



THE GOOD FOOD GUIDE TO PREGNANT TIMES

WITH CONSTANT CRAVINGS AND HORMONAL CHANGES, EATING HEALTHY WHEN YOU'RE PREGNANT CAN GET DIFFICULT. HOWEVER, EATING RIGHT IS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE FOR YOUR GROWING BABY. **BINDU GOPAL RAO** DRAWS UP A LIST OF NUTRITIOUS, EXPERT-APPROVED MEALS.

Pregnancy is one of the most enriching and rewarding experiences for a woman and is also the time when the body undergoes several hormonal changes. It is also the time when one needs to eat for herself and her baby. So, how does she ensure she is making the right food choices? Read on for an expert-backed guide to picking the right foods when pregnant.

NUTRITION MATTERS

Food consumed by a -to-be-mom is her baby's main source of nourishment. "So, a pregnant woman must ensure that she chooses a variety of healthy foods and beverages to provide the important nutrients a baby needs for growth and development. During pregnancy, the goal is to be eating nutritious foods most of the time. To maximise pre-natal nutrition, they must emphasise on the following five food groups: fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and dairy products," avers Dr Vishaka Munjal, Senior Consultant and Laparoscopic Surgeon, Apollo Cradle Royale, New Delhi. At the same time, it is important not to "eat for two" in the literal sense as you

could be piling on unnecessary calories. Dr Shilva, Consultant Gynaecologist, Paras Bliss Hospital, Panchkula, says, "Increase the intake of vitamins and minerals in your diet. Eat nutritious food, rather than eating more. Avoid junk foods and take to eating a lot of fruits and vegetables." Adequate amount of nutrients such as calcium, iron, zinc, vitamin A, vitamin B12, vitamin C, and folic acid should be included in the diet. Proteins are essential for the growth of the foetus, development of the placenta and maternal tissues. So, protein-rich foods like whole pulses, curd, paneer, egg, chicken, fish, legumes, milk and milk products should be encouraged. Calcium is also important in pregnancy for the growth and development of the bones of the foetus and for the mother to avoid demineralisation of her bones. Calcium-rich foods include banana, raisins, milk, cheese, yoghurt, dark leafy greens like spinach, kale, turnips, and collard greens, fortified cereals such as raisin bran, cornflakes, fortified orange juice, soya beans, enriched breads, grains and waffles," says Daljit Kaur, Senior Nutritionist, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi.



QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

A well-balanced diet interspersed with small frequent meals during pregnancy is very important for maintaining the health and well-being of the mother as well as that of the growing foetus. Dr Sahana K, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynecologist, Medikoe, says, “Normally, pregnant women require 300 kcal more than their non-pregnancy requirements in the second trimester and an addition of 450kcal in the third trimester. Foods rich in folic acid such as citrus fruits and lentils are recommended prior to pregnancy and up to 12 weeks. This is essential to prevent neural tube defect in the offspring.”

Small frequent meal patterns help overcome heartburn. Dr Seemma Saadikha, Functional Medicine expert says, “Increase servings of fresh vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds to satiate your increased appetite during pregnancy. Eating regularly to maintain energy levels throughout the day helps prevent morning sickness. Don't overeat—large meals can drain energy. Instead of eating three big meals per day, try six mini-meals

to spread your kilojoules' intake more evenly. This will result in more constant blood sugar and insulin levels.”

Gita Ramesh, Joint Managing Director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group says, “Basmati rice is a preferable option for the Ayurveda dietary regime during pregnancy. Vegetables such as sweet potato, sprouts, parsley and squash cannot stay out of the list because of their high nutritional value. Kidney and lime beans, chicken and fish in moderate quantity are some other important satvik foods that the Ayurvedic pregnancy diet is incomplete without. The mother-to-be is recommended to eat rice mixed with milk in liquid or semi-solid form with ghee.”

Lifestyle and nutrition consultant Tripti Gupta advises, “Eat at small intervals alternating between sweet and salty options, for example, a fruit followed by chaas followed by dalia upma followed by coconut water. This simple trick not only keeps you fit and light, it also maintains a good balance of electrolytes in your body.” Your choices and eating habits and overall lifestyle during pregnancy

influence your child's health and habits in life. "Junk eating can cause stress, however. When you crave something sweet/salty/sour, choose the healthier alternative over the junk. Add coconut to the diet as its fatty components satiates food cravings. Add ghee to the diet as it adds to the calories and is good for strength and immunity," says Gauri Gandhi, Founder, Bombay Barons Pvt.Ltd.


Sherine Thomas, Chief Dietician, Aster MIMS (a unit of Aster DM Healthcare), says, "Some typical Indian food items that can be included are *poha*, multigrain *dosas* or *thalipeeth* (with *jowar*, *soya*, *nachni* and *bajra*), *khichdi*, vegetable upma, etc. for breakfast; vegetables, sprouts, *dal*, *chapatis*, rice for lunch and dinner. Snacks can



include cereal puffs, *khakras*, *methi* rotis or *puris*, *rajgira laddus* or *chikkis* and protein biscuits. Non-vegetarians can include boiled eggs and grilled chicken and fish in their diet. Fruits such as peaches, pineapple, pear, berries, and apples add fibre to the diet and should be consumed." When you do not feel like eating solid foods, you may consume soups, fruit smoothies or buttermilk. "You may include garlic, fenugreek (*methi*), milk and almonds in your daily diet. For instance, you can prepare garlic *chutney*, *badam kheer* or *methi* vegetable. These foods, called galactagogue foods, stimulate the production of breast milk," says Namita Jain, Fitness Expert and Author.

However, remember that one size does not fit all. As long as you are feeling good and your baby is growing fine, your diet works.

ON THE BACKBURNER

While there are several food choices to make, there are others to avoid as well. Apart from a strict no alcohol and no smoking regimen, ensure you avoid excessive intake of tea, caffeine, caffeinated foods and beverages like coffee, cocoa and cola as the caffeine in them can cross over to the placenta and enter foetal circulation. Poonam Gupta, Director & Nutritionist, Golds Gym, Gurgaon, says, "Avoid raw eggs as they may be contaminated with salmonella, a bacterium that can cause fever, vomiting and diarrhoea. Watch out for restaurant-made Caesar salad dressing, homemade eggnog, raw cookie dough, and soft scrambled or sunny-side up eggs, any dish in which the eggs (both yolk and white) are not cooked completely." Likewise, sushi is not safe as it may contain illness-inducing parasites. Also avoid fresh juice and fish like swordfish, shark, and tile fish. Dr Shubha Rama Rao, Head, Gynaecology Department, St. Martha's Hospital, adds, "Raw salads, street foods, processed canned foods and artificial sweeteners should also be avoided as it contains preservatives which are harmful for the health of the mother and the baby." Dr Shuba Dharmana, General Practitioner, Dermatologist, Wellness Coach & Founder, LeJeune Group of Medspas, opines, "Soft cheeses such as brie, camembert and blue cheeses should be avoided because they can cause listeriosis, an infection that causes miscarriage and still birth. Soft cheese like feta, mozzarella, cream cheese, paneer, halloumi, goat's cheese are fine to eat if made from pasteurised milk." "Also, mothers can pass a toxoplasma infection on to her baby, which can cause problems such as blindness and mental disability later in life. To avoid toxoplasmosis, avoid raw or undercooked meats and poultry and raw and undercooked shellfish, such as clams, mussels, oysters and scallops," says Vinod Channa, Celebrity Fitness Expert. 

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