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University Health Board

Healthy Eating During Pregnancy

(up to 36 weeks)

Name.....

Date.....

Provided by
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Contact Details
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Compiled by the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Cwm Taf Health Board

You will have received a lot of information about why it is important to eat well during your pregnancy.

Food safety is especially important to know about. This is discussed in quite a lot of detail in your Bump, Baby and Beyond book (pages 23 & 24).

Your community midwife will also have given you a leaflet about healthy eating to help you manage your weight in pregnancy. This booklet is designed to complement these resources.

Why Is It Important To Have A Healthy Diet During Pregnancy?

We know from research that the foundation of a child's health begins with the mother's nutrition. Everything you now eat and drink is being shared by your baby and this can have a huge impact on your baby's growth and development.

The quality of your diet during pregnancy will affect your future child's well-being not just in the early years but in later life too.

During your pregnancy you should never deliberately go hungry nor do you need a 'special diet'. However now is a great opportunity to make some small changes to your diet. Having a healthy balanced diet in pregnancy and managing your weight may help you to have a healthier pregnancy, a safer birth and a healthier baby.



Should I Eat More?

Although well meaning family, friends, partners and even work colleagues can encourage you to 'have that little bit more' it is important to remember and remind people that **you are NOT eating for two.**

Calorie (energy) requirements stay the same for the majority of your pregnancy. This only changes as you enter your last three months of pregnancy and an additional extra small healthy snack of 200 calories per day is all you need.

NB If you are eating well in this period and your midwife is happy with your baby's growth you may not need this additional snack.

please ask your dietitian or midwife for guidance if you are unsure or would like more information

How much weight should I expect to gain?

Managing your weight in pregnancy is not about dieting or trying to lose weight. Instead it is what every women (regardless of her size) should be doing to ensure they have a healthy, happy pregnancy. This approach is essential for both mum and baby.

Experts have not yet agreed on the exact amount of weight a women should gain during her pregnancy but obviously the more weight you gain the more you have to lose once you have given birth. It therefore seems sensible to watch your diet and keep active. This is particularly important if you are overweight at the beginning of your pregnancy.

Every pregnancy is different and it is never too late to start eating healthily—have a look at the suggestions on healthy snack and meal ideas in this leaflet.

Should I try to lose weight during my pregnancy?

No. Losing weight while you are pregnant could be very unsafe. Experts are not yet sure on the effect this can have on your baby's growth and development and because of this actively losing weight by restricting your diet should be avoided.

Instead, eating healthily and being active can help you manage your weight during pregnancy and gain only the necessary amount of weight (baby weight) needed to have a healthy and safe pregnancy.



If you are concerned about gaining too much weight try to improve the quality of your diet and ensure your meals are well balanced. Also it is helpful to monitor portion sizes and keep sugary / fatty foods to a minimum and avoid snacking/boredom eating between meals unless you are genuinely hungry.

This booklet provides you with some useful examples of how to swap and substitute some foods high in sugar and fat for healthier alternatives.

Your Dietitian will be able to discuss the above in more details at your appointment.

Healthy Eating—additional tips

Why it is important to be aware of portion sizes when eating healthily during pregnancy?



Being more aware of portion sizes will help you ensure are getting enough of the foods that will give you and your baby all the nutrients you need in pregnancy. It is important to eat what you need for your daily activity levels (remember individual activity levels vary) and choose foods that will provide nutrition for you and your baby.

Bigger portion sizes may give you more calories/energy than you need and your body will store this unused energy which can contribute to additional weight gain in pregnancy.

Swapping to a smaller dinner plate can help manage portion sizes.

To ensure your meals are providing all the nutrients you and your baby needs try to fill half your plate with **vegetables or salad** and divide the rest equally with **meat/fish/eggs or meat substitutes** and food that give you energy, such as **bread/pasta/rice/potatoes**—wholegrain/wheat versions helps with feeling fuller for longer.



Top tips for smaller portion sizes

Eat breakfast. Evidence shows that people who eat a healthy breakfast are less likely to want to snack before lunch. Have a look at the page on healthy meal options for breakfast ideas.

Eat at a slower pace especially if you know you are a fast eater. It takes time for our brains to register that we are full.

Turn off the TV. If you eat a lot of your meals watching TV, swap to eating more meals at the table. Eating in front of the TV is known to be a reason why people overeat as we are not paying enough attention to what we are eating.

Fast Food and Takeaways: healthier options

Fast Food and Takeaway foods can be very high in fat and salt and come with large portion sizes. You can make healthier choices for you and your baby although it is best to try to keep takeaways for an occasional treat.

Swap creamy sauces for tomato or yoghurt based sauces, choose plain rice or one with vegetables in and share a portion, avoid deep fried dishes, ask for burgers without cheese and mayonnaise, choose thin crust pizza, no extra cheese.

Important Points

Food Safety—refer to your Bump, Baby and Beyond book (pg 23-25).

VITAMINS: It is a Dept of Health recommendation that **ALL pregnant women to take a vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms a day throughout their pregnancy.**

Oily Fish

Sardines, mackerel, salmon, kippers, fresh tuna and trout are types of oily fish. One portion of oily fish a week is beneficial to the health and neurological development of the baby. Do not have more than 2 portions of oily fish/ week. A portion is 140g drained or baked weight. Also limit tinned tuna to 4 medium cans per week or 2 fresh tuna steaks per week. Avoid shark, marlin and swordfish during pregnancy. They contain higher levels of mercury which can damage baby's developing nervous system.



Sushi

The safest sushi to eat is vegetarian or one which contains cooked meat (e.g. chicken). Otherwise ensure that if you are eating sushi made with fish that the fish has been frozen and thawed first. This is because raw fish can contain parasites (which are killed during freezing and cooking). If you are unsure stick to veggie or cooked chicken options.

Vegetarian / Vegan Mums

Vegetarian

Ensure you are eating 3 servings of milk, cheese and yogurt /day and are having three servings of protein (meat-free alternatives / beans /pulses / tofu / eggs).

If you eat fish—include two servings per week. If you do not, ensure you are having a pregnancy suitable omega 3 and iodine supplement.

Vegan

Iodine -care should be taken to ensure an iodine supplement suitable for pregnancy is taken 140-150µg (not kelp or seaweed).

B12 - (fortified yeast extracts / soya milk, textured soya protein and fortified cereals). If unsure a B12 supplement may be required.

Calcium—fortified soya milk or supplement.

Iron—nuts / pulses/ green leafy vegetables / dried apricots / breakfast cereals. A glass of orange juice at the same time will help with absorption.

Omega 3—from walnuts or walnut / rapeseed oil or consider an omega 3 supplement suitable for pregnancy and for vegans.

Important points contd

Nausea and vomiting continuing past 16 weeks?

Many women find that as their pregnancy progresses past 12 weeks their nausea and vomiting begins to improve and they are able to eat better. However, when pregnancy nausea and vomiting continues to be troublesome it is important to eat and drink whatever foods and fluids you can tolerate. You can focus on eating healthily once symptoms improve often around 24 weeks.

A separate information sheet is available for helpful tips to manage nausea and vomiting—ask your midwife/dietitian for a copy.

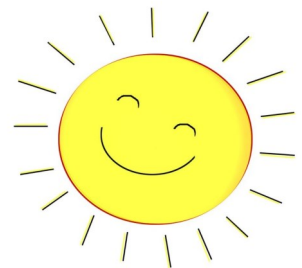
Do I need to take my pregnancy vitamins with pregnancy nausea and vomiting?

Yes, it is important to try continue to take your pregnancy vitamins, especially to make sure you are getting enough Vitamin D in pregnancy. Swapping to a pregnancy multi vitamin that does not need to be taken with food may help as you will be able to take it when you are less nauseous.

Speak to your midwife for further advice if you are concerned.

I've made changes and my diet is healthy, why do I need to take vitamins during pregnancy?

It is a Department of Health recommendation that all pregnant and breastfeeding women take 10 micrograms of Vitamin D daily.



The main source of Vitamin D is from action of sunlight on our skin (April to September). Foods rich in vitamin D include oily fish, eggs and fortified breakfast cereals and spreads but you cannot get enough Vitamin D from food alone.

Vitamin D helps the absorption of calcium from foods we eat. When you are pregnant having the correct dose of Vitamin D each day will help to protect your own bone health as well as contributing to the healthy development of your baby's skeleton and teeth.

What foods are a good source of calcium?

Dairy foods (milk, cheese and yoghurt) are calcium rich foods which can be easily absorbed by the body. If you do not eat dairy foods choose non dairy sources that are fortified with calcium. Aim to have 3 portions of dairy or calcium rich foods per day. A portion = 200mls of milk (low fat), 150g yoghurt and a small piece of cheese (matchbox size).



Important Points Cont....

Fluid

Good hydration during pregnancy is very important. Ensure you are drinking plenty of fluid per day. Water is best but decaffeinated tea & coffee, sugar-free squash etc all count towards your allowance. For pregnancy 8-10 glasses/day of fluid should meet your requirements but you will need more if you have been exercising or if you have been being sick recently.

Caffeine

Too much caffeine may have a link in premature low birth weight babies as well as increasing your risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. It is therefore important not to exceed the recommended caffeine intake (200mg/day) - equivalent to 2 cups of instant coffee or 2½ cups of tea. Cola, chocolate and certain cold and flu remedies will also contain caffeine. Always check the label. Diet and zero cola drinks still contain caffeine. Avoid very high caffeine drinks eg. energy drinks and coffee shop coffee (unless decaf) as caffeine levels can vary.

Herbal teas—little is known on the effects of herbal tea and your developing baby. NHS choices therefore recommends limiting to a maximum of 4x cups /day.

Exercise

Unless you have been advised otherwise moderate exercise can help keep pregnant women fit, reduce complications associated with pregnancy and labour and helps to limit excessive weight gain during pregnancy. Regular activity also helps women to manage joint pain and swelling, encourages better sleep and help women cope with the physical demands of labour.

If you have not been active before your pregnancy start slowly. Build up activity to at least 30 minutes 4 times per week. You can split this up into 15 minute slots at first if you find it easier.



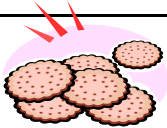


High risk sports where there is a risk of falling (skiing / horse riding) or heavy knocks (contact sports) should also be avoided. Scuba diving is NOT suitable to do during pregnancy.

Suitable exercises can include pregnancy yoga, swimming or aqua aerobics and brisk walking.

Speak to your midwife or doctor if you have any concerns or are unsure.

If you have any other questions please speak to your community midwife or the Bump Start team.

Reducing Sugar and Fat in Your Diet

High Sugar / High Fat Foods	Healthier Alternatives
Sugar - all types Honey /Maple syrup	Artificial sweetener e.g. Canderel, Sweetex, Splenda; cinnamon
Full sugar squashes, fizzy drinks, Lucozade, fruit juices, energy drinks, NO energy drinks e.g Red Bull even the diet versions.	Sugar free/no added sugar squash, diet drinks, Slimline, One Cal drinks. Be aware that diet pop still contains caffeine so limit.
Drinking chocolate, Horlicks, Ovaltine	Low calorie alternatives e.g. Options hot chocolate, Hi-Lights or Ovaltine Light
Sweet, cream or jam filled biscuits or chocolate biscuits Rich cakes (cream filled)	Plain biscuits e.g. Rich Tea and Marie or plain digestives Wholemeal scones, plain sponge cake. If you bake your own cakes you can use less sugar or swap it for sweetener 
Sweets Chocolate Desserts 	Fresh fruit Sugar free sweets/mints/gum 1 or 2 squares of chocolate as a treat. Low fat chocolate mousses Fresh fruit, stewed fruit and custard made with sweetener, sugar free jelly, diet yoghurts eg. Muller Light
Sugar coated breakfast cereals eg Crunchy Nut Cornflakes, Sugar Puffs, Frosties 	Porridge, Ready Brek, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Special K, Shreddies, no added sugar muesli
Tinned fruit in syrup	Tinned fruit in own juice, stewed or fresh fruit
Full fat dairy products—milk / cream / cheese etc	Semi skimmed / skimmed milk; Low fat cream cheese / cottage cheese / reduced fat cheddar cheese; low fat yogurts
Mayonnaise / salad dressing	Lite mayo / low fat salad dressings (careful of sugar content)
Crisps / salted or dry roasted nuts / pretzels	Low fat alternatives E.g Skips / Quavers etc; plain nuts (small handful only); plain or lightly flavoured rice cakes; oats cakes.
Added oil in cooking	Dry fry or use low fat spray oil e.g 1Cal spray Drain excess fat when cooking e.g. draining mince; trim fat off meat & remove skin from chicken.

Healthy Meal / Snack Ideas

Below you will find some meal / snack ideas which you may find useful.

Breakfast

Wholegrain breakfast cereal or porridge with semi-skimmed milk and dried fruit

Granary toast with boiled / scrambled egg

Bagel with low fat cream cheese spread



Any of above with small glass fruit juice and a cup of tea

Lunch

Vegetable soup with bread roll

Wholegrain toast with small tin baked beans and sprinkle of low fat grated cheese

cChicken pasta salad (low fat /lite mayo)

Egg mayo sandwich on granary bread (low fat / lite mayo)

Any of above with low fat yogurt and a glass of sugar-free squash or water

Dinner

Fish pie with sliced potato topping & green beans

Chicken or beef curry with vegetable rice

Lasagne topped with low fat cheddar or cottage cheese & green salad

Oven baked chicken breast, with sweet potato wedges, peas and sweet corn

Salmon, baby potatoes with peas and carrots



Piece of fruit for afters and a glass of water or sugar-free squash

Snacks or Supper (suggest max 2x day)

2 Clementines

Toasted crumpet with scrape of butter

Rice cakes and cottage cheese

Banana and glass of milk

Slice Barra Brith with scrape of butter

Soreen or fruit loaf

Low fat chocolate mousse or yogurt

Handful of nuts and dried fruit

Apple with small piece of low fat cheese

Decaffeinated skinny latte

Low calorie hot chocolate

Small bowl cereal (low sugar) with milk

**** Don't forget your Folic Acid and Vitamin D supplements. Also you may need to take an Iodine supplement if you do not eat fish or much dairy ****

	Action Plan
1	
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3	
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Further information/support

NHS Choices: will provide the most up to date information on food safety:
www.nhs.uk/livewell/pregnancy

Tommy's (Charitable organisation): provides lots of helpful information on diet and nutrition, exercise and healthy weight management in pregnancy.
www.tommys.org.uk

The Bump, Baby & Beyond book (provided by your midwife) can be viewed online: **www.bumpbabyandbeyond.wales.nhs.uk**

The British Dietetic Association provides Food Fact leaflets free to download
www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts (e.g. Calcium, Vitamin D, pregnancy)

Start 4 Life has lots of useful information for mums and dads including for pregnancy and babies and young children up to 5 years **www.nhs.uk/start4life**

Compiled by Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
 Cwm Taf University Health Board

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BumpStart

Note—information correct at time of printing however not a substitute for medical advice. Please consult your health professional if you have any concerns regarding the content of this leaflet or your diet in pregnancy.