

#	Age & Stage	Theme	Title
3	Pregnancy	Nutrition during pregnancy	Did you know that you should eat twice as healthy when you are pregnant, not twice as much?

**“Eating for two” means eating twice as healthy, not twice as much. Eating well right from the start helps to build a healthy brain for your baby. It also helps you feel your best. During pregnancy, what you eat and drink, and the things that are around you, may have an impact on your unborn baby’s brain.**

- ◆ Make sure you include important baby-building nutrients such as:
  - Folate, from vegetables and fruit (spinach, broccoli, asparagus, sweet potatoes, oranges, berries, cantaloupe, etc.).
  - Vitamin C, from vegetables and fruit (oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, red peppers, etc.).
  - Iron and protein, from meat and alternatives (lean red meat, beans, lentils, etc.).
  - Calcium, from milk and alternatives (milk, cheese, yogurt, fortified soy beverages, etc.).
  - Vitamin D, from fish and fortified products (milk, fortified soy beverages, margarine, salmon, mackerel, etc.).
  - Omega-3, from fish, nuts, seeds, fats and oils (sardines, salmon, mussels, walnuts, flax seeds, canola and soybean oil, etc.).
  - Carbohydrates and fibre, from whole grain products (whole grain breads, cereals, brown rice, rolled oats, whole wheat pasta, etc.), vegetables, fruits and legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils, etc.).
- ◆ Choose foods from all four food groups of Canada’s Food Guide.
- ◆ Choose less processed foods more often, such as whole grain bread, homemade oatmeal and fruits and vegetables, etc.
- ◆ Have two servings of cooked fish each week (one serving = 75 grams or 2.5 oz. cooked, about the size of a deck of cards). Choose fish that are low in mercury such as salmon, rainbow trout, mackerel, light tuna, haddock, sole, etc. If you eat canned tuna, choose “light” tuna over “white” (also known as albacore). The “light” variety is usually lower in mercury.
- ◆ Read the labels to limit fatty, sweet and heavily salted foods. Foods with less than 5% of the daily value of salt are considered low in salt.
- ◆ Talk to your health care provider about the need for vitamins. Vitamin requirements may vary depending on a number of factors, including your diet and the length of time since your last pregnancy.
- ◆ Eat regular meals, including breakfast every day.
- ◆ If you are a vegetarian, ensure you get all the nutrients your baby needs, paying special attention to iron and protein.
- ◆ Limit the amount of caffeine to less than 300mg/day (about two 8-oz cups of coffee or three 8-oz cups of tea). Caffeine may reduce the absorption of some nutrients, especially iron.
- ◆ Be careful if you use herbal teas. Some may harm your baby or may cause early labour. Talk to your health care provider about the safe use of herbal teas or drinks or call Motherisk (1-877-439-2744).

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- ◆ Drink milk, water or juice instead of soda (pop).
- ◆ Protect yourself and your baby from food poisoning by following safe food handling practices. Avoid raw and undercooked fish, meat, poultry and seafood. Avoid foods made with unpasteurized milk and juices.
- ◆ For a woman of average weight, a healthy amount of weight to gain while pregnant is 11.5 to 16 kg (25 to 35 pounds). Discuss your personal healthy weight gain with your health care provider.

Pregnancy is a good time to establish healthy family habits. These may include healthy food choices, being active, becoming a non-smoker, having non-alcoholic drinks and balancing work and family time. For some pregnant women, making these changes may be difficult. Help from a dietitian or prenatal nurse may help you manage these changes. Contact your local public health unit for these types of programs.

Links

- ◆ *Healthy Eating for a Healthy Baby*. Nutrition Resource Centre. [www.ophra.on.ca/Nutrition-Resource-Centre/NRC-Resources/healthy-kids.aspx](http://www.ophra.on.ca/Nutrition-Resource-Centre/NRC-Resources/healthy-kids.aspx)
- ◆ *Prenatal Nutrition*. Health Canada. [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/prenatal/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/prenatal/index-eng.php)
- ◆ *Dish Safer Fish*. Canadian Partnership for Children's Health & Environment. [www.dishsaferfish.ca](http://www.dishsaferfish.ca)