




# Healthy Eating for a Healthy Baby



Accelerating Knowledge. Advancing Practice.



Nutrition Connections is a centre for nutrition services and resources, education, training, knowledge and collaboration. We help health professionals, businesses, government and community organizations, educators, researchers, and others working in food and nutrition meet organizational needs, learn, connect and share information.

Nutrition Connections is housed within OPHA, a registered charity. The proceeds from our paid services go towards work that promotes public education on nutrition and healthy eating.

## Table of Contents



<b>Congratulations! You are having a baby</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Canada's Food Guide and pregnancy</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Baby building nutrients</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Foods and beverages to limit or avoid</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Food safety</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Changes in pregnancy</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Sample menu</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Recipes</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Recommended websites for more information</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>27</b>

# Congratulations! You are having a baby.

There are many benefits of eating well in pregnancy. It helps:



**Your baby to grow and be healthy**



**You to feel well and have more energy**



**Lower your chances of having low iron or high blood pressure**



**Build healthy habits that will benefit you and your family for life**

This resource will answer many of the questions you may have about eating well in pregnancy. If you need extra help:

- Talk to your health care provider
- Talk to a registered dietitian at Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007)
- Visit [UnlockFood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca) (Dietitians of Canada) for articles, tips and recipes or to find a dietitian in your area
- Call your [local public health unit](#) by visiting Ontario.ca (search: public health unit locations)
- Contact your local [community health centre](#) by visiting Ontario.ca (search: community health centre)



# Canada's Food Guide and Pregnancy

Canada's Food Guide has advice for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Visit [Canada.ca/foodguide](https://Canada.ca/foodguide) and go to resources > tips > life stages > healthy eating when pregnant and breastfeeding.



## Eat a variety of healthy foods each day (vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods)

Try making half your plate vegetables and fruits at meals and snacks.

Choose foods that have little to no added:

- Sodium
- Sugars
- Saturated fat

If you choose to follow a vegetarian or plant-based diet while you are pregnant, you will need to plan well to get enough protein, vitamin B12, calcium, vitamin D, zinc, and iron. Consider working with a registered dietitian to make sure you are getting the nutrients you need.



## Eat a little more food each day than you would normally (before becoming pregnant), during your second and third trimesters

During your second and third trimesters, you need more calories each day for your baby's growth. Just a little more food each day, such as an extra healthy snack or small meal, is enough. While you are breastfeeding, you will want to continue to eat this way to help you feel your best.

Your hunger and fullness cues should guide the amount of food that you eat. To learn more about hunger and fullness cues, visit [Canada's Food Guide](https://Canada.ca/foodguide) (search: hunger cues).

## Choose healthy snacks

Try:

- Green leafy salad with orange sections, almonds and an oil-based dressing
- Lower fat (2% M.F. or less) unsweetened yogurt topped with frozen berries and walnuts
- Fruit smoothie made with unsweetened milk of choice, unsweetened lower fat yogurt and frozen fruit
- Lower fat cheese and whole grain crackers with sliced cherry tomatoes
- Sliced vegetables (e.g. cucumber, red pepper, carrot, celery) with hummus or baba ganoush (eggplant dip)
- Whole grain bread, tortilla, bannock or naan topped with mashed avocado, or peanut butter and banana slices



---

## Make healthy drink choices

It is important to drink plenty of water while you're pregnant. Water can:

- Keep you cool
- Help control swelling
- Help prevent constipation
- Carry away waste products from you and your baby
- Carry nutrients through your body and to your growing baby

Water is a great choice. Make water the easy choice by carrying a reusable water bottle.

Unsweetened cow's milk and unsweetened fortified soy beverage are also healthy drink options.

Plant-based beverages are made from legumes, nuts, seeds, grains, or potatoes. Some examples include: almond, kamut, quinoa, oat, rice, flax, coconut, soy, hemp, potato and teff. Except for soy, most of these beverages are generally lower in protein, fat, and calories than cow's milk. They may also be lower in iron, calcium and vitamin D.

If you will be drinking a plant-based beverage as your main milk source, be sure to get extra protein from foods such as meats, poultry, fish, legumes, eggs, tofu and nuts. Talk with a registered dietitian (e.g. Telehealth Ontario) for more information about plant-based options.

## Be mindful

Being mindful of your eating habits can help you make healthier food choices during your pregnancy. Be mindful by:

- Taking time to eat
- Planning your meals and snacks
- Removing distractions during meals
- Including culture, food traditions and taste preferences

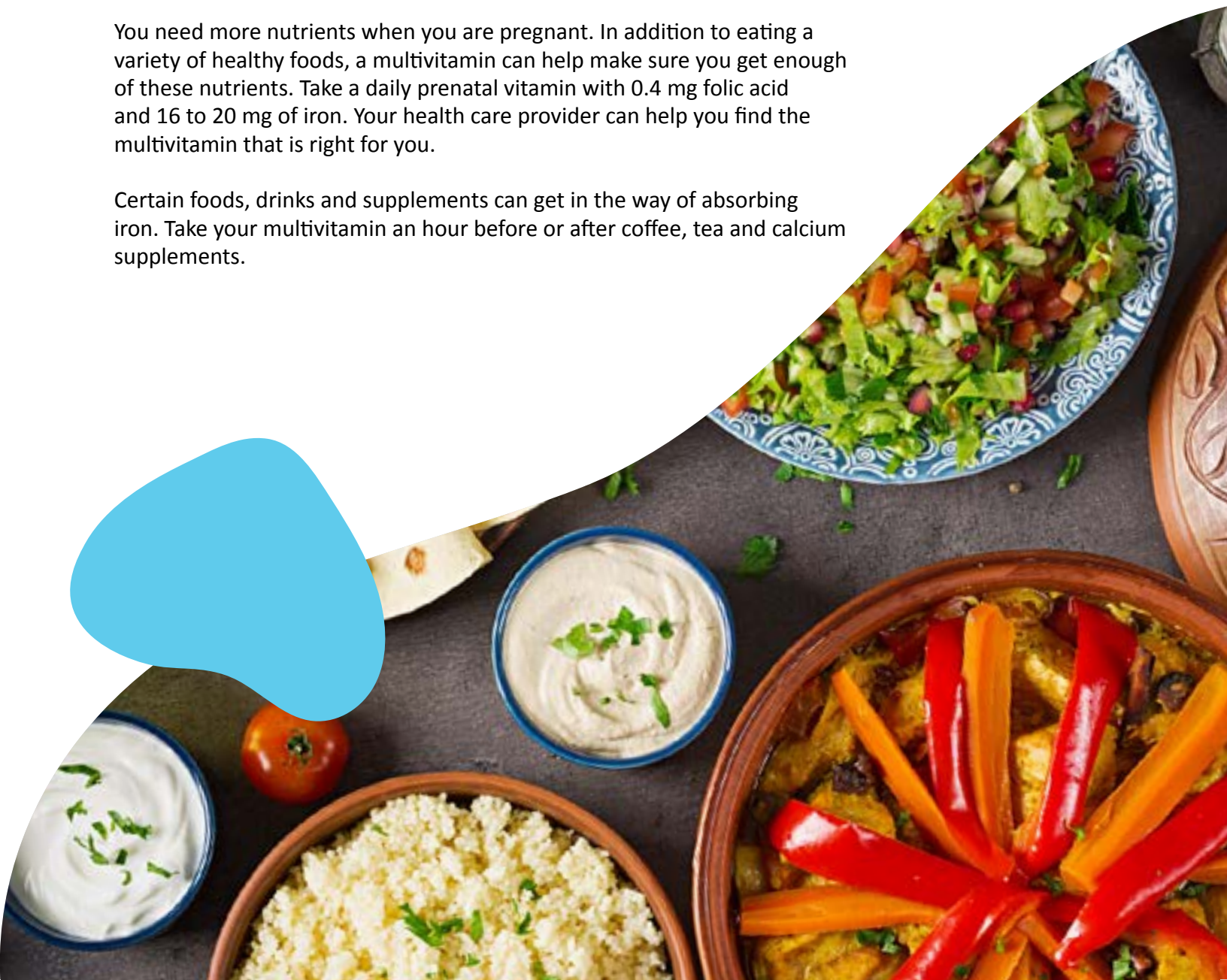
Cravings are common in pregnancy. Eating foods that you crave is not a problem, as long as you are able to eat a variety of nutritious foods from Canada's Food Guide. Sometimes pregnant women crave and eat things that are not food. Talk to your health care provider if this happens to you.

---

## Take a daily multivitamin

You need more nutrients when you are pregnant. In addition to eating a variety of healthy foods, a multivitamin can help make sure you get enough of these nutrients. Take a daily prenatal vitamin with 0.4 mg folic acid and 16 to 20 mg of iron. Your health care provider can help you find the multivitamin that is right for you.

Certain foods, drinks and supplements can get in the way of absorbing iron. Take your multivitamin an hour before or after coffee, tea and calcium supplements.



# Baby Building Nutrients

Your growing baby needs key nutrients to build a healthy body and brain. It is important for you to eat foods with these key baby building nutrients:



## Folate

Vegetables, fruits, beans, peas, lentils, enriched grains



## Carbohydrates and Fibre

Whole grain foods, vegetables, fruits



## Calcium

Milk, yogurt, fortified soy beverage, cheese, tofu



## Vitamin D

Milk, fortified yogurt, fortified soy beverage



## Omega-3 Fats

Certain fish, oils, nuts, seeds



## Iron and Protein

Meats, beans, peas, lentils, tofu



## Vitamin C

Vegetables, fruits



## Folate (Folic Acid)

Folic acid is a B vitamin that helps your baby's spine, brain and skull develop. Along with eating folate rich foods, extra folic acid is very important before you become pregnant and during the first few weeks of pregnancy. Getting enough of this nutrient can help lower the risk of birth defects that affect the brain and spinal cord, called neural tube defects.

To get enough folic acid throughout your pregnancy, you will need to eat folate rich foods and take a daily multivitamin with at least 0.4 mg of folic acid. Some women may need more folic acid. Talk to your health care provider about the amount of folic acid you should take.

Here are some ideas to get folate from the foods you eat:

- Choose dark leafy greens like collards, kale, romaine lettuce or spinach for your salads. Sprinkle salads with sunflower seeds.
- Top cereal with your favourite berries
- Eat these vegetables more often: asparagus, broccoli, green peas, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, sweet potatoes
- Have dried (requires cooking) and canned (ready-to-eat) beans and lentils more often. Try chili, bean curries, dals, hummus and lentil soups.
- Choose fruits like oranges, grapefruit, cantaloupe or avocado more often
- Have enriched grain products like pasta, cereals, and bread

For more information visit [Canada.ca](https://Canada.ca) (search: folic acid and neural tube defects)

---

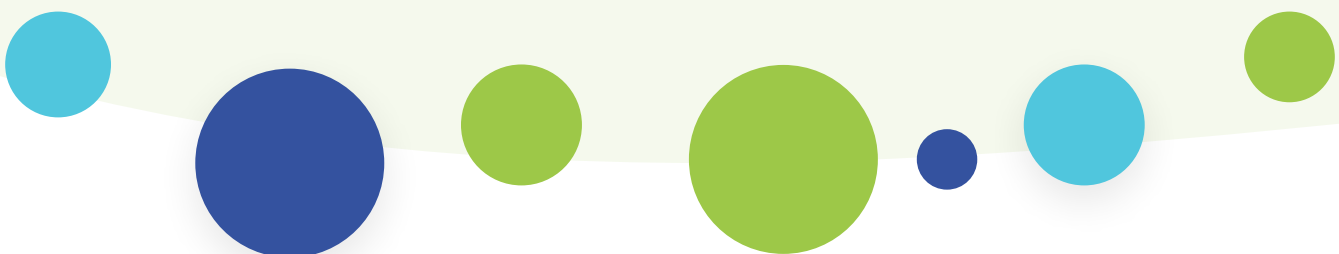
## Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D help build strong bones and teeth for your baby. They also help the heart, nerves and muscles grow.

Here are some excellent sources of calcium:

- Cow's milk, yogurt, cheese, kefir
- Fortified plant-based beverages (e.g. soy, rice, almond)
- Tofu, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Fish (e.g. sardines or salmon, canned with bones)





There are only a few food sources of vitamin D:

- Cow's milk, fortified soy beverage
- Fatty fish like salmon and sardines
- Egg yolks
- Fortified yogurts (check the label)
- Margarine

Here are some ideas to help you get enough calcium and vitamin D:

- Have unsweetened cow's milk or fortified unsweetened soy beverage everyday
- Make a stir-fry with bok choy, kale, broccoli and calcium-set tofu
- Snack on sardines or salmon (canned with bones) on whole grain crackers
- Grate some cheese into your soup or salad
- Look for yogurt with vitamin D added

Ask your health care provider if you should take extra calcium, vitamin D or both. For more information visit [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca) (search: [calcium](#) and search: [vitamin D](#)).

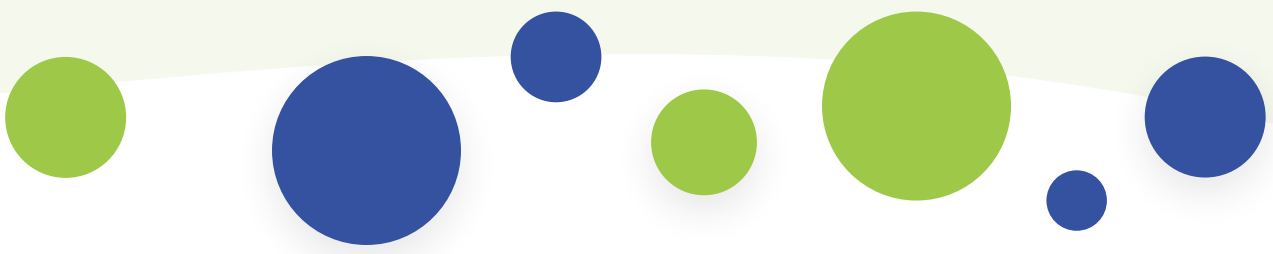
---

## Omega-3 Fats

Omega-3 fats are important for your baby's brain, nerves and eyes. They are found in fish, seafood, oils, nuts, seeds and soy. Some eggs and yogurts have omega-3 fats added and some varieties of cow's milk are produced to have omega-3 fats.

Here are some ideas to help you get enough omega-3 fats:

- Eat at least 150 grams (5 oz) of low-mercury fish each week. Choose fatty fish more often, such as salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, herring and char. See page 15 to learn more about mercury in fish.
- Have canned fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines on a sandwich, in a salad or on whole grain crackers
- Enjoy a small handful of walnuts for a snack. Add them to salads or cereals.
- Cook with canola or olive oil, or use it in salad dressings

- 
- Use a soft margarine made from canola or soybean oil on bread or in baking
  - Add ground flax seeds to salads, oatmeal or plain lower fat yogurt. Limit flax seeds to 60 - 90 ml (4 - 6 Tbsp) per day. There is some concern that large amounts of flax seeds can affect hormone levels in pregnancy.

Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about taking fish oil supplements when you are pregnant.

For more information visit [UnlockFood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca) (search: eating for a healthy pregnancy).

---

## Iron

Iron helps build new red blood cells and helps them carry oxygen. The amount of blood you have increases while you are pregnant to meet the needs of you and your baby. Getting enough iron helps your baby store the iron they need for when they are born.

To make sure you get enough iron, take a daily multivitamin with 16-20 mg iron and eat iron-rich foods such as:

- Lean meats and poultry
- Beans, peas, lentils
- Tofu
- Fish
- Eggs
- Whole grain foods
- Nuts and seeds

For more information visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search: iron)



## Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps your body use (absorb) the iron in vegetables, grain products, dried (requires cooking) and canned (ready-to-eat) beans and lentils. When your meal doesn't include meat, poultry or fish, include a source of vitamin C to help your body absorb iron from foods.

All vegetables and fruits are a source of vitamin C. Aim to fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits.

Vegetables and fruits that are high in vitamin C include:

- Oranges, grapefruit
- Papaya
- Kiwi
- Strawberries
- Cantaloupe
- Tomatoes and tomato sauce
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Cabbage

Here are some ideas to include vitamin C to help you absorb more iron (from plant sources):

- Enjoy whole grain pasta with meat or tofu and tomato sauce
- Have an orange or grapefruit with your breakfast cereal
- Make chicken fajitas with red and green peppers and mango black bean salsa
- Enjoy legume dishes like chili or bean or lentil curries (with tomatoes) more often

# Foods and Beverages to Limit or Avoid



## Caffeine

In small amounts, caffeine is safe in pregnancy. Aim to keep your caffeine intake below 300 mg a day. That is about two small cups (250 ml each) of coffee or six small cups of black tea per day. Have less coffee and tea if you have other sources of caffeine during the day (such as colas or chocolate).

Wait an hour after meals before having coffee or tea. These drinks make it harder for your body to use (absorb) iron.

For more information on caffeine visit [UnlockFood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca) (search: caffeine).

---

## Alcohol

It is recommended that you avoid alcohol while you are pregnant. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). There is no amount of alcohol that has been shown to be safe. It is best to stop drinking alcohol before you get pregnant.

You should also avoid:

- Non-alcoholic versions of drinks such as beers and wines. Most of these drinks contain at least 0.5% alcohol by volume.
- Alcohol in cooking. Although some alcohol evaporates, it is hard to know how much alcohol remains in your food.

Talk to your health care provider if you drank alcohol before you knew you were pregnant or if you need help to stop drinking.

For more information visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) or [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca) (search: fetal alcohol spectrum disorder).

# Energy Drinks

Energy drinks are not recommended while you are pregnant. They are high in caffeine and contain ingredients that may not be safe for you or your baby.

To learn more about energy drinks, visit [UnlockFood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca) (search: energy drinks).

---

# Herbal Supplements and Teas

Herbal products in tablet, capsule or extract forms are not recommended while you are pregnant. Many herbal products have been found to be unsafe for you or your baby. Others have not been tested enough to show that they are safe while you are pregnant. The following herbs are considered safe when used in small amounts in foods or as herbal teas (two to three cups per day):

- Citrus peel/orange peel
- Ginger
- Lemon balm
- Linden flower (not recommended if you have a heart condition)
- Rose hip

Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about other herbal products. For more information on caffeine and herbal teas visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search: caffeine and pregnancy).



# Artificial Sweeteners and Sugar Substitutes

All sugar substitutes that are approved in Canada are safe to use in moderation while you are pregnant. However, it is important that foods and drinks made with sugar substitutes do not replace more nutritious choices in your diet. If you have questions about using sweeteners, talk to your health care provider.

For more information visit [UnlockFood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca) or [Diabetes.ca](https://www.diabetes.ca) (search: sweeteners).

---

## Fish High in Mercury

Some types of fish can have high levels of mercury which can harm your growing baby. Limit these fish to 150 grams (5 oz) per month.

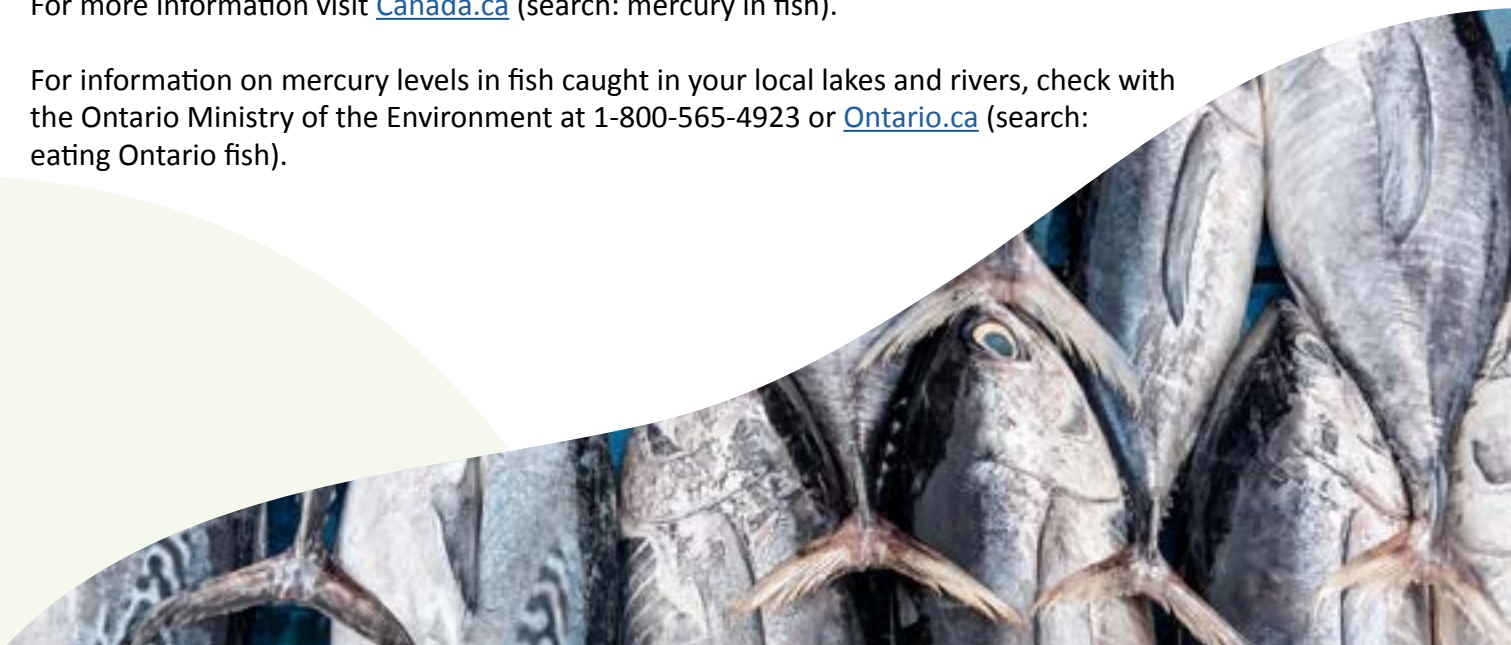
Examples of high mercury fish:

- Fresh or frozen tuna
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Escolar

The fish used in canned tuna products are younger and smaller and have much less mercury than fresh or frozen tuna. There is no need to limit canned (light) tuna. However, canned albacore (white) tuna, may have higher levels of mercury. Pregnant women should limit canned albacore (white) tuna to 300 grams (10 oz) per week.

For more information visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search: mercury in fish).

For information on mercury levels in fish caught in your local lakes and rivers, check with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment at 1-800-565-4923 or [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca) (search: eating Ontario fish).



# Food Safety

Food safety is very important while you are pregnant. Even if you don't feel sick, the germs that cause food-borne illness can harm your baby.

To reduce the risk of food poisoning, practice safe food handling:

## Clean

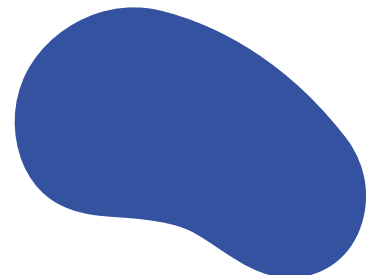
- Clean your hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds:
  - Before handling food
  - After handling raw meat, poultry and seafood
  - After using the washroom
  - After touching your hair or face
  - After touching pets
- Learn more about hand washing at [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search hand washing and staying healthy).
- Clean and sanitize surfaces that have been in contact with food, especially raw foods
- Use paper towels to wipe kitchen surfaces, or change dishcloths daily
- Wash raw vegetables and fruit under cool running water, even if you will be removing the peel
- Use a clean produce brush to scrub foods that have firm, rough surfaces like melons or potatoes
- Use one cutting board for produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood
- Keep raw meat, fish, shellfish and poultry away from cooked and ready-to-eat foods
- Clean reusable grocery bags and bins often

## Cook foods to a safe internal temperature

- Fully cook all meats, poultry, fish and seafood. Use a digital thermometer to check the internal temperature.
- Learn about safe cooking temperatures at [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search: safe cooking temperatures)

## Keep hot food hot and cold food cold

- Keep hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or above
- Keep cold foods at 4°C (40°F) or below
- Refrigerate or freeze prepared foods and leftovers within two hours
- Keep leftovers in the refrigerator for no more than four days. When serving leftovers, reheat the food to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F).





## Defrost food safely

- Defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave. Never defrost food at room temperature.

## Foods to avoid while you are pregnant

Certain foods raise your risk of food-borne illness. Do not eat these foods when you are pregnant:

- Raw fish and sushi made with raw fish
- Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, seafood and eggs
- Refrigerated pates, meat spreads and smoked fish products
- Ready-to-eat deli meats and ready-prepared meals unless they are reheated until steaming hot (internal temperature of 74°C or 165°F)
- Raw or unpasteurized dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese)
- Pasteurized and unpasteurized soft and semi-soft cheeses (e.g. brie, camembert, feta, goat cheese), blue-veined cheeses (e.g. Danish blue, Roquefort, Gorgonzola) and Hispanic-style fresh cheeses (e.g. queso blanco) unless they are cooked until steaming hot (internal temperature of 74°C or 165°F)
- Unpasteurized fruit juices or ciders
- Raw sprouts (e.g. alfalfa, clover, radish, mung bean) unless they are cooked until steaming hot (to a temperature of 74°C or 165°F)

Women who are pregnant should also limit their consumption of liver. Eat no more than 75 grams (2 ½ oz) of liver once every two weeks. Liver is very high in vitamin A, and too much vitamin A can be harmful to your growing baby.

Visit [UnlockFood.ca](https://www.unlockfood.ca) or [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search: food safety for pregnant women) to learn more. Contact your health care provider if you think you have a food-borne illness.



# Changes in Pregnancy

Your body goes through many changes in pregnancy. You might be expecting some of these changes, while others might come as a surprise.

## Pregnancy weight gain

The weight you gain in your pregnancy:

- Helps your baby grow
- Helps you stay healthy
- Gets your body ready for breastfeeding

## How much weight should I gain?

It is important to gain a certain amount of weight for you and your growing baby. This amount depends on your weight before becoming pregnant and other factors (e.g. teen pregnancy, pregnant with more than one baby, etc.).

For most women, it is recommended to gain 11.5 to 16 kilograms (25 to 35 pounds) in pregnancy. You may be surprised that only two to three and a half kg (five to eight pounds) of this weight gain is fat. Your body stores fat to give you the extra energy you will need for pregnancy and breastfeeding. The rest of the weight gain is for the baby, the placenta, blood and fluids.

### Sample Pregnancy Weight Gain

Breasts	1 to 1.5 kg (2 to 3 pounds)
Blood	2 kg (4 pounds)
Uterus	1 to 1.5 kg (2 to 3 pounds)
Baby	2.5 to 3.5 kg (6 to 8 pounds)
Placenta and amniotic fluid	2.5 to 2.5 kg (4 to 5 pounds)
Extra Fluids	1 to 1.5 kg (2 to 3 pounds)
Energy stored as fat	2 to 3.5 kg (5 to 8 pounds)



Talk to your health care provider about weight gain that is right for you.

## How will this weight gain happen?

Weight gain is minimal during the first three months. Most women expect to gain one to two kilograms (about two to four pounds) in their first trimester.

Most weight gain will happen in the second and third trimesters.

Talk to your health care provider if you are gaining a lot more or a lot less than half a kilogram (one pound) a week. Learn more at [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) (search: pregnancy weight gain calculator).

## Gestational diabetes

Some women develop diabetes when they are pregnant. Diabetes means blood sugar levels are too high. High blood sugar can harm you and your baby. All women are tested for diabetes at around 28 weeks of pregnancy.

You are more likely to get gestational diabetes if you:

- Are 35 years of age or older
- Have obesity
- Had pre-diabetes or gestational diabetes in a previous pregnancy
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Are of Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic or African descent
- Had a baby over 4.5 kg (9 lbs)

If you develop gestational diabetes, ask your health care provider to refer you to a registered dietitian or Diabetes Education Centre. They can help you make changes to your eating to help lower your blood sugar levels. Gestational diabetes often goes away after you have your baby. However, you should be tested for diabetes after your baby is born (1 ½ - 6 months). Having gestational diabetes increases your risk of developing diabetes later in life.

For more information visit [Diabetes.ca](https://www.diabetes.ca) (search: gestational diabetes).



## Nausea and vomiting

This is most common during the first trimester. Here are some ideas that might help:

- Get out of bed slowly in the morning
- Try eating crackers, bread (toast) or dry cereal before getting out of bed in the morning
- Eat five to six small meals each day rather than three large meals. Try not to skip meals. You will feel worse if your stomach is empty.
- Try eating your foods cold
- Crunchy foods might be better tolerated (e.g. crackers, celery, dry toast, dry cereal)
- Drink fluids before or after meals, not with meals
- Stay away from coffee, fatty foods and foods with strong smells or tastes
- Have a small snack with a source of protein before bedtime such as whole grain toast with nut butter and banana
- Have someone cook for you, if possible. This helps you avoid some of the cooking smells that might make you feel nauseous.
- Try to get enough rest
- Try to keep stress levels down

Talk to your health care provider if you cannot stop vomiting, or if you feel too sick to eat many of your meals and snacks.

## Heartburn

In the second half of pregnancy, many women get heartburn. Heartburn happens because of hormone changes and the pressure of the baby against your stomach. This can cause stomach acid to move up to your throat, causing a burning feeling.

Try these ideas to help you feel better:

- Eat five to six small meals each day rather than three large meals
- After eating, wait at least one to two hours before laying down
- When you lie down, raise the head of your bed by placing a thick book (or wood) between the bed and the floor or add a pillow under your mattress
- Drink fluids before or after meals, not with meals
- Choose lower fat foods. Limit fried foods.
- Eat foods that are less spicy
- Stay away from coffee, colas, alcohol and smoking
- Avoid chewing gum for long periods
- Know your food triggers (spicy, vinegary, acidic, etc.) and avoid them when possible

Talk to your health care provider before you take antacids or if your heartburn does not go away.

## Constipation

Food passes through your body more slowly when you are pregnant. This helps you absorb the extra nutrients you and your baby need. It can also cause constipation which could mean you:

- Have bowel movements less often than you normally do
- Have harder than usual stools that are difficult to pass
- Strain when you have a bowel movement

To prevent constipation eat foods that are high in fibre and drink more fluids. Being physically active is also important.

Try these ideas to help you feel better:




















- Start the day with a whole grain cereal such as oatmeal
- Choose whole grain breads, brown rice and whole wheat pasta
- Add a tablespoon of psyllium fortified cereal (such as some bran cereals) to your cereal or plain, lower fat yogurt. Increase the amount gradually as needed.
- Eat beans, peas and lentils more often
- Have plenty of vegetables and fruit each day (half your plate)
- Drink more fluids, especially water
- Aim for two to three walks a day (10 - 20 minutes each)

Before you take laxatives, talk to your health care provider. Some laxatives are not safe to take when you are pregnant.



# Sample Menu

Here is an example of a one-day menu that has foods and beverages with baby-building nutrients and avoids foods that are not safe in pregnancy. It includes recipes from this booklet.

	Vegetables and fruits	Protein foods	Whole grain foods	Oils and fats
<b>Breakfast</b>				
Smoothie with plain, 2% M.F. yogurt, 2% M.F. milk (unsweetened), banana and frozen strawberries				
Whole grain toast with peanut butter				
Water				
<b>Snack</b>				
Homemade bran muffin with non-hydrogenated margarine				
Clementine, Water				
<b>Lunch</b>				
Spinach and lentil soup				
Whole grain crackers				
Pear				
2% M.F. milk (unsweetened)				
<b>Snack</b>				
Salmon salad on whole grain pita				
Cherry or grape tomatoes				
Water				
<b>Dinner</b>				
Fast and easy chicken cacciatore				
Brown rice				
Green leafy salad with oil and vinegar dressing				
Water				
<b>Snack</b>				
Mixed berries				
Plain 2% M.F. cottage cheese				
Water				

# Recipes

## Fruit and yogurt smoothie

½ cup (125 mL) fresh or frozen berries  
 ½ ripe banana  
 ½ cup (125 mL) plain, 2% M.F. yogurt  
 ½ cup (125 mL) unsweetened cow's milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage

1. Put all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth
2. Pour into a glass

Makes one serving

This recipe is a good source of calcium, vitamin D and protein.

## Spinach and lentil soup

1 tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil  
 1 onion, finely chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
 2 stalks celery, finely chopped  
 2 tbsp (30 mL) tomato paste  
 6 cups (1 ½ L) water or vegetable stock  
 2 cups (500 mL) cooked red or brown lentils, rinsed (canned or cook your own)  
 1 package (300 gm) frozen spinach, thawed  
 pepper to taste  
 squeeze of lemon to taste (optional)

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add onion, garlic and celery. Cook for about 2 minutes.
2. Add tomato paste and water or stock to sauce pan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat.
3. Add lentils, spinach, pepper and lemon (if using). Cook for about 5 minutes until heated through.

Makes 6 servings

This recipe is a good source of folate, iron, vitamin C and protein.



## Salmon salad pita pockets

1 can (213 gm) salmon, drained  
 2 tbsp (30 mL) light mayonnaise  
 1 tbsp (15 mL) lemon juice  
 ½ cup (125 mL) grated carrot  
 ½ cup (125 mL) diced cucumber  
 1 green onion, chopped  
 lettuce leaves

1. Put all ingredients (except lettuce) in a small bowl and mix well
2. Cut two whole wheat pitas in half. Stuff the pitas with lettuce and salmon mixture.

Makes 4 servings

This recipe is a good source of omega-3 fats and protein.

## Fast and easy chicken cacciatore

1 can (796 mL) diced tomatoes  
 2 cups (500 mL) mushrooms, sliced  
 4 skinless chicken pieces  
 1 bell pepper, diced  
 1 tsp Italian herbs

1. In a large saucepan, combine undrained tomatoes with mushrooms and herbs. Bring to a boil.
2. Add chicken pieces. Cover and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes.
3. Turn the chicken over and add the bell pepper. Continue cooking for 10 minutes.
4. Remove the chicken. Boil sauce, uncovered until thickened. Pour over the chicken.

Makes 4 servings

This recipe is a good source of folate, vitamin C and protein.





## Vegetable cheese quesadillas

1 tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil  
 ½ bell pepper, diced  
 1 cup (250 mL) fresh spinach, chopped  
 1 tomato, diced  
 2 large whole grain tortillas  
 ¾ cup (175 mL) shredded cheddar cheese

1. Heat oil in pan over medium heat. Add peppers, spinach and tomatoes. Cook and stir for a few minutes, until softened. Remove from pan and set aside.
2. Place one tortilla in the pan. Spoon cooked vegetables onto the tortilla. Sprinkle with cheese. Top with the second tortilla.
3. Heat 2 to 3 minutes or until cheese begins to melt. Flip and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Remove from pan and cut into wedges

Makes 4 servings

This recipe is a good source of folate, vitamin C and calcium.

## Mango black bean salsa

1 can (540 mL) black beans, rinsed and drained  
 1 diced mango  
 ½ cup (125 mL) diced red onion  
 ¼ cup (60 mL) lemon juice  
 2 tbsp (30 mL) vegetable oil  
 ¼ cup (50 mL) chopped cilantro (optional)

1. Put all ingredients together in a small bowl and stir gently. Toss with ¼ cup (50 ml) chopped cilantro (if using).
2. Chill for one hour before serving

Makes 4 servings

This recipe is a good source of iron, vitamin C, folate and protein.



# Recommended Websites for More Information



## **Canada.ca**

[Canada's Food Guide](#)

[Canada prenatal nutrition program](#)

[Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder](#)

[Food safety](#)

[Food safety for pregnant women](#)

[Guide to a healthy pregnancy](#)

[Mercury in fish](#)

## **Diabetes.ca**

[Gestational diabetes](#)

[Sugars and sweeteners](#)

## **Ontario.ca**

[Community health centre locator](#)

[Eating Ontario fish](#)

[Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder \(FASD\) programs and services](#)

[Public health unit locator](#)

## **UnlockFood.ca**

[Find a dietitian \(local dietitian locator\)](#)

[Pregnancy articles](#)



## Acknowledgements



Nutrition Connections would like to thank our staff and reviewers for contributing their time and thoughtful insight into the revision of this resource. A special thanks to Best Start by Health Nexus, Marg LaSalle, RN, BScN, IBCLC, BFI Lead Assessor, members of the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH), and Susan Yang, RD, The Four Villages Community Centre/Association of Ontario's Health Centres (AOHC).



Produced by Nutrition Connections with support from The Helderleigh Foundation



Nutrition Connections at the Ontario Public Health Association© February 2021

All rights reserved. This material may not be copied, reproduced, modified, or distributed, in whole or in part, without the prior written permission of Nutrition Connections. For permission to use the content or for additional information, contact us through our [website](#) or email at [info@opha.on.ca](mailto:info@opha.on.ca).