

The Healthy Pregnancy Book

Month by Month,
Everything You Need to Know
from America's Baby Experts



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with Linda Holt, MD, and BJ Snell, PhD, CNW**



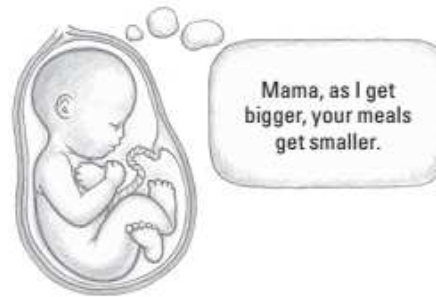
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How to Eat: Graze, Sip, and Dip

Intestinal and hormonal changes during pregnancy can make it a challenge to get the nutrition you and baby need. A growing baby pressing on already queasy tummies may change the way you eat. Try these simple tips: graze, sip, and dip.



WHY GRAZING IS GREAT

Grazing is good for Mommy and baby. Many mothers find that as their pregnancy progresses, a way to satisfy the “always hungry” feeling is to nibble throughout the day. You may find that you don’t have to make a conscious decision to become a grazer—your body naturally prompts you. As part of this mysterious internal wisdom of the body, your gut brain will start talking to your head brain, advising you what foods are most friendly to your increasingly sensitive digestive system, and how much and how often to eat. Here’s why grazing is good for you and your baby:

It relieves reflux. Your growing uterus pushes on an expanding stomach, which pushes acids up into a sensitive esophagus, contributing to “pregnancy heartburn,” especially after a big

meal. (Learn more about heartburn on page 23.) You will soon find that there is less room in your stomach for big meals.

It relieves constipation. When you wolf down a huge meal, a large amount of undigested food stays in the intestines, leading to indigestion and constipation. You will find your gut brain talking to you more during pregnancy, as if to say “Don’t feed me so much so fast or I will have to work too hard!”

I tended to be a fast eater. To slow down my eating while pregnant, I retired the fork and used chopsticks, which also forced me to take smaller bites.

Eating for two means eating twice as well, not twice as much. When we mention this

OUR RULE OF TWOS

- Eat *twice* as often.
- Eat *half* as much at a time.
- Chew *twice* as long.
- Take *twice* the time to dine.

very simple yet practical rule of thumb for eating while pregnant, mothers in our medical practice react: "Oh, that's so simple. It makes sense. I can do that." With grazing, the intestinal tract does more work at the top end, which saves discomfort at the lower end, the one most affected by your enlarging

uterus. Another grazing perk: it reduces the chance of hemorrhoids.

It steadies blood sugar. One of the reasons you will have the urge to nibble constantly is that there are days that you should. A steady blood sugar leads to steadier moods, which are usually a bit out of balance during pregnancy. (See page 60 for why steady blood sugar is important for baby's health.)

It helps keep you lean. Another pregnancy perk of grazing is that you tend to gain less excess body fat. Obesity researchers have long noticed that grazers tend to be leaner than gorgers. The reason seems to be that grazers can burn more calories.

THE HORMONAL HARMONY OF PREGNANCY

During your pregnancy you'll get tired of hearing everything blamed on hormones, yet they are the culprit of so much. At no time in your life will your hormones be in such a state of flux. Hormones are biochemical messengers that travel all over your body to give instructions. As your baby and your body change, your hormones change to meet those growing needs.

Knowing how to achieve hormonal harmony is important for maintaining a healthy pregnancy. Imagine that your hormones are players in a symphony orchestra. During pregnancy, these players are called upon to perform at their best. Insulin is the master hormone and the conductor of this symphony orchestra. When your insulin is stable, the other hormones are in tune. As a result, beautiful music, or a feeling of well-being, occurs during your pregnancy.

Exaggerated fluctuations of insulin are

under your control. The more stable your insulin levels, the more stable your moods and weight gain. Insulin is a fat-storage hormone. If it is too high, as it is when you gorge (especially on junk sugar foods), it prompts your body to store the extra calories you consume as excess fat. Continual oversecretion of insulin, mainly from unsteady blood sugar, is a common cause of gestational diabetes.

What's good for Mommy is also good for baby. Remember that "diabetes dial" on your baby's genes you learned about on page 14? Hormonal harmony helps baby's maturing endocrine system achieve its own hormonal harmony and lowers the risk of baby becoming diabetic as she gets older. By keeping blood sugar stable, grazing on good foods helps your endocrine system, and your baby's, play harmonious music. (See "Listening to Your Hormonal Symphony Orchestra," page 152.)

SNACK SMART

During pregnancy, a smart snack is one that contains at least 3 grams of fiber, 3 grams of protein, and healthy fats. It should not contain antinutrients, such as high-fructose corn syrup, artificial dyes and colorings, and unhealthy additives. Try these smart snack suggestions:

- Baby carrots dipped in hummus
- Apple slices dipped in peanut butter
- Whole-grain cereal with yogurt
- String cheese and a piece of fruit
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Pita bread spread with hummus
- Rice cakes with peanut butter and banana
- Parmesan cheese melted on a slice of whole-grain bread
- Celery sticks with peanut butter
- Cherry tomatoes with cheese cubes
- Homemade oatmeal-raisin cookies
- Raw almonds

PREGNANCY EATING TIP: ONE FISTFUL OF FOOD

As a general guide, limit the size of your meals to the size of your fist, which is roughly the size of your stomach. Especially in the later stages of pregnancy, more than one fistful of food at each of your eight minimeals is likely to, shall we say, be a pain in the gut. Shoot for at least eight of the twelve superfoods daily (page 28).



ENJOY THE SIPPING SOLUTION

Try our supersmoothie (recipe below). In formulating this recipe, we made sure it contains most of the extra nutrients you need for you and your baby, and it's an intestine-friendly way to eat during pregnancy. Sip on the supersmoothie all day as your breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Then, have a normal, healthy dinner, like our pregnancy salad (see recipe, page 38).

The "sipping solution" is a particularly comfortable way to eat early in your pregnancy, when blended food is more stomach-friendly, and later on, when your growing baby and uterus push on your stomach so there is less room for a plateful of food. We have recommended the sipping solution in our medical practice for many years. Pregnant mothers report that when they sip on a smoothie all day long, they suffer less indigestion, constipation, heartburn, mood swings, and fatigue.

Dr. BJ notes: *Many women come in for their preconception visit or first prenatal visit with a bag full of supplements. They have the best of intentions and believe that more is better. I try to help them recognize that supplements cannot take the place of balanced nutrition. Unfortunately, many women in our culture*

Pregnancy Digestive Problems	How the Sipping Solution Helps
Reflux and heartburn Indigestion Constipation	Blended, liquefied food empties faster from the stomach, the nutrients are absorbed more efficiently, and the high-fiber liquid is a natural laxative.
Inflammation, "itises"	The antioxidants in the smoothie boost immunity.
Blood sugar and mood swings	Blood sugar and insulin levels are steadier, as are moods.
Excessive weight (fat) gain	Grazers and sippers tend to be leaner, probably because their stomach and intestines get used to feeling satisfied with smaller volumes.
Fatigue	A steady supply of healthy nutrients gives you a steady supply of energy.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE PRENATAL SUPPLEMENT THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

While ideally it's better to get your nutrition from real foods rather than from packaged supplements, during pregnancy this may be more challenging. This is why most obstetricians recommend that pregnant women take prenatal supplements. In choosing your prenatal supplement, consider the following:

- Be sure it contains the big three: folic acid, omega-3s, and iron. Your levels of these must go way up during pregnancy. Levels of most of the other vitamins need to go up only slightly during pregnancy.
- If you can't eat the recommended 1,200 to 1,600 milligrams of calcium through foods, your supplement should contain 400 to 800 milligrams of calcium.
- Consider a supplement containing potassium iodine to avoid iodine deficiency.
- Consider a probiotic, which can help alleviate some of the intestinal ailments.
- Don't megadose. This is mainly true for vitamin A, which in high doses (greater than 10,000 IU a day) has been shown to increase the risk of birth defects — such

(continued)

Dr. Bill and Martha's Pregnancy Supersmoothie

8 oz. green vegetable juice	1 c. other fruit (strawberries, papaya, mango, pineapple, etc.)
8 oz. carrot juice	3 oz. tofu, firm
8 oz. pomegranate juice or grape juice	¼ c. ground flaxseeds or 2 tbsp. flaxseed oil
1–2 c. Greek-style, organic, plain yogurt	¼ c. wheat germ
1 c. blueberries (fresh or frozen)	1 tsp. cinnamon
2 kiwis	1 tbsp. blackstrap molasses
1 banana	

Mix all ingredients in a blender. Supersmoothies taste best when they are fresh and still have that bubbly milkshake consistency. Keep blender with unused smoothie in the fridge for later sipping, and blend just a bit to refresh.

Makes 8 cups

Special additions (optional):

Figs for extra fiber and sweetness
 1–2 tbsp. peanut butter for extra energy and satiety
 Organic milk or coconut milk instead of juice
 Organic kale or spinach for an earthy taste and extra folic acid
 Pomegranate (when in season): scoop out the seeds and flesh
 1 tsp. spirulina for extra iron and B₁₂
 A multivitamin/multimineral protein powder (see AskDrSears.com/supplements)

Nutritional content: Depending on your special additions and the nutritional content of your multimineral/multivitamin/protein/omega-3 supplement, this recipe is a perfect balance of around 20–25 percent healthy fats, 25 percent protein, and 50–55 percent healthy carbs, which makes it the calorie equivalent of two meals and two snacks:

Calories:	1,000–1,400	Calcium:	800–1,000 mg.
Protein:	50–70 grams	Vitamin C:	200–300 mg.
Fat:	20–30 grams	Iron:	18–25 mg.
Carbs:	120–150 grams	Folate:	200–300 mg.
Fiber:	25–30 grams	B12:	2–3 mcg.

Antioxidants: at least 10,000 ORAC units (a measure of antioxidant levels)—double the minimum recommended level.

as cleft lip, cleft palate, and heart defects — by fivefold. The reason vitamin A is more easily overdosed is that it is fat-soluble, meaning it is stored in body fat. Other vitamins, such as vitamin C and the B vitamins, are water-soluble, and therefore any excess is easily

excreted through the urine. It's safest to stick with the dosage of vitamins recommended by your healthcare provider.

(Go to AskDrSears.com/supplements to see what supplements we recommend.)

claim they “don't have time” to work on their nutrition, so they turn to supplements to make them feel more balanced.



NUTRITION QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

I'm a vegan, but I wonder if it's a safe diet while pregnant?

You're right to wonder. The stricter your vegan diet, the riskier it is for baby. While vegetarian mothers are less likely to gain excess weight, being a vegan or a strict vegetarian while pregnant is a nutritional challenge. It just so happens that some of the top extra nutrients you need — namely, omega-3 fats, vitamin D, vitamin B₁₂, and iron — come mainly from seafood and animal sources. Some vegans even note that

during pregnancy, they crave certain animal-based foods they previously shunned. Nine meatless months are possible, yet pregnancy may be a good time for you to consider healthier alternatives:

- Become a pescovegetarian. Adding 12 ounces of safe seafood per week would increase your chance of getting more of those nourishing nutrients you and baby need, especially omega-3 fats, vitamin B₁₂, and vitamin D.
- During your pregnancy become a flexitarian. Listen to your body. If you crave animal-based foods, such as yogurt, eggs, or salmon, give in to these healthy cravings.
- To beef up your iron, eat more of these meatless pregnancy superfoods: beans, lentils, tofu, figs, prune juice, spirulina, and blackstrap molasses. Plant-source iron, such as that from spinach and kale, is not absorbed as well as meat-source iron, so you'll need to eat more citrus fruits (vitamin C increases the absorption of iron from your veggies). As a general guide, 1 cup of beans, lentils, or firm tofu will give you almost as much iron and protein as 3 ounces of meat.
- Care about your calcium. The best vegetarian sources are calcium-fortified

foods such as orange juice, tofu, blackstrap molasses, figs, beans and greens, and sesame seeds.

- For nutritional insurance, be sure to take a prenatal supplement that contains the nutrients that are most difficult to get from a vegan diet, namely omega-3 DHA, vitamin B₁₂, and iron. (See “How to Choose the Prenatal Supplement That’s Right for You,” page 23.)

- Adding a daily serving of spirulina powder to your smoothie (see page 24) gives you two of the nutrients you miss by avoiding animal foods: vitamin B₁₂ (9 micrograms) and iron (7 milligrams).

How many extra nutritious calories do I need while pregnant?

Most mothers need only 100 extra nutritious calories a day during the first trimester and 300 to 500 additional calories a day during the rest of the pregnancy. But instead of counting calories, just eat more real foods. Instead of trying to consume “300 extra calories,” think of adding two extra servings of protein and two extra servings of fruits and vegetables. This is a more accurate, more doable, and healthier approach. Or, just think: each day for the health of myself and my baby, I need to eat four to five extra servings of the pregnancy superfoods daily. (Review the list of superfoods on page 29.)

Here’s the real meaning of “eating for two”: You become twice as picky, and you need to consume twice the amount of protein and omega-3s. This is not a green light to indulge — you certainly don’t need twice the number of calories. Really you’re eating for 1.2, especially in the first trimester. For most mothers, extra fat stores will supply the extra calories.

Shoot for a balanced week rather than a balanced meal or balanced day. Your gut feelings and your appetite are going to fluctuate from day to day, so just make sure you are getting what you need over the course of a week.

Even though your daily caloric need rises by around 15 percent, your daily need for nutrients such as iron, folate, omega-3s, and other nutrients may increase by 50 percent. It’s a good idea to start eating these extra micronutrients early in pregnancy.

I bear a lot about vitamin D deficiency. How much vitamin D do I need?

Vitamin D helps build strong muscles and bones, for both you and your baby. Recent research reveals that 94 percent of pregnant African American mothers, 60 percent of Hispanic mothers, and 50 percent of Caucasian mothers have vitamin D deficiency. Low levels of maternal vitamin D are associated with:

- Increased C-section rates
- More allergies in baby
- Weaker bones in baby and mom

Consider these guidelines:

- Ask your healthcare provider to measure your vitamin D blood level.
- Depending on your diet, sun exposure, and blood levels, your healthcare provider may recommend a supplement containing 1,000 to 4,000 IU daily.
- The best two sources of vitamin D are salmon and sunshine. So, eat fish and go outside for around fifteen minutes a day, with bare arms and legs exposed to the

sun, weather permitting. (See page 49 for other sources of vitamin D.)

I suffer from food allergies. What can I do to protect my baby from allergies?

You'll be happy to know that new studies show that you can make several health changes to protect your baby from allergies. First, of course, limit foods you are allergic to. It used to be thought that if mother ate less of the foods most likely to cause allergies, such as dairy, wheat, shellfish,

soy, nuts, and eggs, her baby would be less likely to be allergic to these foods. Since there is no scientific proof of this, allergists now advise mothers to eliminate only the foods they are certain they are allergic to. This sensible advice lowers your risk of undernutrition. Omega-3 fish oil, vitamin D, and probiotics have been shown to lower your baby's chances of getting allergies such as asthma and eczema. Be sure to consume plenty of these. And breastfeeding is one of the best ways to reduce later allergies in your child.