



# DIET IN PREGNANCY

The growth & development of another tiny human occurs inside you when you are pregnant. Pregnancy thus demands eating for two with the right nutrients to assure that your developing fetus receives all important elements for healthy growth while you maintain good nourishment for yourself too.

## **What should I eat?**

Eating for two doesn't mean eating calories without nutrients. You do need to increase your calories but you also need to choose your foods carefully to assure you are eating nutrient-dense food. Some important nutrients that should be a part of your diet include:

**Calcium:** Calcium builds strong bones and teeth and apart from that it also helps in nerve transmission and blood clotting. Make sure to add plenty of it to your diet. Some sources of calcium include dark green and leafy vegetables, milk, and milk products such as cheese, tofu, & yogurt. You can also consume nuts as snacks to get adequate calcium.

**Iron:** Your body's blood is now directed to your baby also. To meet the additional requirements & to have good haemoglobin levels consumption of iron is necessary. Foods such as green leafy vegetables, nuts, cereal, meat, dates, & seafood should be consumed to fulfill the extra requirement of iron. At times your doctor may advise you to take iron supplements based on your haemoglobin levels.

**Protein:** The formation of fetal tissue needs protein; it is also needed for energy & to repair different parts of your body. Make sure you have a good quantity of it in your diet; pulses, eggs, meat, dairy products, seeds, & nuts are some protein-rich foods.

**Folic acid:** This extremely essential nutrient helps in making extra blood in your body during pregnancy, & it also prevents the developing fetus from neural tube defects. Chances are you may already be taking your folic acid supplements as prescribed by your gynaecologist during your preconception appointment or start of pregnancy, but folic acid in food is important too. Green leafy vegetables, avocados, lentils, beans, & cereals are some foods that contain adequate folic acid.

**Other nutrients:** That should be present in your diet at this time, include fibre to prevent constipation, iodine, DHA, and vitamins like vitamin C & D. Though it is not recommended to indulge in foods containing saturated fats & excessive fried items, do add a healthy intake of good fat such as ghee in your diet.

*Small frequent meals which are evenly spaced should be eaten during pregnancy and fiber and water should be consumed adequately to prevent or minimize pregnancy concerns like heartburn, constipation, nausea, and vomiting.*

### Which foods and drinks should be avoided in pregnancy?



- Raw uncooked food
- Food from the street may have chances of causing gastric infections
- Soft cheese made with unpasteurised milk
- High mercury fish
- Unpasteurised juice or unclean water
- Excess caffeine
- Canned & frozen fruit
- Alcohol

### Specific foods that can benefit you during pregnancy



*Add the following to your diet for the healthy growth and development of your fetus:*

- Omega-3-rich foods such as walnuts, flaxseeds, salmon, or soybean
- Fresh fruits
- Foods rich in essential fatty acids such as nuts & fish
- Magnesium-rich foods such as pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, & nuts such as almonds & cashews
- Citrus foods containing Vitamin C
- 8-10 glasses of fluids

If at any point in your pregnancy you feel concerned about not eating right due to health or other reasons then discuss it with your gynaecologist.



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