

pregnancy & new baby

# pregnancy nutrition

By Monika Vadai\*



Pregnancy is a magical and wonderful time, and a healthy diet and lifestyle can make it easier and more enjoyable. With a good nutritional status at birth, you can help to avoid exhaustion, breastfeeding complications and postnatal mood disorders. You will also give your baby the best start in life if you have an optimum diet during pregnancy.

Pregnancy is a natural state, not a disease. A normal, healthy diet is required. All nutrients are important in pregnancy, therefore a varied diet is the best recommendation. And whatever you are consuming, the baby is consuming too, therefore it is very important to cut harmful substances from the diet, for example, drugs, alcohol, and caffeine, which can have adverse effects on the baby. Food must be prepared with good hygiene and has to be fresh. For example, you can consume liver pâté as long as it's freshly made or, in the case of a store-bought product, has just

been opened. Liver is an excellent source of iron and vitamin A (please note vitamin A is not recommended in supplement form during pregnancy). Raw seafood is to be avoided, but if cooked, it is very beneficial for its protein, Omega 3 and zinc content.

Generally, focus on good protein consumption as protein equals growth. Iron-rich foods, such as liver, red meat, green leafy vegetables, spirulina and molasses, are also extremely important. Try to increase fluid intake to 2-3 litres per day (preferably purified water) and eat a variety of different coloured fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Don't forget that the body is equipped with amazing mechanisms to keep your body in balance. For example, there is an increased rate of nutrient absorption during pregnancy, therefore there is no need to over-supplement or to 'eat for two'.

If you are unsure about your diet, please consult your midwife, GP, nutritionist or naturopath. It is a good idea to work out a personalised diet plan once you find out you are pregnant (or even better when you are trying to become pregnant), as we are all different with very different nutritional needs.

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