing vitamin E, nuts, seeds, avocados, broccoli and greens. Fish, eggs and oysters are good options for non-vegetarians, Avoid excessive consumption of oily food. Eat high-protein, regular diet to avoid putting on excess weight, which would result in stretch marks. Exercise during pregnancy helps retain skin elasticity, thus reducing the stretch marks. Try kegel exercises to help your blood circulation. You can also opt for pregnancy yoga. Stretch marks can cause itching, but one should not scratch them, apply calamine cream. Not all cosmetic products are compatible during pregnancy and there are several ingredients that may harm you as a mother-to-be or the baby inside your womb. Therefore, you must be careful about your skin care regime.

## Healthy Eating during Pregnancy

Healthy eating during pregnancy is no different to healthy eating at any other time – it's just particularly important to ensure that you are eating enough of the essential nutrients, such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, for both you and the baby.

A healthy balanced diet includes a wide range of foods from 5 different food groups:

- Starchy carbohydrate foods - bread, breakfast cereals, rice and potatoes etc.
- Fruits and vegetables
- Dairy foods – milk, cheese, yoghurts etc.
- Protein foods - meat, poultry, fish, beans, nuts, soya etc.
- Foods containing fat and sugar



The picture above gives you an indication of balance in terms of the quantities of each food group required. You need to be eating more fruit and vegetables and starchy carbohydrate foods, moderate amounts of dairy and protein foods and just a few fatty and sugary foods.

## Ten basics of Healthy Eating for Pregnancy



**1. Base every meal on starchy foods** like bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, chapatis, yams and cereals. These provide energy for you and for the baby to grow. They can also be a good source of fibre, help you feel full and satisfied, and combat fatigue.



**2. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.** Aim for a wide variety and at least 5 servings every day. Fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced all count.



**3. Choose foods rich in protein** such as lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, soya, beans and nuts. These foods are also great sources of iron.



**4. Eat more fibre rich foods** such as wholegrain breads and pasta, brown rice, wholegrain or high fibre breakfast cereals, pulses, fruit and vegetables to help prevent constipation and piles.



**5. Eat plenty of dairy foods** such as milk, cheese and yoghurts. Dairy foods are a major source of calcium, important for the mother's and baby's teeth and bones. Choose low fat varieties when you can.



**6. Make snacks nutritious.** Snacking is common during pregnancy. However too many indulgent snacks can result in excessive weight gain. Healthier snack choices include: malt loaf; currant buns;

low-fat yoghurts; bread or vegetable sticks; breakfast cereals; milky drinks, fruit smoothies & fruit.

**7. Aim for two portions of fish each week**, one of which should be oily. Oily fish includes salmon, trout, sardines, pilchards etc. and



are important for supplying the baby with long chain fatty acids (AA, EPA and DHA). DHA contributes to the normal development of the eyes and brain of the foetus\*. If you never eat oily fish speak to your Doctor about taking a pregnancy supplement which contains omega-3, such as Meyer Vitabiotics' Pregnacare Forte+.



**8. Get active and try to maintain a healthy weight.** The average pregnancy weight gain is 10-12 kilograms or 22-28lbs. Gaining too much weight can affect your health and blood pressure. Equally, it's important to avoid dieting when pregnant as this can limit the baby's access to nutrition. Being active not only helps to moderate weight gain, but also prepares the body for birth.



**9. Drink plenty of water and other fluids.** Pregnant women dehydrate more quickly than normal so drinking plenty of water and other fluids is important, especially when exercising or if the weather is hot.



**10. Don't skip breakfast.** Breakfast provides a vital boost to energy and nutrient levels, so make sure you get every day off to a great start for you and your baby.

Many people consume a diet which contains lower than ideal levels of vitamins and minerals. This occurs for several reasons including; low fruit and vegetable intake, hectic lifestyle, erratic eating pattern, lack of balanced diet and poor food choices. As a result of this, many women are at risk of not meeting the increased vitamin and mineral requirements during pregnancy.

Many women choose to take a pregnancy specific multivitamin and mineral supplement, such as Meyer Vitabiotics' [Pregnacare](#) or [Pregnacare Forte+](#) in order to boost dietary intake and ensure that the baby is receiving everything that he or she needs.

## Vulnerable Vitamins & Minerals

| Sr. No. | What & how much you need per day  | Role in Pregnancy  | Particular concerns/times  | Rich sources  |
|---------|---|--|--|---|
| 1       | <b>Folic Acid 400mcg</b><br>supplement plus 300mcg from food. 3/4 women fail to eat enough from diet and over half do not take a folic acid supplement prior to confirmation of pregnancy | Contributes to maternal tissue growth during pregnancy. Taking the correct amount can reduce the risk of having a baby with Spina Bifida by 40%. | Women should take a 400mcg folic acid supplement from the time contraception stops and until at least the twelfth week of pregnancy and also choose foods rich in folates. Women with multiple pregnancies or with a previous history of neural tube defects should double the dose. | Black eye beans, brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, spring greens, granary bread, broccoli and green beans. Also added to some soft grain breads and breakfast cereals. |
| 2       | <b>Vitamin D 10mcg</b><br>Up to 100% of women fail to consume sufficient amounts from their diets.  | Contributes to normal absorption / utilisation of calcium.   | All pregnant and breastfeeding women should take at least 10mcg vitamin D supplement daily.  | Main source is sunlight. Also found in oily types of fish, eggs and full fat dairy products. Also added to margarines, some yoghurts and breakfast cereals.           |
| 3       | <b>Iron 14.8mg</b><br>8 out of 10 women eat too little. 2 in 5 women enter pregnancy iron deficient.  | Contributes to normal formation of red blood cells & haemoglobin.  | Anaemia is common during pregnancy affecting both the mother's and baby's wellbeing.   | All meat, especially red meat, fortified breakfast cereals and white bread, beans, chick peas, baked beans, eggs, dried fruit, nuts and seeds.                        |
| 4       | <b>Calcium 700mg</b><br>1 in 2 women eat too little.  | Calcium is needed for the maintenance of normal bone and teeth.  | Most of the baby's calcium is laid down in bones during the 3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester.   | Milk, cheeses, yoghurt, fortified soya milk and soya products, canned fish e.g. sardines, added to white bread, beans and baked beans, almonds and hard tap water.    |

For many women intakes of magnesium, zinc, iodine, copper & potassium are also below ideal levels.



## Common Dietary Myths

### Now that I'm eating for two, can I eat twice as much as before?

In short, no. Falling for the myth of eating for two is likely to result in excessive weight gain, which is not good for you or the baby. The body becomes more energy efficient during pregnancy in order to meet the increased energy needs so you only need to eat slightly more e.g. the odd extra slice of bread or one or two healthy snacks each day.



### I've been having strong food cravings – does this mean I am deficient in something?

Cravings or aversions to food vary between women and even between pregnancies in the same woman. We don't really know why food cravings or aversions occur, but they are likely to be caused by hormonal changes to taste and smell rather than any specific deficiencies for vitamins or minerals. For many women food cravings or aversions are unlikely to be harmful but if the craving is for unusual foods, such as coal or matches then it is important to discuss this with your Doctor.

### Eating spicy food will bring on labour. Is this true?

No. Eating spicy food close to a due date may cause tummy upsets but that is as close to bringing on labour as you might get. So if you enjoy spicy foods you are safe to carry on eating these throughout the whole of pregnancy.

### I love herbal teas but have been advised to avoid raspberry tea until the end of my pregnancy. Why is this?

Raspberry leaf tea is thought to have a stimulating effect on the womb, helping to induce contractions. Therefore intake of this is not usually advised until towards the end of pregnancy, generally after 36 weeks. Whether raspberry leaf tea helps with labour still requires further research, as there have been few studies in this area.

### I've been feeling sick all day - why is it called morning sickness?

The cause of morning sickness is thought to be due to the rise in hormone levels during pregnancy. For many women nausea and sickness are at their worst in the mornings hence the name morning sickness, but it can indeed be 'any time of day sickness'. Most cases resolve by the end of the first trimester, but may continue after this time. Women who are severely affected should speak to their Doctor for advice on how to cope with this troublesome problem.

## Diet after giving birth & Breast Feeding

Breast milk is the best choice for your new baby. It provides all of the nutrients the baby will need as well as extra immunity against infection. It also helps your body return to normal after the birth and utilize the extra body fat stored during pregnancy. In the first year the baby will triple its weight and double in length, so not surprisingly the nutritional demands of breastfeeding are quite high.



Feeding a new baby (whether by breast or bottle) can be exhausting in terms of disturbed nights and loss of sleep, so try to make sure you get all of the help and support you need in order to get adequate rest during the day, especially during the first few weeks. The basics of healthy eating after birth remain exactly the same as during your pregnancy, however your energy needs will be higher so you may need to include regular snacks in addition to meals if breastfeeding. Not only are you providing your baby with vitamins and minerals, but you will also be replacing those lost during pregnancy so it is important to continue eating a diet that is rich in vitamins and minerals.

Many women choose to continue taking a one-a-day multivitamin and mineral supplement that is suitable for breastfeeding in order to boost their diet and for peace of mind that they are supplying the baby with everything they need. It is particularly important to eat plenty of calcium rich foods whilst breastfeeding as your requirements increase by an extra 500mg per day (equivalent to needing an extra pint of milk every day). Also try to continue eating oily fish once each week (such as salmon, trout, sardines etc.), and/or choose foods that have added omega-3 (DHA & EPA) such as some types of milk or eggs.

The **American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG)** recommends that pregnant and breastfeeding women should take a daily supplement containing **1000 IU - 2000 IU of vitamin D** to ensure the mother's requirements are met and to build adequate foetal stores for early infancy. Alcohol and caffeine both pass into breast milk so continue to avoid intake of these. What you eat and drink will pass all sorts of flavours in your milk to your baby, helping to prepare them for weaning. However some babies may be sensitive to highly spiced or strong tasting foods so if you notice that certain foods upset the baby then it's best to avoid them.

## Getting back into shape after the baby is born

Most women are keen to get back into shape after pregnancy and once again wear their normal jeans and other clothes. However giving birth is an exhausting experience and the following weeks of sleepless nights will take their toll on even the most energetic of women. Therefore, it's essential to balance maintaining energy levels and the stamina to keep going with any attempts to lose weight. If you are breastfeeding, restricting your food intake will restrict the baby's food intake, so be patient, now is not the time to diet. It is as important to eat a healthy balanced diet and to keep well hydrated as it was during the pregnancy.

The best way to approach getting back into shape is to take it slowly, starting with some gentle exercise, such as a short daily walk combined with a healthy balanced diet that is low in fat with a mix of protein, carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables. Don't forget the importance of pelvic floor exercise for sexual health and to avoid urinary incontinence. If you are unsure ask your Doctor about these.



Low-fat, high-fibre foods and healthy snacks such as fresh fruit will stave off hunger. If you have had a caesarean section you should follow advice from your Doctor and avoid abdominal exercise for the first six weeks afterwards. At your 6-week check, your Doctor will tell you if it is okay to resume normal activities such as swimming, aerobics etc.

All of the high-risk foods that were off limits during pregnancy can now make a welcome return to your diet such as soft and blue cheeses, soft-boiled eggs, liver etc. as the baby is no longer at risk and your immune system will be returning to normal. You can choose to eat peanuts or

foods containing peanuts (such as peanut butter) when breastfeeding as part of a healthy balanced diet, unless you are allergic to peanuts or your health professional advises not to. <sup>1</sup> If you are breastfeeding, alcohol and caffeine still needs to be avoided, and if you are not breastfeeding, don't forget that after 9 months of abstinence you will probably be very susceptible to the effects of alcohol and caffeine.

If you are tired and lacking sleep, eating little and often will help to keep energy levels up. And if friends offer to help, it is a great idea to ask them to bring round a freshly cooked meal that you can simply re-heat, or pop into the freezer for another day.



<sup>1</sup> Food Standards Agency, August 2009





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**Prevents Pregnancy complications  
& Low Birth Weight**



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**Prevents & Reduces Stretch Marks**



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