

Nutrition During and After Pregnancy

It is important to have a healthy diet during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. Your diet should be varied and contain adequate fiber and eight cups of fluid every day. Small, frequent meals help prevent your blood sugar from dropping. A healthy diet includes proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and plenty of water. The U.S. government publishes dietary guidelines that can help you determine how many servings of each kind of food to eat every day. Eating a variety of foods in the proportions indicated is a good step toward staying healthy. Here are some of the most common nutrients you need and the foods that contain them.

Nutrient	Needed for	Best sources
Protein	cell growth and blood production	lean meat, fish, poultry, egg whites, beans, peanut butter, tofu
Carbohydrates	daily energy production	breads, cereals, rice, potatoes, pasta, fruits, vegetables
Calcium	strong bones and teeth, muscle contraction, nerve function	milk, cheese, yogurt, sardines or salmon with bones, spinach
Iron	red blood cell production (to prevent anemia)	lean red meat, spinach, iron-fortified whole-grain breads and cereals
Vitamin A	healthy skin, good eyesight, growing bones	carrots, dark leafy greens, sweet potatoes
Vitamin C	healthy gums, teeth, and bones; assistance with iron absorption	citrus fruit, broccoli, tomatoes, fortified fruit juices
Vitamin B6	red blood cell formation; effective use of protein, fat, and carbohydrates	pork, ham, whole-grain cereals, bananas
Vitamin B12	formation of red blood cells, maintaining nervous system health	meat, fish, poultry, milk (Note: vegetarians who don't eat dairy products need supplemental B12)
Vitamin D	healthy bones and teeth; aids absorption of calcium	fortified milk, dairy products, cereals, breads
Folic acid	blood and protein production, effective enzyme function	green leafy vegetables, dark yellow fruits and vegetables, beans, peas, nuts
Fat	body energy stores	meat, whole-milk dairy products, nuts, peanut butter, margarine, vegetable oils (Note: limit fat intake to 30% or less of your total daily calorie intake)