

# what to eat

## now that you are pregnant



**KAISER PERMANENTE®**



## Nutrition and Pregnancy

While you are pregnant, your body supplies all that your baby needs to grow. The best way to do this is to eat at least 3 balanced meals and 1 to 2 healthy snacks every day. Drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of fluid every day.

## Choosing the Right Foods

The Daily Food Guide on page 4 will help you choose foods that give you the nutrition you and your baby need while you are pregnant. At the end of each day, you can see if you are getting enough servings from each of the six food groups:

1. Whole grains
2. Vegetables (especially green leafy vegetables)
3. Fruits
4. Milk, yogurt, cheese
5. Meat, chicken, turkey, fish, dry beans, eggs, soy/tofu
6. Fats (oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, olives, butter)



## Choose High-Vitamin Foods

There are three vitamins and minerals that are especially important for you and your growing baby:

- Calcium
- Iron
- Folate

You can get the extra calcium, iron, and folate that you and your baby need to be healthy if you eat enough of the following foods every day.

### Calcium-rich foods

*(1,000 to 1,200 milligrams per day)*

- Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt)
- Orange juice (calcium fortified)
- Calcium-set tofu
- Soy or almond milk (calcium fortified)
- Almonds
- Broccoli
- Green leafy vegetables (kale, bok choy, collard greens)

If you do not get at least 1,000 mg of calcium from food, consider taking calcium supplements. The recommended amount is two 500 milligram supplements of calcium carbonate a day (not at the same time). Ask a dietitian if you have questions about supplements.

### Iron-rich foods

*(30 to 60 milligrams per day)*

Eat iron-rich foods with foods high in vitamin C, such as oranges, pineapple, broccoli, or strawberries. Vitamin C helps your body absorb iron. Calcium and polyphenols

(found in tea and coffee) can make it harder to absorb iron.

- Beef (lean, dark-red meat), chicken, or turkey
- Liver\* and other organ meats
- Eggs
- Oysters and other shellfish
- Dark-green leafy vegetables (spinach, broccoli, bok choy, collards, kale)
- Lentils or beans
- Iron-fortified cereals
- Dried fruits (raisins, prunes, apricots)
- Soybeans/tofu
- Nuts and seeds (walnuts, cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds)

### Folate-rich foods

*(0.4 milligrams per day)*

- Dark-green leafy vegetables (spinach, greens)
- Broccoli
- Dried beans
- Asparagus
- Lean beef
- Liver\*
- Cereals fortified with folic acid
- Oranges and orange juice
- Potatoes
- Mushrooms
- Whole-wheat bread
- Prenatal vitamins (best source for folic acid)



\*Liver has high amounts of vitamin A. Eat it in moderation. (See page 14.)

## Daily Food Guide

Check off the amounts you eat in each food group in the chart every time you have a meal or snack. Try to eat the recommended amounts each day.\*

*For example:*

### **Lunch:**

1 turkey sandwich	= 2 slices of bread, 2 to 3 oz. of meat, 2 Tbsp. of avocado
1 small apple	= 1 piece of fruit

### **Snack:**

1 cup low-fat yogurt	= 1 cup of milk products
1 cup raw carrots	= 1 cup of vegetables

\* These recommended amounts are based on a diet of 1,800 to 2,800 calories per day. For more information and to get a customized daily food plan with a calorie level that meets your needs, visit [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov).

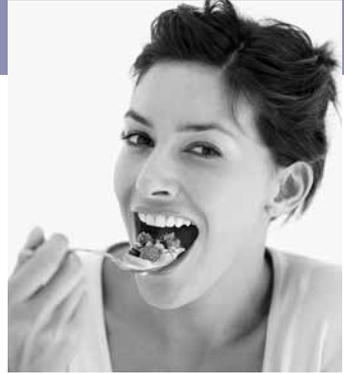


Food Groups and Serving Sizes	Recommended Amounts You Need Every Day	Check Off the Amounts You Ate Today from Each Food Group
<p><b>Whole Grains</b>            1 slice whole-wheat bread            1 corn tortilla (6-inch)            1 cup dry cereal            ½ cup hot cereal            ½ cup cooked brown rice or whole-wheat pasta            6 whole-grain crackers</p>	<p>6 to 10 servings each day</p> <p><i>For example:</i>            2 slices of bread from sandwich =            2 servings of bread</p>	<p>■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■            ■ ■ ■</p>
<p><b>Vegetables</b>            1 cup vegetables            1 cup green salad</p>	<p>4 servings or more each day</p> <p><i>For example:</i>            1 cup raw carrots from snack = 1 serving of vegetables</p>	<p>■ ■ ■ ■</p>
<p><b>Fruits</b>            1 small to medium piece fresh fruit            1 cup fresh fruit            ½ cup orange juice or other 100% fruit juice*</p>	<p>3 servings or more each day</p> <p><i>For example:</i>            1 apple from lunch =            1 serving of fruit</p>	<p>■ ■ ■</p>
<p><b>Milk, Yogurt, Cheese</b>            1 cup low-fat or nonfat milk or yogurt            1½ oz. low-fat cheese            ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese (calcium fortified)            1 cup soy milk (calcium fortified)</p>	<p>3 servings or more each day (teenagers need 4 servings or more)</p> <p><i>For example:</i>            1 cup low-fat yogurt from snack =            1 serving of milk products</p>	<p>■ ■ ■</p>

\*Get most of your fruit servings from fruit, not juice.



## Try this sample menu



### **BREAKFAST**

- ½ cup sliced melon
- 2 slices of whole-wheat toast
- 1 boiled egg
- 1½ tsp. peanut or almond butter
- 1 cup nonfat or low-fat milk

### **Morning snack**

- 1 oz. low-fat cheese with 6 crackers
- 1 small apple

### **LUNCH**

- 1 bowl of black bean soup
- 1 whole-wheat roll
- 1 cup mixed greens with 1 Tbsp. dressing
- 1 cup nonfat or low-fat yogurt

### **Afternoon snack**

- 1 corn tortilla
- 1½ oz. low-fat cheese
- 1 cup carrot sticks and cherry tomatoes

### **DINNER**

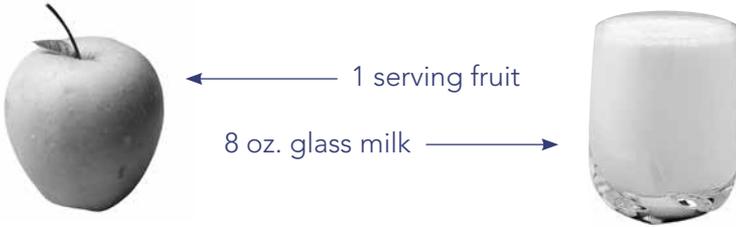
- 3 oz. sliced chicken
- 1 cup mixed vegetables (chopped peppers, carrots, and broccoli)
- ½ cup steamed brown rice

### **Evening snack**

- 1 cup nonfat or low-fat yogurt
- 1 piece of fruit
- 1 handful of walnuts

# The Healthy Plate

Use this plate to help you portion your food in a healthy way and make meal planning easier. Portions are based on a small dinner plate.



$\frac{1}{4}$  plate healthy protein

$\frac{1}{4}$  plate whole grains



## How Much Weight Should You Gain?

You and your physician or other health care professional need to keep track of your weight so you will gain enough to support your growing baby, but not too much. The recommended amount of weight you should gain is shown below. This varies depending on your weight and body mass index (BMI) before you were pregnant. The BMI helps to find out if your weight is right for your height. (To find your BMI, go to [kp.org/calculators](http://kp.org/calculators).)

Women who gain too much weight during pregnancy are at increased risk of having a premature baby or a larger than average baby. Babies who are larger than average at birth are at higher risk for some health problems, including being overweight. Women who gain too much weight may also have health problems such as diabetes and high blood pressure, which can cause complications.

Pre-Pregnancy BMI	BMI	Total Weight Gain (Pounds)	Pounds to Gain per Week in the Second and Third Trimester
Underweight	less than 18.5	28 to 40	1 to 1.3
Normal weight	18.5 to 24.9	25 to 35	1
Overweight	25 to 29.9	15 to 25	0.6
Obese	30 or higher	11 to 20	0.5

## What to Do If You Are Gaining Too Much Weight

- Cut down on fats like butter, margarine, oil, gravy, salad dressing, mayonnaise, sour cream, and sauces.
- Choose lean meats, chicken or turkey (without the skin), beans or lentils, and fish.
- Drink nonfat or 1 percent milk. Eat nonfat or low-fat yogurt and low-fat cheeses.
- Choose grilled, steamed, or baked foods instead of fried.
- Replace soda and juice with water.
- Snack on fresh fruit, raw vegetables, or popcorn (without butter) instead of chips and candy.
- For dessert try fresh fruit, low-fat yogurt, or fruit ices instead of ice cream, cakes, or pastries.
- Walk every day unless your physician or other health care professional tells you to limit activity.





## Help Your Baby Grow

Eating enough healthy foods throughout the day will give your baby the important nutrients needed to grow.

- Follow the Daily Food Guide and check off what you eat every day.
- Eat the recommended amounts of healthy foods each day. Don't skip meals. Your baby needs regular meals at regular times to grow properly.
- Check with your physician or other health care professional if you have any questions or worries about the amount of weight you're gaining.

## Take Care of Yourself

- Eat well-balanced meals with a variety of foods.
- Avoid fast foods high in fat and calories. Choose broiled chicken and salad instead of hamburgers and fries.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand to eat during the day.
- Read labels so you know what you're eating.
- Drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of fluid every day, including water, milk, and soup.
- Omit coffee, tea, and other caffeinated drinks (like colas) or limit to one 8-ounce cup of regular coffee or tea.
- Rest every couple of hours during the day. In late pregnancy, put your feet up or lie on your side if you can find a quiet space to rest.
- Let go of the “superwoman syndrome” at home and at work. Ask your partner and other family members to help take care of housekeeping and cooking.



## Exercise

Exercising during pregnancy is a good way to prepare for childbirth, control weight gain, and relieve stress. Make sure to talk to your physician before starting an exercise program. If you were exercising before pregnancy, you can usually continue during your pregnancy. Aim for 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week.

## Foods to Avoid During Pregnancy

You should try to avoid certain foods during pregnancy. These foods might harm you and your growing baby because of the types of bacteria that can grow in them or because they contain toxins such as mercury.

- No amount of alcohol or smoking is safe during pregnancy.
- Avoid or limit caffeine to less than 200 mg of caffeine a day (the amount in one 8-ounce cup of coffee).
- Don't eat raw or undercooked meat, chicken, fish, or eggs. Cook raw foods thoroughly and cook ready-to-eat meats, such as hot dogs or deli meats (ham, bologna, salami, and corned beef), until they are steaming hot. Wash your hands, knives, cutting boards, or cooking surfaces with warm soapy water after handling raw or undercooked meat.
- Don't eat refrigerated pâté, meat spreads, or smoked seafood (salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna, and mackerel). Canned or shelf-stable pâtés, meat spreads, and smoked seafood are OK to eat (except tuna).

- Don't eat raw eggs or foods that contain raw or lightly cooked eggs, such as soft-scrambled eggs, Caesar salad dressing, homemade mayonnaise, or hollandaise sauce (shelf-stable, bottled Caesar dressing and mayonnaise are OK to eat).
- Make sure all dairy products you eat or drink are pasteurized (check the labels), including milk and cheese. Don't eat soft, unpasteurized cheeses such as feta, Brie, blue cheese, or queso fresco. Hard cheeses, processed cheeses, cream cheese, and cottage cheeses are safe.
- Don't drink raw (unpasteurized) milk or foods that contain unpasteurized milk.
- Don't eat raw sprouts, especially alfalfa.
- Avoid unripe or green papaya and papaya supplements. These may cause uterine contractions.
- Avoid all sugar substitutes, such as saccharin (Sweet'N Low), Splenda (sucralose), and NutraSweet (aspartame).
- Limit how much liver you eat because it has high amounts of vitamin A. Too much vitamin A can cause birth defects. Fruits and vegetables that have vitamin A are safe and healthy to eat. If you're taking prenatal vitamins or other vitamins, check with your physician about how much vitamin A they have.

Talk to your physician or other health care professional if you have any questions about which foods to avoid.

## Omega-3 Fatty Acids—DHA

One type of omega-3 fatty acid called DHA has been shown to help your baby's brain and eyes develop in the womb. Aim for 200 milligrams of DHA a day. It can be found in fish (such as farmed trout and wild salmon). Some foods have DHA added to them, such as some brands of eggs and soy milk. Ask your physician before you take any supplements with DHA.



## Fish and Mercury

Fish is a good source of protein and omega-3 fatty acids. Some fish does have mercury, which can harm your growing baby’s brain. Use this list to help you choose safer fish and seafood while you are pregnant.

Lowest in Mercury	Eat No More Than One Serving (3 ounces) per Month	Avoid While Pregnant
Anchovies	Blue mussels	All forms of tuna (ahi, steaks, canned)
Blue crab	Channel catfish (wild)*	Gulf Coast oysters
Croaker	Cod (U.S.)	Halibut
Flounder	Eastern oysters	King mackerel
Haddock	Great Lakes salmon	Largemouth bass
Trout (farmed)	Gulf Coast blue crab	Marlin
Salmon (wild Alaskan), fresh or canned	Lake whitefish	Shark
Shrimp	Mahi mahi	Swordfish
Sardines		Tilefish
Pollock		Sea bass
		Walleye
		White croaker

\*Farmed catfish have low mercury levels but may contain other chemicals in amounts of concern for pregnant women.

For more information about fish, go to [nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/guide.asp](https://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/mercury/guide.asp).





**Adapted with permission from copyrighted material of  
The Permanente Medical Group, Inc., Northern California.**

©1997, 2010 Kaiser Permanente. All rights reserved.  
SCPMG Regional Health Education  
MH0504 (8/15)  
**kp.org**