

Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby



A friendly, everyday guide to healthy eating during pregnancy —
based on the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030**.



INSIDE THIS GUIDE

What to eat, what to skip, key
nutrients, trimester-by-trimester tips,
and a weekly checklist.

Prepared for expecting parents.

♥ Eat well. Grow well.

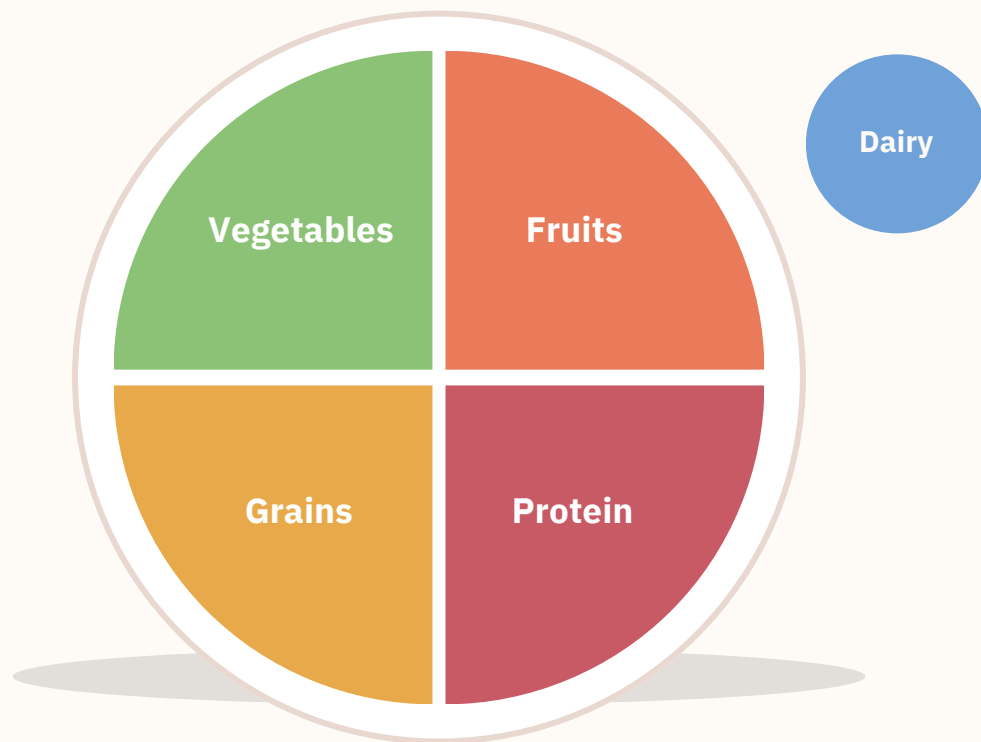
GETTING STARTED

Why what you eat matters now

Pregnancy is an amazing time — and the food you eat helps build your baby, step by step. You don't need a perfect or special diet. What matters most is building a steady pattern of nourishing choices over time. The newest federal guidance ([USDA & HHS, 2025–2030](#)) keeps it simple: **focus on building balanced meals with a variety of nourishing foods.**

Build meals around:

- A variety of **vegetables** and **fruits**
- **Whole grains** most of the time
- A mix of **protein** sources, including plant-based options
- **Dairy** foods such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, or fortified alternatives



Good to know: Most pregnant people need **about 340 extra calories/day in the 2nd trimester** and **about 450 extra calories/day in the 3rd trimester** — that's roughly a yogurt + fruit + a small handful of nuts. You usually don't need extra calories in the 1st trimester. Your clinician can tailor numbers for you.

Build every day from these 5 groups

These amounts reflect a general daily pattern for a **typical 2,200-calorie pregnancy diet**. Your needs may vary. Use this as a guide.



Vegetables

3 CUPS PER DAY • VARY THE COLORS

- **Dark green:** spinach, kale, broccoli
- **Red/orange:** carrots, sweet potato, bell pepper, tomato
- **Beans/peas:** black beans, lentils, chickpeas
- **Other:** cucumber, zucchini, mushrooms



Fruits

2 CUPS PER DAY • MOSTLY WHOLE FRUIT

- Berries, oranges, apples, pears, melon, mango, banana
- Fresh, frozen, or canned (without added sugar)
- Whole fruit provides more fiber than juice



Grains

ABOUT 6-8OZ EQUIVALENTS • AIM FOR MOSTLY WHOLE GRAINS

- Oatmeal, brown rice, whole-wheat bread or pasta
- Quinoa, popcorn, whole-grain tortillas
- Limit refined grains and sugary cereals



Protein Foods

ABOUT 5-7 OZ-EQUIVALENTS PER DAY • VARY YOUR SOURCES

- **Lean meats & poultry** (fully cooked)
- **Heated deli meats** (heated to 165°F, then cooled)
- **Low-mercury seafood** — aim for 8–12 oz/week
- **Eggs** (fully cooked), beans, lentils, tofu, unsalted nuts & seeds



Dairy (or alternatives)

ABOUT 3 SERVINGS PER DAY

- Milk, yogurt, and cheese (pasteurized)
- Fortified plant-based options such as soy milk or yogurt

Choose options that fit your preferences and nutritional needs, and aim for varieties lower in added sugars.



Healthy Fats

INCLUDE REGULARLY

- Olive oil, canola oil, avocado oil
- Nuts, seeds, avocado
- Fatty fish, such as salmon

Keep foods high in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats as a smaller part of your overall pattern.

Key nutrients for a healthy pregnancy

The 2025–2030 guidelines highlight several nutrients that are **especially important during pregnancy** — and often low in typical diets. Aim to get these from food first. A prenatal vitamin helps fill gaps.

NUTRIENT	DAILY GOAL	WHY IT MATTERS	BEST FOOD SOURCES
Folate/Folic Acid	600 mcg	Supports baby’s brain & spine (neural tube) in the earliest weeks.	Leafy greens, beans, lentils, fortified cereals, oranges, prenatal vitamin.
Iron	27 mg	Builds extra blood & carries oxygen to baby. Prevents maternal anemia.	Lean red meat, poultry, seafood, beans, lentils, spinach, fortified cereals. Pair with vitamin C foods to absorb more.
Calcium	1,000 mg	Builds baby’s bones & teeth; keeps yours strong.	Milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified plant milks, tofu set with calcium, canned salmon with bones.
Vitamin D	600 IU (15 mcg)	Helps absorb calcium; supports immune health.	Fortified milk & plant milks, eggs, salmon, sunlight, prenatal vitamin.
Iodine	220 mcg	Essential for baby's brain & thyroid development.	Iodized salt, dairy, eggs, seafood. Check prenatal vitamin contains iodine.
Choline	450 mg	Supports baby's brain & memory development. Often under-consumed.	Eggs (especially yolks), lean beef, chicken, fish, soybeans, potatoes. <i>*Avoid undercooked eggs</i>
DHA (Omega-3)	~200 mg	Supports baby's brain & eye development.	Salmon, sardines, trout, herring; fortified eggs; DHA prenatal supplement. <i>*Cooked fish, low in mercury</i>
Fiber	28 g	Helps with digestion & constipation (common in pregnancy).	Whole grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds.

Prenatal vitamins: Most clinicians recommend a daily prenatal with **at least 400 mcg of folic acid** (ideally starting before conception), **iron**, **iodine**, and often a separate **DHA supplement**. Always check with your healthcare provider before starting or changing supplements.

What to skip — and what's safe to enjoy

Pregnancy changes how your body handles some foods. A few things are worth avoiding to protect you and your baby from infections (like *Listeria*, *Toxoplasma*, or *Salmonella*) and from high mercury.

✗ Please avoid

- ✗ **Alcohol**—no known safe amount during pregnancy
- ✗ **High-mercury fish:** shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish (Gulf of Mexico), bigeye tuna, marlin, orange roughy.
- ✗ **Raw or undercooked** meat, poultry, seafood (sushi with raw fish, rare steak, ceviche).
- ✗ **Raw or runny eggs** (cookie dough, homemade Caesar dressing, hollandaise).
- ✗ **Unpasteurized** milk, juice, or soft cheeses (queso fresco, brie, feta — unless label says pasteurized).
- ✗ **Deli meats & hot dogs** unless heated until steaming hot.
- ✗ **Refrigerated pâtés, smoked seafood, and deli salads.**
- ✗ **Raw sprouts** (alfalfa, clover, mung bean, radish).
- ✗ **Unwashed** fruits & vegetables.

✓ Safe & encouraged

- ✓ **Low-mercury seafood, 8–12 oz/week:** salmon, shrimp, tilapia, cod, catfish, sardines, trout, pollock, canned light tuna.
- ✓ **Fully cooked meats, poultry, and eggs** (ensure no pink remains in meat and that egg yolks are firm; avoid undercooked eggs).
- ✓ **Pasteurized** dairy, juice, and cheese (hard cheeses are generally fine).
- ✓ **Well-washed** fruits & vegetables — scrub firm produce.
- ✓ **Beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, seeds** for plant-based protein.
- ✓ **Heated deli meats** (heated to 165°F, then cooled).
- ✓ **Pasteurized soft cheeses** like cream cheese, cottage cheese, ricotta.

Watch your limits on these

Caffeine: Keep under **200 mg per day** — about one 12–16 oz cup of coffee, depending on strength. Remember tea, soda, chocolate, and energy drinks add up.

Added sugars: Less than **10% of daily calories** (about 12 tsp on a 2,200-cal day). Skip sugary drinks when you can.

Sodium: Aim for **less than 2,300 mg per day**. Watch packaged soups, sauces, frozen meals, and chips.

Herbal teas & supplements: Many aren't well-studied in pregnancy. Check with your clinician first.

Your needs change as baby grows

FIRST TRIMESTER

WEEKS 1–12

Build the foundation

Calories: Usually no extra needed.

Focus on: folate, iron, iodine, hydration.

If queasy: try small, frequent meals; plain crackers, toast, ginger tea, cold foods. Keep something nearby for nighttime and first thing in the morning.

SECOND TRIMESTER

WEEKS 13–27

Grow & thrive

Calories: +340 per day.

Focus on: calcium & vitamin D (baby's bones), choline, DHA (brain), steady iron.

Appetite usually returns — use it to stock up on colorful produce and whole grains.

THIRD TRIMESTER

WEEKS 28–BIRTH

Final stretch

Calories: +450 per day.

Focus on: iron (baby stores it), DHA, protein, fiber + fluids (for comfort).

Small, frequent meals help when there's less room in your stomach. Keep snacks handy.



Stay hydrated — about 10 cups (80 oz) of fluids daily

Water is best. Milk and unsweetened drinks count. More is needed in hot weather or if you're active. If your urine is pale yellow, you're on track.

Simple, balanced ideas



BREAKFAST

Power Oats

Oatmeal with berries, walnuts, a spoon of peanut butter & milk.



LUNCH

Rainbow Bowl

Quinoa, chickpeas, spinach, roasted veg, feta (pasteurized), olive oil.



DINNER

Salmon Plate

Baked salmon, brown rice, broccoli, orange slices.



SNACK

Yogurt & Fruit

Plain Greek yogurt, apple slices, sprinkle of seeds or granola.

YOUR WEEKLY HABITS

A simple check-in for each week

You don't need to hit every box every day. These are gentle goals to aim for **across the week** — print this page or check it off in your head.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Fruits & vegetables at most meals | ☐ Took my prenatal vitamin most days |
| ☐ Whole grains most days (oats, brown rice, whole wheat) | ☐ Drank around 10 cups of fluid daily |
| ☐ Protein with each meal (beans, lean meat, tofu, eggs; <i>avoid undercooked eggs</i>) | ☐ Kept caffeine under 200 mg |
| ☐ 8–12 oz low-mercury seafood | ☐ Skipped alcohol and high-mercury fish |
| ☐ 3 servings of dairy (or fortified alternative) daily | ☐ Heated (165°F, then cooled) deli meats & chose pasteurized dairy |
| ☐ A source of iron paired with vitamin C | ☐ Washed all produce before eating |
| ☐ An egg or choline-rich food a few times this week | ☐ Moved my body most days (if cleared by my clinician) |

You are doing great ♥

Progress, not perfection. Every balanced meal and every glass of water is a gift to you and your baby. Be gentle with yourself — food aversions, nausea, and cravings are normal parts of pregnancy.

When in doubt, call your clinician. Your prenatal team is there to help you with personalized advice, including if you have gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, food allergies, or other conditions.

About this guide: This handout is based on the [*Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*](#) (U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health & Human Services), along with recommendations from the [*American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)*](#), the [*Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*](#), and the [*FDA*](#). It is intended as **general patient education** and does not replace personalized advice from your healthcare provider. Calorie and nutrient targets may vary based on pre-pregnancy weight, activity level, age, and whether you are carrying multiples. Always consult your obstetric clinician, midwife, or registered dietitian for guidance specific to your pregnancy.

Eating well while breastfeeding

The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030](#) include lactation as a dedicated life stage. The good news: most of what you ate during pregnancy still applies — your body now needs a little more energy, a little more fluid, and continued attention to a few key nutrients.

+330–400

extra calories per day
while exclusively breastfeeding

~6 mo

exclusive breastfeeding
recommended, then continued with foods
through age 2 or beyond

~13 cups

fluids per day
more than pregnancy—milk-making is
thirsty work

Key nutrients to keep up

NUTRIENT	DAILY GOAL	WHY IT MATTERS	BEST FOOD SOURCES
Iodine	600 mcg	Higher than in pregnancy. Critical for baby's brain & thyroid through breastmilk.	Iodized salt, dairy, eggs, seafood; check our prenatal vitamin includes iodine.
Choline	550 mg	Higher than in pregnancy. Supports baby's brain growth.	Eggs (especially yolks; avoid undercooked eggs), lean beef, chicken, fish, soybeans, potatoes.
DHA (Omega-3)	~200–300 mg	Passes into breastmilk; supports baby's brain & vision.	Salmon, sardines, trout (8–12 oz/week of low-mercury fish); DHA supplement.
Vitamin B12	2.8 mcg	Especially important if you eat little or no animal foods.	Dairy, eggs, fish, lean meat, fortified plant milks & cereals; supplement if vegan.
Calcium & Vitamin D	1,000 mg / 600 IU	Protects your bones; baby may need a separate vitamin D drop (ask your pediatrician).	Milk, yogurt, fortified plant milks, leafy greens, salmon, sunlight.



Drink to thirst — and keep a bottle within reach when you nurse

Many parents feel thirsty as soon as baby latches on. Water is best; milk and unsweetened drinks count. Pale yellow urine = well hydrated.

✓ Helpful habits

- ✓ **Keep taking your prenatal vitamin** for at least the first few months, or as your clinician advises.
- ✓ **Eat regularly** — small, balanced meals and snacks beat skipping meals when you're tired.
- ✓ **Vary your seafood** with low-mercury options 2–3 times a week for DHA.
- ✓ **Include eggs & lean protein** daily for choline and recovery.
- ✓ **Eat a wide variety of flavors** — they pass into milk and help baby accept new foods later.



⚠ Watch your limits

- ⚠ **Alcohol:** Safest is none. If you choose to drink, wait **at least 2 hours per standard drink** before nursing.
- ⚠ **Caffeine:** Keep under **300 mg/day** (about 2–3 cups of coffee). Watch for fussy or wakeful babies.
- ⚠ **High-mercury fish:** Same list as pregnancy — skip shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish, bigeye tuna.
- ⚠ **Herbal teas & supplements:** Many aren't well-studied — check before using.
- ⚠ **Strict diets:** Skip aggressive weight loss while establishing your milk supply.

* Heat deli meats to 165°F, allow to cool before eating. *Avoid eating undercooked eggs. *Choose cooked fish low in mercury.

Feed yourself, too ♥

Breastfeeding asks a lot of your body— be gentle, rest when you can, keep snacks within reach.

If you don't breastfeed or combine with formula, that's okay too — iron-fortified formula is a safe, complete alternative.

About this page: Based on the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030](#), AAP, ACOG, and the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#). General patient education only. Not a substitute for personalized advice. Please contact your obstetric clinician, lactation consultant, or pediatrician with concerns.



Prepared for expecting parents.
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