

Pregnancy Nutrition Checklist

A pregnancy nutrition checklist to help you eat well and cover key nutrients while expecting.

Key nutrients to prioritize

- Take your prenatal vitamin daily as directed for folic acid and other gaps.
Folate supports your baby's early development; food sources include leafy greens, beans and fortified grains.
- Include iron-rich foods such as lean meat, beans, lentils and spinach.
Pair plant iron with vitamin C foods to help absorption.
- Get calcium daily from milk, yogurt, cheese or fortified alternatives.
- Add a protein source to each meal, such as eggs, poultry, fish, tofu or legumes.
- Choose foods with omega-3s like DHA, such as low-mercury fish, per your provider.
- Eat colorful fruits and vegetables for fiber, vitamins and antioxidants.
- Include whole grains for steady energy and added fiber.

Build balanced daily meals

- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit at main meals.
- Eat small, regular meals or snacks to steady energy and ease nausea.
- Keep easy, healthy snacks on hand, such as nuts, yogurt or fruit.
- Choose healthy fats like avocado, olive oil and nuts in moderation.
- Limit added sugar and ultra-processed snacks.
- Add a vitamin C food daily to support iron absorption.

Foods to limit or avoid

- Avoid alcohol completely throughout pregnancy.
- Limit caffeine; ask your provider about a daily amount that suits you.
- Skip high-mercury fish such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel and tilefish.
- Avoid raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, shellfish and eggs.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk, soft cheeses and juices.
- Heat deli meats and hot dogs until steaming before eating.
- Wash fruits and vegetables well and practice safe food handling.

Hydration and habits

- Sip water throughout the day and carry a refillable bottle.
- Drink more fluids in hot weather or when active.
- Check urine color; pale yellow generally signals good hydration.
- Limit sugary drinks and choose water as your main beverage.
- Eat fiber-rich foods and stay hydrated to help with constipation.

Manage common challenges

- For nausea, try bland foods like crackers and eat small amounts often.
- If certain smells trigger nausea, favor cold or room-temperature foods.
- For heartburn, eat smaller meals and avoid lying down right after eating.
- Discuss any strong cravings or aversions with your provider.
- Tell your provider if you cannot keep food or fluids down.

Track with your provider

- Bring nutrition questions to each prenatal appointment.
- Ask whether you need extra iron, vitamin D or other support.
- Review any food allergies or dietary restrictions with your provider.
- Discuss healthy weight gain goals for your pregnancy.
- Important: This is general information, not medical advice. Always follow the guidance of your OB-GYN or midwife for your individual needs and any concerns.