

Eating and exercising wisely in pregnancy

The changes taking place as your baby grows and your body responds need energy. During the last 20 weeks of pregnancy, this means you may need an extra 160 calories a day. This 10% increase in energy, protein, vitamins and minerals can usually be provided through a healthy diet, but sometimes your doctor may recommend supplements. During breastfeeding you need nearly 700 extra calories a day to produce 600mls-1L milk.



Protein

Most women eat enough protein already (60-80g daily), but it is wise to vary the sources of protein, from meat, dairy and vegetables. For example:

1 serve meat	15-30g
1 leg of chicken	30g
1 serve fish	15-30g
1 tub yoghurt	10g
1 glass milk	8g
½ cup baked beans	7g



Iron

When pregnant, your iron needs increase to 12-20mg daily. Many vegetarian mums can become low in iron in latter pregnancy unless they take supplements. This is because plant sources of iron often contain chemicals called phytates, which reduce the absorption of iron. Absorption can be increased by taking Vitamin C with meals.

100g red meat	4mg
1 serve chicken	2mg
1 serve fish	1-2mg
1 egg	1mg
½ cup baked beans	2mg
2 slices w/meal bread	2mg
6 prunes	2mg



Calcium

Your body needs extra calcium to form the baby's teeth and bones. A total of 1200mg is usually recommended daily. Generally this will be supplied by three servings of dairy food, for example:

1 tub yoghurt	350mg
1 glass milk	300mg
30g cheese	330mg

Folate

Folic acid occurs in green leafy vegetables such as broccoli and lettuce, but also in liver. At levels of 0.5mg a day, it protects against some birth defects. Women who have had children with abnormalities may need higher doses.

Doctors recommend women increase their folic acid intake before becoming pregnant to prevent spina bifida.

Listeria

Listeriosis is a bacterial infection of soft cheeses, cold cooked meats and raw seafood. It can cause miscarriage and stillbirth. These foods should be avoided in pregnancy.



Fibre and fluids

Constipation is such a common problem in pregnancy it is wise to increase both dietary fibre (eg. fruit, grains, vegetables and bran), and fluids (2-3 litres per day) to help.

Exercise

It is important to continue daily exercise in pregnancy. Walking and swimming are excellent. Most women restrict themselves to non-contact sports after 16 weeks. Heart rate should be kept below 140/min. Overheating should be avoided, and strenuous exercise limited to 15-20 minutes at a time. In late pregnancy ligaments become lax, so soft tissue injuries may be more common.