

LCP's and Pregnancy

During pregnancy certain long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPs) are vital for you and your baby. Like minerals and vitamins, the Omega-3 and Omega-6 LCPs are essential for health. They are especially important for the baby's developing brain and eyes.

Best sources of Omega-3 fatty acids are:

oily fish (salmon fresh or canned), sardines, mullet, mackerel, trevally, herring, tuna. (See Listeria Food Safety Warning, overleaf). White fish and seafood; eggs; lean red meat; liver and kidneys contain smaller amounts. Plants contain some Omega-3, though this is used less efficiently by the body.

Plant sources of Omega-3 include: linseed, canola and soy oils; canola-based spreads; walnuts; wheatgerm; soy beans and baked beans; green, leafy vegetables.

Omega-6 fatty acids are found in vegetable and seed oils and in wheatgerm.

Morning Sickness

Some women suffer from nausea and vomiting early in pregnancy. It may help to:

- Eat small frequent meals
- Try dried foods such as bread or crackers before getting out of bed
- Sip flat lemonade or gingerale
- Avoid high-fat or spicy foods
- Try to rest more often

Cold, plain or bland foods are often well tolerated.

Heartburn and Indigestion

This is usually a problem later in pregnancy as your baby grows and presses on the stomach. It may help to:

- Eat small, frequent meals
- Sit upright or stand after eating
- Avoid drinking fluids with your meals
- Avoid high-fat or spicy foods

Listeria

This bacteria can cause the food-borne infection Listeriosis. This is dangerous during pregnancy and can cause miscarriage and stillbirth.

To reduce risk of listeria infection, store and handle food safely:

- Refrigerate perishable foods promptly
- Keep cold foods well chilled
- Cooked or prepared food that has been stored in the fridge must be used within 2 days
- Keep cooked and raw foods separate
- Cover foods in the fridge to avoid cross contamination
- Thoroughly wash all raw fruit and vegetables
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing raw foods and ready-to eat foods
- Cook all hot food until piping hot (above 70°C)
- Reheat cooked food thoroughly
- Eat freshly cooked food as soon as possible after cooking

Listeria Food Safety Warning - Avoid any of the following:

- Uncooked fish; chilled, pre-cooked seafood products, unless reheated thoroughly
- Paté (unless freshly home-made), pre-cooked chicken, ham and other pre-cooked meat products
- Shop-bought salads and coleslaws
- Unpasteurised milk

For further information regarding food safety during pregnancy, please contact your local District Health Board for the "Food Safety in Pregnancy" booklet.

For further advice speak to one of our Dietitians by calling the Nutricia Advisory Service on 0800 688 742 from Monday to Friday between 9am - 5pm.

You can also email our popular website www.babytimes.co.nz

NUTRICIA

37 Banks Road, Mt Wellington, Auckland, PO Box 62 523, Central Park, Auckland 6. Ph: 09 570 0970. Fax: 09 570 0971.

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During pregnancy you will need more of certain nutrients. However this does not mean you need to 'eat for two'. Satisfying your appetite with healthy foods such as lean meat, fruit and vegetables, wholegrain breads, cereals and dairy food will ensure you give your baby the best start in life.

Weight Gain

There is no exact healthy weight gain. Most people gain on average 13kgs over the 9 months. However slim people may need to gain more weight, overweight women, less. Weight gain is not spread evenly over the pregnancy, the biggest weight gain tends to be from 20-36 weeks.

Calcium

Your baby needs calcium to build healthy bones and teeth. As early as the sixth week of pregnancy your baby's teeth and bones begin to form. Dairy foods are the richest sources of calcium.

During pregnancy you need 1100 to 1200mg calcium per day.

Food	Amount	Calcium mg
Milk, trim	200ml (1 glass)	290
Milk, reduced fat (1.5%)	200ml (1 glass)	280
Milk, standard	200ml (1 glass)	232
Milk, whole	200ml (1 glass)	228
Yoghurt, plain	1 pot (150g)	180
Cheese, cheddar mild	3 x 2cm cubes (30g)	220
Soy milk (calcium fortified)	200ml (1 glass)	240
Salmon, canned (with bones)	1/2 cup (120g)	110
Sardines, canned	5 only (60g)	330
Tofu, firm	100g	105
Baked beans (in sauce)	1/2 cup (140g)	17
Kidney beans, cooked	1/2 cup (95g)	30
Wholemeal bread	3 medium slices (85g)	27
Seasame seeds	1 tablespoon	11
Tahini	1 tablespoon	53
Broccoli, cooked, chopped	1/2 cup (80g)	30
Figs, dried	4 only (65g)	130
Orange, fresh	1 medium (130g)	40

Try to limit your salt intake as a high sodium diet increases the urinary output of calcium.

Iron

At least 2-3 times more iron than usual is needed during pregnancy to help increase the red blood cells, especially in the last two trimesters. If your diet is lacking in iron you may become very tired and / or anaemic.

During pregnancy you need 22 to 36 mg iron a day.

Foods rich in haem iron (easily absorbed) are red meats, liver, kidney, pork, chicken and fish.

Foods containing non-haem iron (poorly absorbed) are eggs, green leafy vegetables, wholegrain cereals, dried beans, peas and lentils. Eating foods rich in Vitamin C (e.g. citrus fruit, kiwifruit, orange juice, tomatoes, capsicums and broccoli) as part of a meal helps improve absorption of iron.

Food rich in Haem Iron	Amount	Haem Iron mg
Beef rump steak, grilled	100g	3.4
Beef mince, lean, cooked	3/4 cup (130g)	4.4
Lamb liver, cooked	100g	10.0
Lamb kidney, cooked	100g	12.0
Lamb leg, lean, roasted	100g	2.2
Pork, roast, lean	100g	1.5
Chicken liver, cooked	100g	9.2
Chicken breast, grilled	100g	1.9
Sardines, canned	5 only (60g)	2.0
White fish, hoki/snapper	100g	0.2 to 0.7

About 25% of haem iron is absorbed by the body.

Food rich in Non-Haem Iron	Amount	Non-Haem Iron mg
Tofu, firm	100g	5.4
Egg, boiled	1 (50g)	1.1
Kidney beans	1/2 cup (95g)	2.1
Baked beans in sauce	1/2 cup (140g)	1.3
Whole wheat biscuit (Weet-bix®)	1	2.2
Wholemeal bread	1 med slice (28g)	0.5
Silverbeet, cooked	1/2 cup (84g)	1.0
Dried apricots	5 small (30g)	1.0

From 1 to 5% of non-haem iron is absorbed by the body.

Note: During pregnancy limit intake of liver to no more than 100g per week because liver has high levels of Vitamin A. Extremely high doses of Vitamin A are dangerous for pregnant women. Excess Vitamin A can interfere with the development of the foetus or produce/cause birth defects.

Folate or Folic Acid

This B vitamin has many functions in the body including involvement in synthesising DNA and formation of blood cells and new tissues. In the early part of pregnancy folate needs are higher. Lack of folate has been linked with birth defects such as spina bifida. The risk can be reduced by taking folic acid supplements; discuss this with your doctor.

Recommended intake during pregnancy is 400-800 micrograms of folate per day.

Folate is found in many foods.

Foods rich in folate include:

- Vegetables, especially spinach, silverbeet, broccoli, beetroot, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, asparagus, green beans, broad beans, cabbage
- Cooked dried beans e.g. kidney beans, chick peas
- Liver, eggs
- Wholegrain breads and breakfast cereals such as oats, Weet-Bix®, wheatgerm
- Yeast extract eg Vegemite® and Marmite®

Folate is very sensitive to light, heat and air. As folate is easily destroyed during cooking, raw or lightly cooked fruits and vegetables are better than well-cooked.

Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is needed, along with folate, for making the body's DNA and red blood cells. Vitamin B12 is not found in plants. The only reliable food sources of vitamin B12 are animal products.

Best sources of vitamin B12 are: liver, kidney, red meats, oysters, fish, egg yolks, milk and cheese.

Spirulina and comfrey are not good sources of Vitamin B12. Any Vitamin B12 that these sources contain is in the form of inactive B1 analogues. The body cannot absorb these analogues.

Mushrooms are not a reliable source of B12. Mushrooms cultivated on manure-enriched compost may contain traces of vitamin B12 if the mushrooms are not washed before use. Soy beverages and soy yoghurts fortified with vitamin B12 are sources for vegetarians. Vegans or pregnant women who eat no animal products are advised to take a vitamin B12 supplement.

Fluid

You need at least 6-8 glasses of fluid a day. Use your thirst as guide.

Limit coffee, tea and cola drinks to no more than 3 a day as they contain caffeine which can affect your baby.

Alcohol is not recommended.

Fibre

Dietary fibre, plus plenty of fluid, helps minimise constipation which can be a problem in pregnancy. Aim for 30g of dietary fibre a day.

Good sources of high-fibre foods are: dried beans, peas and lentils, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals, fruits, nuts and seeds. Choose a breakfast cereal with at least 6g of fibre per 100g.