

# Nutrition During Pregnancy

A Guide for Patients/Families




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A common myth says that pregnant women need to start eating enough food for two people. While it is true that your body requires extra nutrients during pregnancy in order to keep you and your baby healthy, it does not mean that you need to eat twice as much. In fact, it is recommended that a caloric increase of as little as 300 calories per day is more than enough for most women. The average pregnancy weight-gain is 25 to 35 pounds, but it varies from woman to woman depending, among other things, on her pre-pregnancy weight. Talk to your doctor about your weight-gain goal.

## **Importance of Nutrition during Pregnancy**

- **Protein**

Protein is one of the most important nutrients during pregnancy. It is responsible for the proper growth of body tissues. These tissues include those of you and your baby. Lean meats, eggs and beans are excellent sources of protein, whereas wheat and rice also provide a fair amount of protein.

- **Calcium**

Calcium, which makes your teeth and bones strong, can be found in milk and milk products, as well as in cheddar cheese, dark green leafy vegetables, calcium-fortified cereals and orange juice, beans and broccoli.

- **Iron**

Iron is important for both your blood and that of your body's. Liver is an excellent source of iron. Iron can also be found in foods like red meat, iron-fortified cereal and fortified bread, spinach and other green leafy vegetables. Your physician may also recommend that you take an iron supplement.

- **Folic Acid**

Folic acid has been shown to prevent neural tube defects in fetuses. It is also essential for the formation of red blood cells. Folic acid can be found in many foods such as chick pea kidney beans, peas, leafy green vegetables, oranges and orange juice, and iron fortified breakfast cereals.

## **Omega 3 Fatty Acid**

Omega 3 fatty acids are essential for the proper development of your baby's brain and eyes. They also reduce the risk of premature delivery. Fish is especially rich in Omega 3 fatty acids.

### **Daily Meal Plan During Pregnancy**

- Consume two to three daily servings of milk and dairy products, which are a major source of calcium;
- One serving = one cup of milk. This includes low-fat milk, yoghurt, cheese and cottage cheese;
- Eat nine or more servings of bread and cereals per day, which provide energy, B vitamins and fiber;
- One serving of grain = one bread slice or half chapatti. Try whole-grain bread, oatmeal, pasta, rice;
- Eat three to four servings of protein;
- One serving = 1 oz. of meat, such as lean meat, fish, chicken or egg;
- Include three servings of fruits and four servings of vegetables, which provide vitamins and minerals;
- One serving = half cup cooked and one cup raw. Try a variety of choices from vegetables and fruits such as spinach, carrots, cabbage, peach, or apple;
- Drink plenty of fluids - at least eight glasses of water each day;
- Limit caffeine. You can take three to four cups of green tea in a day.

### **Problems During Pregnancy**

The following suggestions may provide some relief in the problems face during pregnancy.

#### **Nausea and Vomiting;**

- Eat small meals every two to three hours;
- Avoid hunger, do not skip meals;
- Avoid fried foods, spicy foods and any other foods that cause discomfort;
- Eat foods at room temperature rather than piping hot;
- Drink fluids between meals rather than with meals;
- Open windows while cooking to get rid of cooking odours.

## Constipation:

- Drink 8 to 12 cups of liquids - water, juices, and milk - every day;
- Eat high-fibre foods such as whole-grain bread and cereals, fruits, vegetables, and dried beans;
- Engage in physical activity daily. Walking is a good activity during pregnancy;
- Take 1-2 tablespoons Ishpagol husk.

## Heartburn:

- Eat Small, low fat meals every two to three hours;
- Limit caffeinated coffee and soft drinks;
- Avoid large meals before bedtime;
- Check with your doctor before taking antacids;
- Do not offer prayers or lie down for at least one hour after a meal.

## Important Note:

Food provided during hospitalization to patients is disease specific and during stay food from outside hospital is not permitted. Written and verbal instruction related to dietary restrictions is explained by clinical nutrition staff, where applicable.

### Outpatient Nutrition Care Clinics

#### **Nazerali walji building (NW 2)**

Phone: (021) 3486-5789/ 3486-5790  
Monday to Thursday  
Timings: Morning 9.00am -11.00am

#### **Consulting Clinic (CC 4)**

Phone: (021) 3486-1034  
Friday  
Timings Evening 14.00pm - 16.00pm

#### **Sports & Rehabilitation Clinic (Sports Centre)**

Phone: (021) 3486-1662  
Tuesday  
Timings: Morning 9.00am -11.00am

#### **Nazerali walji building (NW 1)**

Phone: (021) 3486-5781-82  
Monday to Thursday  
Timings: Morning 9.00am -4.00pm