

## Pregnancy



Congratulations! Pregnancy is one of the most nutritionally demanding periods in a woman's life. Eating right is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your baby to ensure a healthy pregnancy, fewer complications, and a healthier baby.

### General Recommendations

- Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and fish. Refined sugars, white flour, fried foods, processed foods and chemical additives should be avoided
- Try to eat little and often, including well balanced snacks between your main meals. Low blood sugar can be a trigger for nausea, along with contributing to low energy and fatigue
- Ensure adequate water intake. During pregnancy we need around 2.3L from both food and liquids, about an extra glass more than normal requirements (1.5 – 2 L daily)
- Be sure to get moderate exercise (swimming, walking, pregnancy yoga) and plenty of rest



### How much more do I need to eat when pregnant?

While your energy needs do increase throughout pregnancy, the 'eating for two' adage is a myth. Requirements differ, depending on many things including your pre-pregnancy weight. But in general, your energy needs are

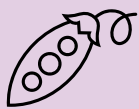
- roughly the same in the first trimester
- + 200 calories in the second trimester - add healthy snack e.g. piece of fruit and palmful nuts
- + 400 – 500 calories in the third trimester – add in 2 healthy snacks. Or spread your food intake out over 5 smaller meals through the day, which may be easier to digest



### Healthy weight gain during pregnancy

The recommended weight gain usually depends on your pre-pregnancy. You will gain most of the weight in the second half of your pregnancy. Gaining much more weight than the recommended amount can increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and delivery as well as increase the baby's risk of high birth weight. There are currently no formal Ireland-specific health guidelines on weight gain in pregnancy. The US Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommended the following weight gain ranges, based on pre-pregnancy weight:

Pre-pregnancy weight	Weight gain during pregnancy
Underweight (BMI < 20)	12.5–18 kg
Normal weight (BMI 20 – 24.9)	11.5–16 kg
Overweight (BMI 25 – 29.9)	7–11.5 kg
Obese (BMI >30)	5–9 kg



### What to include:

- Firstly, eat regularly. Going for too long without eating can trigger nausea or light-headedness in some people. Pack a healthy snack in your bag in case you need it
- It's always important to eat plenty of fibre, but this is even more important in pregnancy, where digestion can become more sluggish. Choose wholegrains like brown bread, brown rice and wholegrain pasta instead of their white counterparts to increase both fibre and nutrients. And include other gentle forms of fibre like lots of vegetables (5+ portions per day), some fruit, pulses, nuts and seeds



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- Iron deficiency is one of the most common nutrient deficiencies in women and more prevalent in pregnancy, where iron needs increase. Studies show that one in three women in Europe are iron deficient when pregnant and this can have risks for the short- and long-term health of the baby. Symptoms include fatigue, breathlessness, palpitations, dizziness and if you are experiencing any of these or if you have been low in iron before pregnancy, check your iron levels

Nutrient	Needed for:	Found in:
Folic acid	Formation of nervous system and red blood cells. Reduce risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida	spinach, sprouts, nuts, seeds, avocados and broccoli Supplement with 400ug  **have one portion of well washed greens per day
Iron	helps prevent anaemia, necessary for foetal immune system development	red meat, egg yolk, lentils, almonds, parsley, pumpkin seeds, cashew nuts, green leafy vegetables, prunes (vitamin C for absorption of plant sources of iron)
Vitamin D	Skeletal development, immune health. Reduces risk of pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes.	Commonly deficient in Ireland. Supplement, especially in winter.
Vit C & bioflavanoids	help absorb iron, helps prevent capillary rupture which may be important for haemorrhage and premature labour	broccoli, cabbage, grapefruits, lemons, oranges, peppers, berries and kiwifruit
Calcium	Bone formation, particularly in the third trimester when calcium is taken from the mother. Also for blood clotting	natural yoghurt (good probiotic source also), milk, cottage cheese, almonds, tinned salmon with bones, sardines, sesame seeds, tofu
Choline	Essential for healthy brain development	Eggs, meat and animal products. Some nuts and pulses contain choline but supplement in vegan diet
Magnesium	Prevent high blood pressure and leg cramps, bone development, helps to prevent gestational diabetes	All nuts and seeds, legumes, fish, wholegrains, leafy greens
Zinc	Low levels associated with early birth, low birth weight, dyslexia. Promotes healing post birth and may help prevent post natal depression.	Cashew nuts, pumpkin seeds, whole grains, oats, eggs, fish, chickpeas, mushrooms, green leafy vegetables, asparagus, tomatoes, squash
Iodine	Essential for brain development and linked with IQ levels	Fish, dairy
Vitamin K	Blood clotting and healing the womb after the birth	Normally produced by gut bacteria, also cauliflower and leafy greens
Omega 3	provides building blocks for baby's brain and eye health. Shown to reduce the risk of pre-term birth and depression post pregnancy.	Oily fish. Limit or avoid tuna and eat other oily fish like salmon or mackerel a couple of times per week. Plant-based sources include chia, flax and pumpkin seeds and walnuts.



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### What to avoid

A small number of foods, drinks and other substances should be avoided during pregnancy, due to changes in the immune system during pregnancy or direct risk to the health of the developing foetus.

To be avoided	Reason:
Raw fish and shellfish, pre-cooked shelled crustaceans e.g. prawns, crab	Avoid, can harbour harmful bacteria
Unpasteurised dairy products	unpasteurised (raw) milk and soft cheese like brie and Roquefort. Other cheese including soft cheese from pasteurised milk like feta and mozzarella are safe, as are all hard cheeses
undercooked meat including raw cured meats like salami, Chorizo and Parma ham	can contain harmful parasites like Toxoplasma gondii or bacteria like Salmonella or Listeria.
Liver products, pate, cod liver oil	high in retinol (Vitamin A), harmful for developing foetus at high levels
Salad bars, bagged salad, raw sprouts like alfalfa	can contain Listeria, E coli and other bacteria
Raw eggs, unpasteurised mayonnaise	can be contaminated with salmonella and other bacteria. Cook eggs well and check labels on mayonnaise and egg-contain desserts like choc mousse to ensure that eggs are pasteurised,
Green / sprouting potatoes	contain poisonous substances known as alpha solanine and alpha chaconine linked to spina bifida
Large fish including swordfish and tuna	contain high mercury levels. Mercury has been implicated in birth defects
Spicy foods	can lead to heartburn, especially in the third trimester
Alcohol	Alcohol should be avoided completely during pregnancy as it passes through the placenta and there is no safe level during pregnancy
Caffeine	crosses placenta, increasing baby's heart rate. Excess has been associated with increased risk of miscarriage. Limit to a maximum of 1 coffee or 2 teas daily. Drink herbal tea instead
Aloe Juice	may act as a uterine stimulant
Herbal remedies	To not use any herbal remedies unless these have been specifically recommended for you when pregnant by a qualified practitioner
Prescription drugs	If you are taking any prescription medication, please check with your doctor that these are safe while pregnant.
Foods containing aspartame e.g. diet drinks & foods	contains high levels of phenylalanine, an amino acid which may alter foetal brain development
Cat litter, also raw meat and soil on vegetables	Risk of toxoplasmosis from animal faeces, particularly cats. Always wear rubber gloves when cleaning the litter tray

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Herbal teas safe in pregnancy	Herbal teas to avoid in pregnancy
Green tea – but no more than 2-3 per day >200mg caffeine	Raspberry leaf tea should be avoided until 36 weeks
Ginger tea – up to 1g of ginger is safe (approx. 4 cups per day)	Fennel tea
Peppermint tea – 1-2 cups per day but not during first trimester (may also exacerbate heartburn).	Licorice tea
Rosehip tea- 1 cup per day	Sage tea
Lemon balm tea –1 cup per day	Thyme tea
Rooibos tea – 1-2 cups per day	Fenugreek tea
Dandelion tea -1-2 cups	Valerian tea
Cinnamon tea (1 cup max)	Slippery elm bark tea
Chamomile tea (1 cup max)	Hibiscus tea
	Nettle tea

### Common Pregnancy Problems

Many problems encountered in pregnancy can be avoided with a balanced diet and appropriate supplementation. However, many supplements are not suitable during pregnancy and you should check with your Nutritionist before taking any supplement.

Some common complaints include:

- Anaemia – take iron daily, in the form of ferrous gluconate, ferrous fumarate, haem iron concentrate or iron glycine chelate, to avoid constipation, if you have been diagnosed with low iron levels. Your Nutritionist will recommend a suitable supplement
- ‘Morning’ sickness or nausea – try root ginger grated into hot water to make ginger tea or ginger tea bags e.g. Pukka. Nairns oat ginger biscuits can be helpful as part of a snack. Ensure you are eating little and often, even if you don’t feel like it
- Thrush – include fermented food such as natural yoghurt, sauerkraut or miso paste.
- Constipation – increase gentle fibre, as above. Eat 1-2 kiwi fruit and 2 tbsp ground linseeds (flaxseeds) e.g. with your breakfast
- Leg cramps or restless legs – ensure good intake of magnesium and iron (see above)

### Preparation for birth

- Raspberry Leaf tea may help the uterus to contract more effectively and is often used in the lead up to the due date. Drink 4 – 6 cups per day in the last 2 – 4 weeks only
- Practice pelvic floor exercises throughout pregnancy (5-10 mins daily)
- Consider stocking up your freezer with healthy meals to have to hand during the busy first weeks and stock your store cupboard with healthy snacks like nuts, oat cakes, nut butters and healthier snack bar options.

### Find out if you have enough nutrients for two

It can be helpful to check your levels of key nutrients needed for a healthy pregnancy and foetal development, including omega 3, vitamins D and E, zinc, selenium and iodine. Our Functional Nutritional Profile is a blood test covering these and other nutrients, available to patients of Glenville Nutrition. To find out more, please get in touch.