**Healthy eating during your pregnancy**

**ADVICE ON EATING FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY**

**WHAT ARE THE DIETARY GUIDELINES?**

The **Australian Dietary Guidelines**
provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing. They are based on scientific evidence and research.

The **Australian Dietary Guidelines** of most relevance during pregnancy are included below:

**GUIDELINE 1:**

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.

**GUIDELINE 2:**

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day:

- Plenty of vegetables of different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat

And drink plenty of water.

**GUIDELINE 3:**

Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.

a. Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as:
   - Many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks.
   - Replace high fat foods which contain predominately saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominately polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado.

b. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt.
   - Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
   - Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table.

c. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.

d. For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

**GUIDELINE 4:**

Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.

**GUIDELINE 5:**

Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.

---

**WHICH FOODS SHOULD I AVOID?**

**PREGNANT WOMEN ARE AT GREATER RISK OF FOOD POISONING AND SHOULD PREPARE AND STORE FOOD CAREFULLY. THEY SHOULD ALSO AVOID ALCOHOL.**

Pregnant women should avoid:

- Foods which may contain listeria bacteria like soft cheeses (brie, camembert, ricotta, feta and blue cheese), sandwich meats, bean sprouts, pre-prepared salads and pâté.
- Raw eggs as they may contain salmonella.
- Alcohol – not drinking is the safest option.
- Fish that may contain high levels of mercury – Food Standards Australia New Zealand recommend consuming no more than one serve (100g cooked) per fortnight of shark/fish, marlin or broadbill/swordfish, and no other fish that fortnight, or one serve (100g cooked) per week of orange roughy (deep sea perch) or catfish and no other fish that week.
- Foods such as nuts during pregnancy only if they are allergic to the foods themselves – avoiding these foods has no impact on the infant’s risk of developing allergy symptoms.

---

*Want more information about healthy eating when you are pregnant?*


---

**HELPFUL HINTS**

**EATING WELL DURING YOUR PREGNANCY HELPS YOUR BABY DEVELOP AND HAS HEALTH BENEFITS FOR YOU TOO!**

Both you and your growing baby need extra nutrients.

Steady weight gain during pregnancy is normal and important for the health of the mother and baby. However, it is also important not to gain too much weight.

So choose foods from the Five Food Groups and limit discretionary foods and drinks high in saturated fat, added sugars and added salt such as cakes, biscuits and potato chips.

You can eat well by:

- Enjoying a variety of fruits and vegetables of different types and colours.
- Increasing your grain consumption to 8–8½ serves a day – mostly wholegrain – in preference to discretionary choices.
- Choosing foods high in iron, such as lean red meat or tofu, which are important for pregnant women.
- Making a habit of drinking milk, eating hard cheese and yoghurt, or calcium enriched alternatives. Reduced fat varieties are best.
- Enjoying a wide variety of vegetables, legumes, fruit and wholegrains and drinking plenty of water every day can assist with constipation – a common occurrence during pregnancy.

---

**THE AUSTRALIAN DIETARY GUIDELINES PROVIDE UP-TO-DATE ADVICE ABOUT THE AMOUNT AND KINDS OF FOODS THAT WE NEED TO EAT FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING.**

For more information visit: [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

or contact:

National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
Canberra ACT 2601
13 000 NHMRC (13 000 64672)

To order print copies contact:
National Mailing and Marketing
Email: health@nationalmailing.com.au
Phone: 02 6269 1080

Publication Reference: N55h

---

For further information go to www.eatforhealth.gov.au