

Importance of Diet in Pregnancy

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DESCRIPTION

A balanced diet plays an important role in the health of the entire life cycle and affects the functioning of all body systems. Increased nutritional and energy requirements during pregnancy are due to changes in the mother's physiology and foetal metabolic demands. These are achieved through many physiological adaptations, including changes in nutrient metabolism regulated by placental hormones. However, if the nutritional and energy needs are not met (especially under severe deprivation, this results in adverse changes in the baby's weight, height, and body composition, even in apparently healthy babies after changes in metabolic capacity. Life suggests that it can manifest itself as a disease. A healthy diet during pregnancy should ensure proper foetal growth, good maternal health, and good breastfeeding. Good foetal care is also achieved by increased intestinal absorption or decreased renal or gastrointestinal excretion. Nutritional counselling and intervention should be an integral part of pregnancy and antenatal care.

Types of nutritional food should be taken during pregnancy

Nutritional plan for pregnancy includes optimal protein intake from plant and animal sources such as fish, chicken, eggs, and *lentils*.

Dairy products: Dairy products can be important during pregnancy because they provide a variety of nutrients that support baby's development. Protein helps in building healthy tissue. Fat is important for energy and growth. Both calcium and vitamin D play an important role in the normal bone development of the baby. Dairy products are the best sources of calcium and provide large amounts of phosphorus, B vitamins, magnesium, and zinc.

Legumes: Add black beans, green beans, focus beans, lentils black-eyed beans, common beans, galvanzo or *soybeans* to your diet. Try them with chili, soups, salads, and pasta dishes. Not only do they provide protein and fiber, but they are also an

excellent source of important nutrients such as iron, folic acid, calcium, and zinc.

Eggs: Pregnant women are safe to eat eggs as long as the eggs are completely cooked or pasteurized. Pregnant women can consume boiled eggs, but care must be taken to ensure that foods such as aioli, homemade mayonnaise, cake dough, and mousse do not contain raw eggs.

Broccoli and dark, leafy greens: Kale, spinach and other dark-leafed vegetables are rich in the vitamins and minerals needed by pregnant mothers and their babies. It contains vitamins A, C, K, and E, as well as calcium, iron, fiber, and folic acid. Folic acid is a B vitamin that protects against birth defects.

Sweet potatoes: Sweet potatoes are high in beta-carotene, a compound essential for the development of a healthy foetus. It is also rich in dietary fibre and is known to improve digestive health and prevent blood sugar spikes.

Lean meat and proteins: Lean beef, pork and chicken are excellent sources of high quality protein. Beef and pork are also rich in iron, choline and other B vitamins. All of these require more during pregnancy. Iron is an essential mineral used by red blood cells as part of hemoglobin.

Berries: Blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries are high in vitamin C, antioxidants, dietary fiber, potassium, and folic acid. You can eat light meals, replenish oatmeal and cereals, add them to salads, and blend them into smoothies. If the berries are out of season, try frozen blueberries.

Foods to avoid in pregnancy

Undercooked or raw fish: Raw fish, especially shellfish, can cause a variety of infections. These can be viruses, bacteria, or parasitic infections such as nor virus, *vibrio*, *salmonella*, and *listeria*. Some of these infections only affect you, causing dehydration and weakness. Other infections can have serious or fatal consequences.

Undercooked, raw and processed meat: Some of the same problems with raw fish also apply to poorly cooked meat. Eating undercooked or raw meat increases the risk of infection by

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several bacteria and parasites, including *Toxoplasma gondii*, *Escherichia coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Salmonella*. Bacteria can threaten a child's health and can cause stillbirth and serious neurological conditions such as intellectual disability, blindness, and epilepsy. Most bacteria are found on the surface of the entire meat fillet, but other bacteria may remain on the muscle fibers.

Raw eggs: Raw eggs may be contaminated with *Salmonella*. Symptoms of *salmonella* infection include fever, nausea, vomiting, gastric spasms, and diarrhea. However, in rare cases,

the infection can cause uterine spasms, leading to premature birth or stillbirth.

Alcohol: It is advisable to avoid drinking alcohol during pregnancy altogether, as it increases the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. Even small amounts can adversely affect the development of the baby's brain. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can also lead to facial malformations, heart defects, and foetal alcohol syndrome with mental illness. Alcohol levels during pregnancy have not been proven to be safe, and it is advisable to avoid them altogether.