YOUR GUIDE TO PRENATAL NUTRITION

Whole Lifecycle NUTRITION

Before and during pregnancy, a diet rich in vitamins and minerals will build up the nutrient stores that are essential for a baby's development. Following a healthy diet and lifestyle doesn't only help your baby, but will benefit you too. Practicing healthy habits will support your strength and energy, and help you gain the right amount of weight while pregnant.



PRENATAL VITAMINS

Prenatal vitamins should be started as soon as you decide to become pregnant. Surprise pregnancy? Start as soon as you find out. Your daily prenatal vitamin should contain iron, 200 mg DHA, and at least 400 micrograms of folic acid.



MINDFUL EATING

Balancing how and what to eat is important during pregnancy. Eating mindfully means there are no food rules, no guilt or judgement, and no diets.

Mindful eating is being aware, present, and noticing each bite;
Understanding your personal hunger and fullness levels and consciously deciding how much you are eating;
Using your senses to savor and enjoy your food. For example: taste - sweet, smell - aroma, texture - crunchy, hearing - sizzle.

Starting in the second trimester, calorie needs increase. Adding in one or two snacks is usually enough to meet your needs.

KEY NUTRIENTS

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PROTEIN

As your baby grows, protein needs increase. Protein acts as a building block for muscle, skin, blood, and other cells. To meet protein needs in the prenatal period, eat a variety of protein sources such as fish, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products, beans, lentils, tofu, edamame, nuts, and seeds. Some fish, nuts and seeds do double duty as rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids"

OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

The three main types of omega-3s are alpha-linoleic acid (ALA), docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). ALA is in nuts, seeds, and oils. DHA and EPA are in oily fish like salmon, tuna, and sardines. DHA and EPA are more important than ALA during pregnancy. The body can convert a small amount of ALA to DHA and EPA. These essential fatty acids are important in cell structure, fetal development, eye health, and for their anti-inflammatory properties. If you do not eat fish, discuss an omega-3 supplement with your practitioner.

FOLATE

Folate, a B vitamin, is a key player in cell division, which occurs at a rapid pace during pregnancy. It is important to get enough B-vitamins from food every day since during pregnancy we use up nutrients at a faster pace. Grains and cereals are fortified with folic acid to prevent neural tube birth defects. Get at least 400 micrograms of folic acid in a prenatal supplement and eat foods rich in folate like leafy greens, peas, beans, and lentils.







KEY NUTRIENTS

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CALCIUM

Calcium helps baby develop his bones, teeth, heart, nervous system, and muscles. Between 1,000 and 1,300 mg per day is needed during pregnancy. In the U.S, we get over 70% of calcium from dairy. Canned fish with bones, beans, fortified plant milks and OJ, leafy greens, nuts, tofu, and chia seeds are also good food sources of calcium.

VITAMIN D

We need vitamin D to absorb calcium. Pregnant women need 15 micrograms (600 IU) per day. Fatty fish like salmon and fortified dairy are the best sources of vitamin D. Our bodies can convert sunlight to vitamin D. It can be hard to get enough vitamin D from the sun and food. Ask your practitioner if a vitamin D supplement is right for you.

IRON

Iron is needed for normal development. In the prenatal period, iron needs increase by 50%. Choose foods with iron like fish, meat, dark leafy greens, beans, lentils, and fortified foods. Iron from animal foods is more easily absorbed than iron from plant foods. Pair up plant sources of iron with vitamin C to improve absorption. Some foods with vitamin C are citrus, peppers, broccoli, and cauliflower.

CHOLINE

Choline helps babies brain develop properly, has a protective role in a child's behavior, and may help prevent birth defects. Pregnant women should get 450 mg per day while pregnant from fish, meat, eggs, beans, and nuts.

