**PREGNANCY NUTRITION**

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BRIEF:

1. **Overview on pregnancy nutrition**
2. **What to eat during pregnancy including what supplements to take**
3. **What to avoid in pregnancy - food & drink (alcohol/caffeine) + Retinol vit A**
4. **One day meal plan for each trimester and highlight which foods may benefit them in each trimester**

* **1st Trimester - meal plan (3 meals, 2 snacks) - to focus on folate rich foods/snacks for morning sickness .. plus iodine and calcium**
* **2nd Trimester - meal plan (3 meals, 2-3 snacks) - advice to help with indigestion & constipation**
* **3rd Trimester - meal plan - (3 meals, 3 snacks) - include extra 200 calorie snack**

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**The lowdown on nutrition in pregnancy**

A healthy diet is important at any time, however it is vital for mums-to-be as demands on the body are increased during pregnancy. Eating a balanced diet will help your baby to grow and develop, and you’ll be less likely to suffer from complications such as low iron levels. You don’t need to eat a special diet, but you do need to pay attention to what you’re eating, ensuring that you eat a variety of different foods to obtain all the nutrients that you and your baby need.

**Top Tip:** Focus on what you should be eating more of (as we will discuss in this course!), and you’ll naturally eat less of the foods that are high in sugar and fat and low in nutrients, such as cake and biscuits; these can however be enjoyed in moderation (especially with friends over coffee!).

*Although pregnancy is a joyous and monumental chapter in any mum’s life, it can also be filled with anxiety that you’re not doing ‘enough’. The purpose of this course is to show you that consuming a varied and balanced diet during pregnancy doesn’t have to be complicated! Keep reading for my top take-home tips, meal inspiration and more!*

**How much more should I eat?**

You may have heard that, on average, women only need to eat an extra 200 calories in the last trimester of pregnancy (the equivalent of a small bowl of porridge or a slice of toast with nut butter). But did you know that this figure may not be accurate for women who are relatively active, or who may have been on the ‘lighter’ end of the BMI chart pre-pregnancy? More recent research shows that (on average) a woman's body may require up to 340 more calories a day in the second trimester and up to 450 more calories in the third; which is the equivalent of an extra small meal a day! Interestingly, the American Pregnancy Association also advises that your energy needs increase by an extra 300 calories a day during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy.

Having said this though, I do *not* recommend calorie counting during pregnancy; there is simply no need. The calorie requirements mentioned above are simply to show that you *do* need to eat more in order for you and your baby to thrive (although, this is not the same as eating for two grown adults) – honour your hunger and try if possible to eat nutritious, wholefoods for the majority of the time.

**What is a healthy weight gain when you’re pregnant?**

In the UK, there aren’t any guidelines regarding how much weight a pregnant lady should gain, but most ladies who are pregnant with one baby, gain around 2 to 3 stone, with the majority of weight going on after 20 weeks. Your midwife may however give you different guidelines depending on your pre-pregnancy weight, for example if your body mass index (BMI) was over 30 then you may be advised to gain around 1.5 stone. It really is amazing what effect more blood, fluid, baby, placenta, breast tissue and breast feeding stores can have on your size and weight!

Most guidelines say to expect to gain 1 to 7 lbs in trimester one and then 1 lb a week in trimesters 2 and 3. If you don’t gain enough weight, this could result in a small birth weight baby (who is susceptible to more health problems) and if you gain too much weight, this could result in a more complicated birth. If you suffer with severe sickness in trimester 1, then of course you may gain more weight, and be hungrier/eat more (as a catch up!) in trimesters 2 and 3.

My advice is to listen to your body, eat regular meals which contain carbohydrate (your baby needs them and that’s why low carb diets are NOT recommended if you’re trying for a baby or are pregnant), rest when you need to (but continue gentle exercise) and do NOT calorie count; your body is an amazing thing and it does not need a human developed app to tell you when to start and stop eating. Pregnancy can be such a beautiful time and your baby needs you to eat a wide variety of foods.

*NB You do not need to weigh yourself. Midwives in general only weigh pregnant ladies twice; once at the booking appointment, and secondly when the baby is almost due.*

**What SHOULD you eat when pregnant?**

A healthy and balanced diet consists of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables for vitamins, minerals, and fibre which will help to keep you healthy and prevent constipation. Ideally we should eat **5 to 9 portions of fruit and vegetables a day**, with a portion being around a handful or 80g; for example an apple, a small bowl of salad or three tablespoons of peas. Aim to **fill around a third of your meal plate with vegetables or salad** and if you’re hungry between meals have a piece of fruit; to jazz it up, you could have a banana with nut butter, berries with yoghurt or an apple with cheddar cheese.

**Protein, which includes meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses, milk, cheese and yoghurt, should also take up another third of your plate or bowl,** as our bodies and babies need protein on a daily basis to grow and also repair. Aim to eat **two portions of fish a week,** one of which is oily e.g. salmon, mackerel or sardines (avoid shark, marlin and swordfish though). Make sure that all of your foods are cooked thoroughly to prevent food poisoning and choose leaner cuts of meat where possible, avoiding liver as it contains too much vitamin A, which can be harmful in pregnancy. If you really don’t feel like eating, due to morning sickness for example, then a glass of milk is ideal as it will provide you with calcium, protein and slow release energy, as well as keeping you hydrated. Or even better blend it with some fruit for a nutritious smoothie.

**Wholegrain or slow release starchy carbohydrates** such as sweet potato, oats, wholemeal pasta, basmati rice or seeded bread provide your body with B vitamins, energy and fibre. **Aim to fill another third of your plate** with these types of foods to keep you fuelled for the entire day. You can even add oats to a smoothie if you wish!

**Healthy fats** are another essential nutrient, although the body requires them in smaller amounts in comparison to protein and carbs. Healthy unsaturated fats include olive oil and rapeseed oil which are used in cooking, oily fish, avocados, nuts and seeds.

**Keeping hydrated** is also important as it will help to keep your digestive system moving and gut healthy. Aim for your urine to be a pale straw colour for the majority of the day, with the majority of your fluids being free from added sugar and caffeine (have no more than 2 cups of caffeinated tea or coffee a day). No added sugar squash or pieces of strawberry and cucumber can be an ideal option if you aren’t keen on the taste of plain water.

*As I said before, focus on what you should be eating more of, and you’ll naturally eat less of the foods high in sugar and fat and low in nutrients, such as cake and biscuits; these can however be enjoyed in moderation.*

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**What are the most important nutrients and supplements to consider during pregnancy?**

**Vitamin D – Take a 10 mcg supplement**

Everybody needs Vitamin D, as it helps us to absorb calcium. It is especially important in pregnancy as it helps your baby’s bones, teeth, kidneys, heart and nervous system to develop. Our body naturally makes Vitamin D when we are exposed to sunlight, and therefore all adults (in the UK at least), should take 10 mcg of vitamin D in the winter months from around October until April due to reduced exposure. Pregnant (and breastfeeding) ladies however should take a 10 mcg supplement of vitamin D all year round – failure to do this could result in your newborn baby being deficient too, particularly if you have dark skin or spend a lot of time indoors.

***Top Tip:*** *In addition to taking a daily 10 mcg supplement (which you will find in a good pregnancy supplement), get outside in summer. There’s no need to sunbathe though, a short walk in the outdoors (without suncream) can be enough!*

***Food sources include:*** O*ily fish, egg yolks, mushrooms and fortified breakfast cereals/milk alternatives (check that vitamin D is on ingredients list!).*

**Folic Acid –** **Take a 400 mcg supplement (or 5 mg which is prescribed by your doctor if you have diabetes, your BMI is over 30, you take anti-epileptic medication or you have a history of neural tube defects in your family)**

Folic acid is an essential vitamin during pregnancy (as well as breastfeeding), and when trying to conceive too. Not only is it important for the formulation of healthy red blood cells, but it’s important to prioritise when pregnant as low levels can increase the risk of complications, such as neural tube defects.

***Food sources include:*** *Dark green leafy veg, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, beans and legumes (e.g. peas, black eyed beans), yeast and beef extracts, oranges (and orange juice), wheat bran and other whole grain foods, poultry, pork, shellfish and fortified foods (e.g. some brands of breakfast cereals – check the label!).*

**Iodine – 200 mcg a day from dietary sources**

Another essential vitamin, not only in every-day life but in pregnancy too. Iodine is used by the thyroid gland to produce vital hormones for growth and health. It’s very important for healthy development and the growth of the baby’s brain during pregnancy.

***Good food sources include:*** *Fish, milk, and dairy products such as cheese and yoghurt. In general, white fish contains more iodine than oily fish. Milk and dairy products are the main sources of iodine for most people. It is important to be aware that most milk-alternative drinks (e.g. soya/almond/oat) are not fortified with iodine and have a low iodine content. Some milk-alternative drinks are fortified with iodine so it is important to check the product’s label before you buy.*

***Good to know:*** *Seaweed is a very concentrated source of iodine, but it can provide excessive amounts (particularly in the case of brown seaweed such as kelp) and therefore eating seaweed more than once a week is not recommended, especially during pregnancy.*

**Iron - At least 14.8mg a day for all females**

Having sufficient iron levels is very important during pregnancy. Low levels of iron within the diet or through blood loss can result in fatigue, lack of energy or in more severe cases, iron deficiency anaemia, which may increase the risk of infections, illnesses (due to reduced immune support) and other symptoms such as hair thinning and brittle nails. In pregnancy, it may also increase the risk of a low birth weight and possible iron deficiency for your baby. If you are experiencing these symptoms, please contact your GP.⁣⁣

Although there are no specific recommendations for pregnant women (compared to the recommended intake of 14.8mg per day for females) it’s important that iron as a mineral is not neglected. The good news though, is that you can obtain sufficient levels by consuming a varied and balanced diet!⁣⁣

***Food sources include: Haem iron and non-haem iron ⁣⁣***

***Haem iron*** *is found in animal-based sources of iron such as red meat (must be thoroughly cooked), liver (not recommended in pregnancy due to the high vitamin A content) and eggs (must be thoroughly cooked unless they have the lion stamp on). Haem iron is more readily absorbed within the body. ⁣⁣*

*Although less easily absorbed, plant-based sources of iron* ***(known as non-haem iron)*** *include dark leafy greens, beans, chickpeas, seeds, nuts and tofu. Some breakfast cereals and breads are also fortified with iron (check the label). These foods provide us with plenty of other nutrients too.*

***Top Tip:*** *To increase absorption, combine your iron sources and pair with some Vitamin C! An iron-rich meal idea could be a beef (haem-iron), kidney bean (non-haem iron) and mixed vegetable stew (Vitamin C).⁣⁣*

***Iron and Caffeine:*** *It’s best to avoid drinking tea and coffee for 30 to 60 minutes when consuming your sources of Iron and Vitamin C as this may hinder absorption.*

***Twins:*** *The body’s need for iron is greater if you’re pregnant with twins, and therefore you are more at risk of deficiency. Routine supplementation isn’t recommended but this can be explored with your GP if you are showing symptoms of deficiency, and there will be some iron contained within a pregnancy multivitamin if you choose to take one.*

**Calcium - 700mg for all females, through dietary sources (which increases to 1250mg if breastfeeding!).**

Calcium is an essential nutrient for you and your baby as it contributes to growth and the maintenance of healthy strong bones, teeth and regular muscle contractions (including our heartbeat), as well as normal blood clotting.

If you are Vitamin D deficient, have coeliac disease, osteoporosis and/or are following a plant-based/vegan diet then extra care is needed to meet your requirements. A lack of calcium for mum and baby can increase the risk of rickets in children or osteomalacia (softening of the bones) in adults.

***Good food sources include:*** *Milk, yoghurt and cheese. For example: 200ml of milk contains 240mg, 120g of plain yoghurt contains 200mg, tinned fish (with bones), such as sardines are also a rich source containing around 250mg per half tin.*

***Good to know:*** *If you’re plant based or lactose intolerant - don’t worry! Plant mylks, yoghurts and cheese can contain the same levels of calcium as dairy milk IF they are fortified, always check the label! Other non-dairy sources of calcium include fortified breads, breakfast cereals and orange juice, dried fruit, pulses, broccoli, oranges and tofu (must be set with calcium chloride or calcium sulphate - do check the label!)*

***Top Tip:*** *Aim for at least 3 rich sources of calcium throughout the day (such as dairy, fortified dairy alternatives and tinned fish). You could try including milk in smoothies and hot drinks, cheese in a salad or even try sardines on toast for breakfast.*

**Pregnancy Multivitamin –** You may wish to take a pregnancy-suitable multivitamin, which will contain the daily folic acid, vitamin D and iodine requirements, and exclude vitamin A – which in the retinol form can be toxic in large doses. If you feel you are consuming a healthy and balanced diet with plenty of sources of different nutrients, this is not a requirement, however it may be useful if you feel you need it, or if you’re struggling with nausea for example. If you choose not to take a pregnancy multivitamin then you will still need to take folic acid until week 12 of pregnancy as well as a vitamin D supplement throughout all 3 trimesters and beyond if you are breastfeeding.

**What should we be cautious of, if we are following a vegan or vegetarian diet, when pregnant?**

If you are following a more plant-based diet when pregnant or breastfeeding it is essential that you have sufficient levels of essential nutrients such as vitamin D, calcium, iodine, folic acid and iron as well as vitamin B12, which is why a pregnancy multivitamin may be beneficial and is often recommended in this group. An omega 3 (algae) supplement may also be essential if you’re following a plant-based diet as most people get their omega 3 (in the most beneficial DHA form) from oily fish.

***Nutritious plant-based foods include:***

**Soya products** such as soya milk and yoghurt, tofu and edamame beans are a great source of plant-based protein, and an excellent source of calcium and other vitamins such as magnesium.

**Beans, lentils and pulses** are a great source of plant-based protein and vitamins and minerals. Try out as many different ones as you can; chickpeas, red lentils, black beans – even your classic tinned baked beans (try opt for reduced or no added salt and sugar when possible!)

**Vegan alternatives** **to milk, yoghurt and cheese** can be great sources of essential micronutrients that your body requires but only if they are fortified, so it’s important to check the label for calcium at the very minimum! Usually, they will fortify with B vitamins, such as B12 and B2 - which are essential for healthy development of your baby. Some brands will even fortify with iodine as well. It’s important to note that vegan alternatives such as almond or oat milk are not a source of protein, so this needs to be obtained elsewhere - through soya products or beans, lentils and pulses for example. You may also find products such as breakfast cereals and bread are fortified with some essential micronutrients such as iron and can contribute towards your daily requirements, too.

**Plant-based sources of omega-3,** **such as walnuts, soybeans, chia seeds, linseeds and rapeseed oil** are beneficial to include as part of a vegan or vegetarian diet, as they contain another form of Omega-3 (ALA), which can be converted to EPA and DHA, but only in small amounts. *If you don’t consume these foods on a regular basis, it may be worth considering an algae-based omega-3 supplement.*

**Nuts and seeds** are an essential source of healthy unsaturated fats, as well as a whole host of different vitamins and minerals, so try to include a variety throughout the week. One mineral that we can obtain by eating a small handful of Brazil nuts is Selenium, a nutrient that some of the population are not obtaining enough of. In pregnancy, it’s important for normal functioning of the body’s cells and immune system - why not enjoy them as a mid-morning snack!

**What SHOULDN’T I Eat & Drink During Pregnancy?**

During pregnancy your body is working over time to grow your baby, meaning your immune system may be compromised. In order to keep both you and your baby safe, as well as to prevent food poisoning, there are a few foods and drinks that you need to be cautious of.

If you do eat or drink one of the things mentioned below, by accident, then try not to panic! The chances of anything untoward happening are low; having said this though it’s a good idea to chat it through with your doctor or midwife to be on the safe side.

*N.B. As previously stated, pregnant women must avoid supplements that contain the retinol version of vitamin A, including fish/cod-liver oil.*

**CHEESE – Choose pasteurised cheese and avoid soft mould-ripened and blue-veined cheeses.**

Cheese is a great source of protein and calcium for both you and your baby. Most cheeses are safe to eat when you’re pregnant, however some should be avoided due to the risk of food poisoning from listeria; a bacteria which can be harmful to you and your baby.

Safe cheeses to eat include pasteurised hard cheeses such as cheddar, cheese slices/strings, parmesan and stilton, soft cheeses (provided they’re made from pasteurised milk; most in the UK are but check the ingredients list or ask the waiter if you’re abroad) such as cottage cheese, mozzarella, feta, cream cheese, paneer, ricotta, halloumi, goats’ cheese and cheese spreads.

Cheeses to avoid include those made from unpasturised milk, mould-ripened soft cheeses (those with a white rind) including brie, camembert and chèvre (French goat’s cheese), soft blue-veined cheeses e.g. Danish Blue, gorgonzola and roquefort. If you can’t live without these cheeses for nine months then they should be safe to eat if cooked thoroughly i.e. they are cooked until steaming hot on a pizza or baked. You must also avoid any unpasteurised milk, yoghurt and cheese (if you’re travelling abroad then this is something to check/ask about). If in doubt speak to your midwife.

**EGGS – Look for the British Lion stamp if poaching or having soft boiled.**

A few years ago, the advice around eating eggs when pregnant was that women should only have hard boiled or scrambled eggs, i.e. a solid yolk and cooked all the way through. This was to reduce the risk of salmonella poisoning. New research however now shows that eggs produced under the British Lion Code of Practice i.e. eggs with the red lion stamp, are very low risk for salmonella and are safe for pregnant women to eat raw or partially cooked such as soft boiled or poached.

If you buy eggs without the lion stamp on e.g. from a farm, or from your own chickens then you *must* cook them until the white and yolk is solid e.g. hard boiled or scrambled.

Non-hen eggs such as duck, goose and quail eggs should also be cooked thoroughly. Salmonella is unlikely to cause harm to your baby, but it could cause severe diarrhoea and vomiting which could lead to dehydration, which is something you want to avoid.

**MEAT – Cook thoroughly and avoid liver and game meats**

Meat can be a fantastic source of protein, iron and many other vitamins and minerals for you and your baby. During pregnancy however you need to swap your rare-cooked steaks for well done, as all meat needs to be **cooked thoroughly, i.e. there should be no pink bits,** to avoid the potential risk of toxoplasmosis (an infection which can be problematic to the baby).

Liver (including pate), should also be avoided during pregnancy as it may contain a lot of Vitamin A, which has been linked with birth defects when consumed in excess. Game, when shot with lead pellets, should be avoided too, as high levels of lead can harm a baby’s developing brain and nervous system. Cured and fermented cold meats such as salami, prosciutto, chorizo and pepperoni should be either cooked first (e.g. on a pizza) or frozen at home for four days before eating (freezing kills most parasites and makes the meat safer to eat).

**FISH - Cook thoroughly, limit oily fish to 2 portions a week and avoid shark, swordfish & marlin**

Fish is a great source of protein, vitamins and minerals, as well as omega 3 fatty acids (found mainly in oily fish). Having said this though, there are some that you should avoid when you’re pregnant. Do not eat shark, swordfish and marlin as they contain high amounts of mercury, as well as raw or undercooked fish due to risk of food poisoning e.g. raw sushi.

Tuna fish is safe to eat, but it’s best to limit your intake to either two fresh steaks a week or four medium cans. Oily fish, such as salmon, trout, fresh tuna, mackerel, sardines, herring and pilchards (in addition to sea bass, crab and sea bream) should be limited to two portions a week due to the pollutants that they may contain.

You do not need to limit white fish such as cod and haddock.

**SALT - Cut down**

It’s a good idea to cut down on salt intake during pregnancy to reduce the risk of high blood pressure (pre-eclampsia). Foods high in salt include processed meats such as ham, bacon and sausages, as well as powdered soups, crisps, salted nuts and some ready meals. Instead of adding salt to meals try experimenting with pepper, paprika, garlic, lemon juice or even chilli flakes.

**CAFFEINE - Limit to 200mg a day (2 cups of tea or coffee a day)**

For the majority of healthy non-pregnant adults, caffeine in moderation i.e. 400mg a day; which is around 4 cups of tea or coffee, isn’t harmful, but **pregnant women should keep their consumption to below 200mg a day**; which is around 2 cups of instant tea or coffee.

Exceeding 200mg of caffeine a day during pregnancy could result in your baby having a low birthweight, increasing the risk of health problems later in life. If you occasionally exceed the recommended limit by accident, try not to worry as the risks are quite small.

**Here are some useful stats showing how much caffeine (on average) is in these commonly consumed food and drinks. However, you should always check the label for exact amounts:**

* Coffee shop coffee = ~100-400mg\*
* Energy drink = ~80-150mg (avoid in pregnancy)
* Instant coffee = ~100mg
* Black tea = ~75mg
* 50g dark chocolate = ~25mg
* Can of cola (including diet) = ~40mg
* Green tea = ~50mg
* 50g milk chocolate = ~10mg

*\*If you’re buying coffee from a coffee shop, ask for decaf or just 1 shot, as large cups can have up to 4 shots of coffee in them which is the equivalent of double a day’s worth of caffeine for a pregnant lady.*

**ALCOHOL – Avoid**

The Chief Medical Officer for the UK recommends that if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all in order to keep any risks to your baby to a minimum.

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can lead to long-term harm to your baby; and the more you drink, the greater the risk. The risk is greatest in the first three months of pregnancy, as it increases the chances of miscarriage, premature birth and your baby having a low birth weight. Drinking after the first three months of your pregnancy could further affect your baby after birth and lead to them developing learning difficulties or behavioural problems. Heavy alcohol consumption throughout pregnancy can cause your baby to develop a serious condition called foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which causes problems with vision, memory, hearing, attention span and their ability to communicate. If you feel you may struggle to avoid alcohol during pregnancy, please speak to your midwife or GP as soon as possible.

**Foods to Avoid Summary**

*This list may seem overwhelming, but you only have to avoid or limit these foods and drinks for nine months, with the benefits to your baby extending possibly lifelong.*

*You can do it!*

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| **SAFE TO EAT & DRINK** | **TO AVOID** |
| Most hard & pasteurised cheeses/dairy products | Mould-ripened and blue-veined soft cheeses  Unpasteurised milk/cheeese and yoghurt |
| Eggs with the lion stamp or all fully cooked eggs | Runny eggs without the lion stamp |
| Most fully cooked meats & fish | Raw meat/fish, liver, game shot with lead, shark, marlin, swordfish.  Excessive amounts of oily fish and tuna. |
| Herbs and spices | Excessive amounts of salt i.e. more than 6g a day |
| One or two cups of tea or coffee a day  Decaf tea or coffee | Drinking more than 2 cups of caffeinated tea or coffee a day  Having more than 2-4 cups of herbal (including green tea) a day  Consuming raspberry leaf tea before 32 weeks of pregnancy  Energy drinks |
| Water or no added sugar squash | Alcohol |

**COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Is protein powder safe during pregnancy?**

The majority of pregnant women meet their protein needs through what they eat. Unfortunately, we do not have solid scientific evidence to suggest any long-term effects of protein powder consumption during pregnancy. This means **we cannot state whether it is safe to use or not**. Protein powder brands and varieties vary so it is best to check the label and look for any signs that it may not be safe for consumption during pregnancy e.g. if they contain caffeine. If a product states it is not suitable, avoid these completely. Those stating that they are safe for pregnancy can be enjoyed as a snack (e.g. in a smoothie) as part of a healthy varied diet (NOT as a meal replacement).

**Can you drink diet drinks during pregnancy?**

The sweetener-sugar debate is ongoing; with blurred lines over the healthiest option. Artificial sweeteners are used in many ‘diet’ or ‘lighter’ versions of products to replace sugar, which can cause dental caries. As their name suggests, artificial sweeteners alter a product to make it taste sweeter and, in some cases, have a bad reputation associated with E numbers in sweets. However, **diet drinks containing artificial sweeteners are considered safe for consumption during pregnancy and breastfeeding**, as these sweeteners have been tested under strict European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) regulations before being legal to use. Further tests have also cleared them as non-carcinogenic (not known to cause cancer) and non-toxic.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that diet drinks do not add any nutritional value to our diets and are therefore seen as ‘empty calories’. I would always suggest drinking water over diet drinks but recognise the role they can play when trying to reduce your sugar consumption and increase fluid intake.

**Are herbal teas safe to drink when you’re pregnant?**

Herbal teas can be a popular choice when trying to reduce caffeine intake to the safe level for pregnancy. Herbal teas include any teas made from leaves (other than English Breakfast tea), berries, roots, flowers or seeds. It is recommended to consume no more than 4 cups of herbal teas a day during pregnancy.

In general, herbal teas containing familiar ingredients are deemed safe for consumption, such as lemon, apple, orange or blackcurrant. Teas containing ingredients that you are unfamiliar with however, such as ginseng, cohosh or pennyroyal, should be avoided as they may contain active ingredients which may act like medicines within the body. In particular, you should **avoid drinking raspberry tea before week 32 of your pregnancy.**

**Putting it all together.**

It’s important to remember that for many busy and/or working mums to be, life doesn’t stop when you’re pregnant! So it can feel like a lot to take in, especially if you are pregnant with your first child. To make your life a little easier, I’ve provided some inspiration for some nutritious meals and snacks for each trimester.

***N.B.*** *For all dairy options, swap for plant-based alternatives if you are vegan or lactose intolerant, and ensure that they are fortified with calcium, vitamin B12 and iodine.*

**MEAL & SNACK IDEAS**

**First Trimester.. Managing Morning Sickness!**

For many mums to be, a common feeling throughout the first trimester is morning sickness. Although often unavoidable, there are some foods that may help with feelings of nausea, whilst providing essential nutrient requirements that we need throughout pregnancy, such as folic acid, calcium and iodine. To sustain your energy levels throughout the day, it’s important to consume sufficient calories through a combination of meals and snacks, as well as keeping well hydrated. Eating little and often may help to keep morning sickness at bay, in comparison to eating 3 larger meals.

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| **BREAKFAST** | Two wheat biscuits with semi-skimmed milk, a handful of berries and a sliced orange or a small glass of orange juice |
| **SNACK** | A sliced apple with a portion of cheddar cheese (around 30g or a small match box size) and a couple of oat crackers |
| **LUNCH** | A wholemeal pitta bread with hummus, chicken\*, spinach and roasted vegetables  *\*Plant-based option - swap the chicken for falafel* |
| **SNACK** | A pot of plain or low/no added sugar yoghurt with a tbsp of nut butter |
| **DINNER** | A mixed bean and vegetable stew served with broccoli and wholegrain rice |
| **OPTIONAL EXTRAS** | A couple of ginger biscuits with a glass of milk |
| **DRINKS** | Water with no added sugar squash, cup of tea, cup of decaf coffee |

*Fortified cereals such as Weetabix, green leafy vegetables such as broccoli and spinach, as well as poultry and beans are all rich sources of folate, which is essential throughout pregnancy. Throughout all trimesters, it’s also important to eat plenty of rich sources of calcium, iodine and protein such as milk, yoghurt and cheese.*

**Are there any foods that can help with morning sickness?**

Try to opt for snacks/meals that are not highly spiced or flavoured. If you’re sensitive to smells, you could try more cold meals such as salads or cooked protein with potatoes and salads. Go easy when you’re drinking fluid; take sips little and often instead of swallowing large quantities.⁣

**Second Trimester.. Eating for Indigestion and Constipation**

Pregnancy symptoms such as indigestion and constipation are caused by hormonal changes and of course your growing baby. And whilst they may not completely vanish, what we can do is try to manage them! Ensuring you’re consuming enough fibre throughout pregnancy, by eating rich sources such as wholegrain bread and pasta, oats as well as nuts and seeds is not only beneficial for your gut health, but to provide you with essential B vitamins and minerals, too.

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| **BREAKFAST** | Overnight oats made with yoghurt, a spoonful of linseeds/flaxseeds and a dash of milk to loosen - with some chopped fruit to top |
| **SNACK** | A couple of crispbreads with smashed avocado and a sliced boiled egg |
| **LUNCH** | A home-made sweetcorn and tuna sandwich with a little olive oil and a side salad with chopped tomatoes and toasted mixed seeds for added crunch |
| **SNACK** | A frozen berry smoothie with milk and a portion of nuts on the side |
| **DINNER** | Baked sweet potato with low/no added sugar baked beans with grated cheese and a side salad. |
| **DRINKS** | Water with no added sugar squash, cup of tea, cup of decaf coffee |

**Constipation: Think F.F.M - FIBRE, FLUID & MOVEMENT!**

**FIBRE** – Vital for a healthy digestive system! The UK recommended intake is 30g a day. Try to opt for whole grain varieties of carbohydrates where possible.⁣⁣ Including oats and linseeds in the diet may also help (they provide soluble fibre) but it’s important to ensure you’re getting enough fluid and movement, too.

**FLUID** – Make sure to be drinking an adequate amount of fluid too (your urine should be a pale straw colour for the majority of the day). Water is ideal as it’s sugar and caffeine free too.

**MOVEMENT** – Get the bowels moving! Going for a brisk walk can help or you could even try some gentle pregnancy yoga⁣⁣.

**Indigestion:**Another common symptom in pregnancy. To help avoid indigestion, take time to chew and eat your food slowly and mindfully and take small sips instead of large gulps of water. You may also find it useful to eat fewer rich and spicy foods.

**THIRD TRIMESTER… EATING FOR ENERGY**

Although there’s no need to ‘eat for two’, throughout the last trimester in particular, we do require additional energy intake from food (around 200 extra calories). This is needed for the growth and development of our baby. A simple way to obtain this extra energy is through an extra nutritious snack throughout the day!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BREAKFAST** | Omelette with peas, spinach, tomatoes, grilled mushrooms and a sprinkling of cheese. Serve with a slice or two of wholemeal toast  *\*Plant-based option - scrambled silken tofu on toast with vegetables* |
| **SNACK** | Small bowl of Branflakes with milk and chopped banana |
| **LUNCH** | Greek style salad made with mixed leaves, roasted mixed vegetables, feta cheese and falafels with hummus. Served with a wholemeal pitta bread and tzatziki  *\*Plant-based option - swap the feta for fortified vegan cheese* |
| **SNACK** | A handful of dried fruit with nuts |
| **DINNER** | Spaghetti bolognese made with wholewheat spaghetti, lean beef mince and home-made tomato ragu and vegetables of choice.  *\*Plant-based option - ragu made with lentils/mushrooms or a meat-free mince* |
| **EXTRA SNACK** | A pot of Greek style yoghurt with berries and a couple of squares of dark chocolate! |
| **DRINKS** | Water with no added sugar squash, cup of tea, cup of decaf coffee |

**NUTRITIONAL CHECKLIST**

For a simple way to keep track of your nutritional intake during pregnancy, print out this handy checklist and pop it on your fridge to tick off your ‘to do’s’ each day!

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** |
| **Daily Pregnancy Vitamins i.e. Vitamin D & Folic Acid** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2-3 portions of calcium and iodine rich foods e.g. milk, yoghurt & cheese** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2-3 sources of fibre rich foods e.g. wholemeal bread & oats** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **At least 5 portions of fruit/veg** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2-3 sources of protein (from animal or plant sources)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1.6-2 litres of fluids** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Consumed a source of iron with a source of Vitamin C** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Daily movement** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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**YOUR GO-TO GUIDE FOR NUTRIENTS AND FOOD SOURCES!**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FIBRE** | Wholegrain/wholemeal versions of pasta, bread, rice, noodles and breakfast cereals, oats, fruit, vegetables (especially root), potatoes with their skin, legumes, beans and lentils. |
| **PROTEIN** | Animal sources: Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy such as yoghurt, milk and cheese  Plant sources: Soya beans and soya products, beans, lentils, legumes, nuts and seeds |
| **HEALTHY FATS** | Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel, olive oil/olives, avocado, nuts, seeds including chia and linseeds |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **CALCIUM RICH FOODS** | Dairy products - milk, yoghurt, cheese (or fortified plant-based alternatives), tinned fish with bones, fortified breakfast cereals and bread, dark green vegetables, orange/calcium enriched orange juice and calcium-set tofu |
| **IRON RICH FOODS** | Red meat (cooked), eggs, fortified breakfast cereals, dark leafy greens, beans, dried fruit, nuts and beans such as kidney beans (avoid liver) |
| **IODINE RICH FOODS** | White fish, dairy products, eggs, shellfish, fortified dairy alternatives, meat/poultry, nuts and fortified bread |