



## PREGNANCY DIET

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

#### What is a healthy diet during pregnancy?

- A healthy diet during pregnancy contains a variety of foods that provide the amount of calories and nutrients you need. During pregnancy, your body needs extra calories and nutrients to support your growing baby. Some extra nutrients you need include protein and certain vitamins and minerals. Following a healthy diet can help you to gain the right amount of weight during your pregnancy. It can also decrease your baby's risk of birth defects, low birth weight, and certain health problems. The amount of weight you should gain may depend on your weight before pregnancy, and if you are carrying more than one baby. Your caregiver will tell you how much weight you should gain.
- The amount of calories you need depends on your daily activity, your weight before pregnancy, and current weight gain. Your calorie needs also depend on the stage of pregnancy you are in. Caregivers divide pregnancy into three blocks of time called trimesters. In the first trimester, you usually do not need extra calories. In the second and third trimesters, most women should eat about 300 extra calories each day.

#### What should I avoid eating and drinking while I am pregnant?

- **Alcohol:** You should not drink beer, wine, liquor (such as whiskey or gin), or any other mixed drinks. Drinking alcohol can increase your risk of having a miscarriage (losing your baby). Your baby may also have health problems such as being born too small and having learning problems.
- **Caffeine:** It is not clear how caffeine affects pregnancy. Limit your intake of caffeine to avoid possible health problems. Caffeine may be found in coffee, tea, cola, sports drinks, and chocolate.
- **Foods that contain mercury:** Mercury is naturally found almost all types of fish and shellfish, and is not harmful to most people. However, some types of fish absorb higher levels of mercury that can be harmful to an unborn baby and young children. During pregnancy it is important to carefully select the kind of fish that you eat. You should avoid certain types of fish, and eat fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury.

- Do **not** eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish.
  - You may eat up to 12 ounces of fish or shellfish that have low levels of mercury each week. These include shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish. Because albacore tuna has more mercury than canned tuna, eat only 6 ounces of albacore (white) tuna per week.
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- **Foods that cause food-borne illness:**
    - **Raw and undercooked foods:** You should avoid eating undercooked or raw meat, poultry, eggs, fish, or shellfish (shrimp, crab, lobster). You should also avoid eating cooked foods that have been near raw foods. Cook leftover foods and ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs until steaming hot.
    - **Unpasteurized food:** Unpasteurized foods are foods that have not gone through the heating process (pasteurization) that destroys bacteria. You should not drink unpasteurized milk or juice. Cheese made from unpasteurized milk can also be harmful. This includes Brie, feta, Camembert and blue, or Mexican cheeses. These cheeses contain bacteria that can harm your growing baby.