

# Eating for a Healthy Pregnancy



Congratulations, mom-to-be! Now that you're pregnant, taking care of yourself is your number one priority. It's crucial to arm yourself with information about the many ways to keep you and your baby healthy, including the food choices you make.

Below are some helpful reminders for eating for a healthy pregnancy.

## The Good:

- Take a prenatal vitamin prescribed by your physician. It will assist with daily folic acid requirements. Good sources of folic acid can be found in black-eyed peas, spinach, great northern beans, asparagus and ready-to-eat cereals.
- Include 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Summer fruits and vegetables include berries, melons, peaches, bell peppers, green beans, squash and zucchini.
- Consume 3 servings of low-fat dairy products daily, whether 1% or skim milk, low-fat yogurt or cheese. Alternative

sources of calcium are tofu, broccoli, spinach, orange juice fortified with calcium and ready-to-eat cereals.

- Choose whole grain breads, cereals and pasta.
- Include good sources of iron-rich foods—lean meats, poultry, dried beans, lentils, dark leafy vegetables and fortified ready-to-eat cereals.
- Include foods with vitamin C, which can assist with the absorption of iron-rich foods. Look for sweet potatoes, red/green sweet peppers, cantaloupe, kiwi, strawberries, pineapple, kale, broccoli and oranges.

- Avoid fish that contains mercury, such as swordfish, shark, king mackerel, tilefish. Per the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), limit intake of fish/shellfish to 12 ounces per week of shrimp, salmon, pollock, catfish and canned light tuna. Albacore tuna should be limited to 6 ounces a week.
- Limit caffeine to less than 200 mg per day (*or two cups of coffee*). Note caffeine interferes with iron absorption so avoid caffeine when consuming an iron-rich food.

## The Ugly:

If you have cravings for non-food items, such as cornstarch, clay, dirt, paper, chalk or ice, let your doctor know immediately. Eating non-food items is called pica. Pica is potentially harmful to both you and your baby.

—Alicia Curran, RD, LDN

Alicia Curran, RD, LDN  
Registered dietitian



## The Bad:

- Avoid hot dogs and deli meats.
- Steer clear of raw, undercooked meats, poultry, fish and eggs.
- Don't consume unpasteurized juices or dairy products, including soft cheeses (brie, feta, Camembert, Roquefort, blue cheese, queso blanco, queso fresco, panela).

If you would like to make an appointment with a registered dietitian, please call 410-550-7728. These appointments often are covered by insurance. Check with your insurance provider.