Healthy Eating During Pregnancy

During pregnancy, you need to consume enough calories, protein, fluids, vitamins, and minerals to meet the needs for you and your baby. With a few adjustments, you can use the same healthy eating guidelines that everyone should follow. Use the "Healthy Plate" as a guide:

Plate-Style Meal

Fruit

1 piece or ½ cup

Eating fruit with your meal provides vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

About 1 cup of a grain or a starchy vegetable can fill the first quarter of your plate. Aim for 2 to 4 ounces of a lean meat or another protein food in the second quarter.

Try to include green leafy vegetables or other non-starchy vegetables as half your plate.

Milk or Alternative

1 cup

Milk provides protein, vitamins A and D, calcium, and phosphorus.

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Sandwich-Style Meal

2 slices of bread with meat, cheese, egg, or peanut butter provides your protein and starch

Fruit

1 piece or ½ cup

Eating fruit with your meal provides vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Include salad or other non-starchy vegetables to provide vitamins, minerals, & fiber.

Milk or Alternative

1 cup

Milk provides protein, vitamins A and D, calcium, and phosphorus.

Grains
6 oz. per day

1 ounce =

¼ bagel
1 slice bread
½ bun
½ English muffin
½ large biscuit
5-7 crackers
4.5-inch pancake
Frozen waffle
½ cup cooked pasta
½ cup cooked rice or other grain
½ cup oatmeal (1 packet instant)
½ cup potato
3 cups popcorn
2 x 2-inch cornbread
6-inch tortilla

*Aim for whole-grain or whole-wheat options

Fruit
1 ½ - 2 cups per day

1 cup=

1 small or ½ large
- Apple
- Pear
- Peach
- Orange

1 large banana
2 kiwis

1 cup melon cubes
- Cantaloupe
- Honeydew
- Watermelon

1 cup berries
1 cup grapes or cherries
1 cup canned fruit
1 cup applesauce
2 Tbsps. raisins
½ cup dried fruit

8 oz. 100% fruit juice, pasteurized

Dairy or Alternative
3 serving per day

1 serving=

- 1 cup white milk
- 1 cup fortified soy milk
- 4 oz. chocolate milk
- 1 cup yogurt
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1/3 cup shredded cheese
- 1 ½ oz. cheddar, Swiss, or mozzarella cheese

Vegetables
3 cups per day

½ cup =

½ cup cooked/raw
- Asparagus
- Green beans
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Mushrooms
- Okra
- Onions
- Peppers
- Radishes
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini
- Peas, corn, winter squash (starchy)

½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw
- Cabbage
- Greens, spinach
- Lettuce

Protein
6-9 oz. per day

1 ounce =

1 ounce (lean cuts)
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Beef
- Pork
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Tofu

1 Egg

1 cup Greek yogurt

½ cup cooked dried beans

1 Tbs peanut butter
⅛ cup nuts or seeds

Fat
Small amounts for cooking and flavor

Unsaturated
- Olive oil
- Canola oil
- Sunflower oil
- Vegetable oil
- Soft margarine
- Mayonnaise
- Salad dressing
- Avocado
- Flaxseed oil (do not heat)
- Walnut oil (do not heat)

Saturated
(Use less often)
- Butter
- Cream
- Cream cheese
- Shortening
- Gravies
- Sour cream
- Coconut oil
- Lard
- Palm oil
- Chicken fat/skin

Special Considerations and Food Safety

Preparation

- Always wash your hands before and after handling food. Keep raw meats (ex: poultry, fish, beef, etc.) and their juices away from other foods to prevent cross contamination.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables including prewashed bagged fruits and vegetables.

Eat less added sugars

- Found in sugary beverages, candies, ice cream, syrups, jellies, cookies, pudding, fruit canned in syrup, flavored yogurts, etc.
- When choosing canned fruit, look for “packed in water” or “packed in juice”.

Cook meat, seafood, and other high-risk foods to minimum safe internal temperatures

- Deli meats and hotdogs should be heated to steaming hot, or 165°F.
- Avoid undercooked eggs and dressings made with raw egg yolk (Caesar).
- Avoid raw sprouts.
- Avoid raw fish and smoked seafood (lox, ceviche, sushi). Cook fish fillets to the internal temperature of 145°F.
- All poultry and ground meat should be cooked to the internal temperature of 165°F. Cook steaks/roasts to 145°F.

Limit caffeine to under 200 mg per day

- 200 mg = 16 oz. brewed generic coffee, 12 oz. Starbucks brewed coffee, 2 shots of espresso, 24-32 oz. black tea)

Avoid alcohol

- No amount of alcohol is considered safe in pregnancy.

Limit/Avoid mercury-containing fish and seafood

- Stick to the lower-mercury fish, and limit to 12 ounces or less a week. Low-mercury fish: Shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, catfish
- Moderate-mercury fish (6 ounces or less per week): Albacore (white) tuna
- High-mercury fish – AVOID THESE: Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish