

Nutrition during pregnancy



As early as during pregnancy, it is possible to adapt the eating habits of the whole family to help create a nutrition environment for the child that supports their health and growth. In order to promote the development of the foetus and the well-being of the mother, it is important to adopt a varied and adequate diet during pregnancy.

A regular cadence of meals:

- supports a steady supply of nutrients needed by the mother as well as the developing foetus
- helps maintain a healthy level of alertness and blood sugar
- will often prevent nausea
- can prevent digestive problems, such as heartburn and constipation
- supports reaching and maintaining a desired weight.

For most people, a cadence of eating every 3-4 hours, i.e. 4-6 times a day, is the best fit.

Include a portion of at least one vegetable, fruit, or berry at every meal or snack. It is recommended to eat at least 500 to 800 grams of these in total per day.

Choose low-salt foods and use less salt in cooking. **Use iodised mineral salt** when possible.

With cereal products, try to select whole-grain options, which are rich in fibre, vitamins, and minerals. A high-fibre product contains at least 6 g of fibre per 100 g.

As protein sources, **favour fish, poultry, vegetable protein products, and pulses.**

The maximum total recommended intake of red meat and meat products is 350 g per week.

With dairy products, choose fat-free or low-fat options or plant-based alternatives to reduce your intake of saturated (“hard”) fats.

Check the fats you use, preferring soft fats through:

- choosing a vegetable spread with a minimum fat content of 60 % for sandwiches and using vegetable oils or bottled margarine in cooking
- eating nuts in different varieties, as well as almonds, about 2 tablespoons (30 g) a day
- using oil-based salad dressing
- eating oily fish 2 times a week.

In choosing a product labelled with the Heart Symbol you know it is the better choice in its category.



Food supplements

Vitamin D

Take 10 µg/day regardless of the season. If you dress covered or have dark skin, the recommended dosage is 20 µg/day throughout the year. A D3 vitamin preparation is recommended.

Calcium

You will receive enough calcium if you consume 3.5 to 5 dl of liquid dairy products or calcium-fortified plant-based products daily, and your diet also includes other sources of calcium, such as legumes, tofu, fish, dark green vegetables, cabbages or kale, and other calcium-fortified foods. The calcium received from cheese can be estimated such that 1-2 slices of cheese are the approximate equal of 1 dl of milk.

Use a calcium supplement of 500 mg/day if your intake of dairy products or fortified plant-based products is otherwise low. Take 1000 mg/day if you do not use dairy or fortified plant-based products at all.

Iodine

The main sources of iodine in your diet are dairy products, fish, eggs, and iodised table salt. If you consume only a small amount of iodine-containing food in your diet, take a 150-200 µg/day iodine supplement or an iodine-containing prenatal multivitamin.

Folic acid

Take 400 µg/day until the 12th week of pregnancy.

Any other dietary supplements are to be only used on the recommendation of a healthcare professional. Vitamin A supplements are not recommended for use during pregnancy.

Weight gain during pregnancy

The mother's weight increases during pregnancy due to the increasing size of the foetus and the placenta as well as increases in the volume of amniotic fluid and overall blood volume. The recommended weight gain during pregnancy

depends on the mother's body weight in proportion to her height at the start of pregnancy.

The weight gain is monitored regularly at the maternity clinic. Discuss any weight-related questions and concerns with your nurse.

Food restrictions during pregnancy

Please avoid

- alcohol
- liquorice and salty liquorice (salmiak) sweets
- ginger preparations (ginger concentrate or extract), ginger tea, and ginger supplements
- herbal drinks and infusions
- oilseeds (e.g. flax, pine, chia, hemp, sesame, pumpkin, poppy, and sunflower seeds) in large quantities
- false morel (*gyromitra esculenta*) mushrooms
- seaweed products, if their iodine content is unknown or if the product has a high iodine content.

Restrictions on the consumption of fish

- There are no restrictions on the amount of freshwater roach or farmed fish that you can eat.
- Fish, including wild salmon, trout, lamprey, or large specimens of Baltic herring (more than 19 cm in length before being gutted), caught in the Baltic Sea can be consumed once every two months.
- Fish caught in fresh water, including pikeperch, bream, whitefish, perch, pike, or vendace, can be consumed in amounts of up to two portions a week, alternating between species.

- You can eat pikeperch, bream, whitefish, perch, pike, or vendace caught in the Baltic Sea 3-4 times a month, alternating between species.

Caffeine-related restrictions

- The safe intake limit for caffeine is 200 mg per day, taking into account all sources of caffeine. This is equivalent to about 3 dl of coffee, 1 dl of espresso, or 8 dl of black tea. Cola drinks typically contain 12 mg of caffeine per 1 dl.
- Caffeine is also naturally present, to some extent, in chocolate and may have been added to food bars, chewing gum, and mints.
- Consuming energy drinks is not recommended.

Restrictions on eating liver-based foods

- Avoid liver as a main course (e.g. liver casserole, liver patties) throughout pregnancy.
- You may eat up to 200 g of liver sausage and pâté per week, up to 100 g of which at a single meal. If liver sausage or pâté is consumed daily, no more than 2 slices (30 g) per day should be had.



Safe use of foodstuffs
www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/instructions-for-consumers/safe-use-of-foodstuffs/

Issues to consider in food hygiene

Use the following only after heating (internal temperature $\geq 70^{\circ}\text{C}$):

- raw fish
- salted or cold-smoked fish (either pre-packaged or unpackaged and prepared by the consumer)
- vacuum-packed herring products
- uncooked crustaceans
- unpasteurised roe
- foodstuffs containing any the above products, including sushi.



Avoid raw milk, unpasteurised milk, as well as cheeses and other products made from such dairy.

Avoid using blue cheeses and washed-rind cheeses (e.g. Brie, Gorgonzola, chèvre, Vacherol, and Taleggio) unheated, even if they were originally made using pasteurised milk. Heating to a temperature of at least 70 degrees Celsius throughout will destroy listeria germs.

Heat any sausages, wieners, cold cuts, and ready meals before eating, or eat them well before their expiry date.

Avoid any and all meat products that have not been heated at any stage. Whole meat (steaks, roasts) should also be heated until cooked through. Alternatively, you can freeze the products at -18°C for at least 3 days before use to destroy toxoplasma parasites.

Preheat all frozen vegetables before use. Do not consume uncooked beetroot.

Before consumption, heat non-Finnish frozen berries to 90 degrees for 5 minutes or boil them for 2 minutes.

The necessary conditions (heat and humidity) for germinating seeds favour microbial growth. Eating raw sprouts therefore carries a certain risk of disease. Bacteria will be destroyed if the sprouts are heated during cooking.

Remember to wash your hands before either handling food or eating. Maintain good hygiene in the course of food preparation and storage.

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