

Pregnancy Nutrition Myths



If your tummy is growing, than you are probably the recipient of unsolicited advice on everything from what not to do, to what not to eat. Frustrating, yes! But unfortunately some of the advice that well meaning friends and relatives give can actually hurt you. Let's take a look at some of the most common misconceptions.

Myth: Eat up, you're eating for two.

Fact: Whoa, slow down there and put the second helping of lasagna away. A pregnant woman may be eating for two, but one of them only weighs a few pounds. Your body only about 300 **extra calories** when you are pregnant That is about the amount in one (8 oz) cooked chicken breast, without the skin.

Myth: "My doctor says I'm right on target for a 30-pound weight gain." **Fact:**

The rules regarding pregnancy and weight gain have changed significantly in the past few years because so many women never lose their pregnancy weight gain, putting themselves at risk for obesity. Here are suggestions from the Institute of Medicine 2009 guidelines to give you a better idea.

TABLE 1: NEW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOTAL AND RATE OF WEIGHT GAIN DURING PREGNANCY, BY PREPREGNANCY BMI

Prepregnancy BMI	BMI+ (kg/m ²)	Total Weight Gain (lbs)	Rates of Weight Gain* 2nd and 3rd Trimester (lbs/week)
Underweight	<18.5	28-40	1 (1-1.3)
Normal weight	18.5-24.9	25-35	1 (0.8-1)
Overweight	25.0-29.9	15-25	0.6 (0.5-0.7)
Obese (includes all classes)	≥30.0	11-20	0.5 (0.4-0.6)

Calculate your BMI =

$$\frac{\text{weight (in lbs)}}{\text{height (in inches)}^2}$$

+ To calculate BMI go to www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/

* Calculations assume a 0.5-2 kg (1.1-4.4 lbs) weight gain in the first trimester (based on Siega-Riz et al., 1994; Abrams et al., 1995; Carmichael et al., 1997)

Myth: Salt will make you swell up.



Fact: **Salt** is an essential nutrient, even when you are pregnant and it should not be removed from your diet to prevent swelling. Some swelling in pregnancy is normal, if your swelling is continuous you may want to consider the other foods you are eating to be sure you are getting enough protein and water. Also take a serious look at the amount of time you are giving yourself to rest. Rule of thumb, salt your food to taste.

Sodium is an electrolyte, one of several minerals required by the body to regulate fluids. It also plays a role in maintaining the acid-base balance of blood, and helps nutrients cross cell membranes. During pregnancy and lactation, a woman's sodium metabolism (utilization) is altered by hormone activity. As a result, sodium needs are slightly higher for women at this time in their lives. Still, most women get plenty of sodium naturally in a typical diet and there is rarely a need for additional salt use.

Americans typically consume 4,000-8,000 mg each day, well above their daily needs. A goal for moderation for all adults, including pregnancy and lactation is approximately **1,500 mg** of sodium per day. *One teaspoon of salt has 2300 mg of sodium.*



Myth: Don't sweat it.

Doctors used to advise their pregnant patients to put their feet up for the entire 40 weeks. These days we know that staying active during pregnancy will help you feel better, manage your stress, and even prevent pregnancy complications like gestational diabetes. It may also shorten the duration of your labor and help you snap back in shape postpartum. Even if you haven't been following a regular exercise routine, you can start a walking program during pregnancy. Just make sure to check in with your doctor first.

Myth: A low fat diet will help keep the extra weight off.

Fact: Fat is essential to your body's metabolism of water soluble vitamins, it is not the enemy. Fat is no more the culprit for overweight than carbohydrates or proteins are. The problem is not that it is eaten, but that too much is eaten. Too much food of any type will be stored by your body for later use as fat. Low fat diets can be extremely dangerous in pregnancy because most foods considered "fatty" are good sources of protein, such as eggs, meats and cheese. A diet low in protein foods is dangerous in pregnancy.

Your fat intake should be 30% of your daily caloric intake (go back to EER and see what you need!)

<p>Saturated Fats to Avoid</p> <p>Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Butterfat● Coconut oil● Palm kernel oil● Palm oil● Shortening● Butter● Hard margarine● Lard● Bacon fat● Cocoa butter● Hydrogenated vegetable oil <p><i>*Palm Oil and shortening are found in commercially fried foods</i></p> <p><i>*Butterfat, shortening, Lard, Cocoa butter and butter are found in bakery items</i></p>	<p>Unsaturated Fats to Consume: (6-8 servings/day or fewer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Olive oil● Canola oil● Safflower oil● Corn oil● Soybean oil● Cottonseed oil● Wheat germ oil● Flaxseed oil● Sunflower oil● Peanut oil● Fish (cooked!)● Margarine made from oils above (lite tub margarine is best)● Peanut butter and other nut butters● Low-fat or fat-free salad dressings● Low-fat or fat-free mayonnaise● Nuts, especially walnuts, almonds, and pistachios
	<p>One serving equals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 1 teaspoon margarine or vegetable oil● 1 tablespoon salad dressing● 1 tablespoon nuts

Myth: You need meat.

With all the extra iron and protein you need during pregnancy, it seems like it would be nearly impossible to be meat-free and healthy.

Getting 60 grams of protein each day is a bigger chore when you don't eat animal products, but if you include these foods in your diet, you can rack up the grams pretty easily:

- 1 cup edamame 29 grams
- ¼ cup soynuts 17 grams
- 1 veggie burger 18 grams
- 2 T peanut butter 8 g

Vegetarian sources of iron include:

- 1 cup fortified cereal (Total Raisin Bran) 18 mg
- 1 cup cooked spinach 6.43 mg
- 1 cup instant fortified oatmeal 3.96 mg
- 1 cup cooked Swiss chard 3.95 mg
- 1 cup dried apricots 3.46 mg

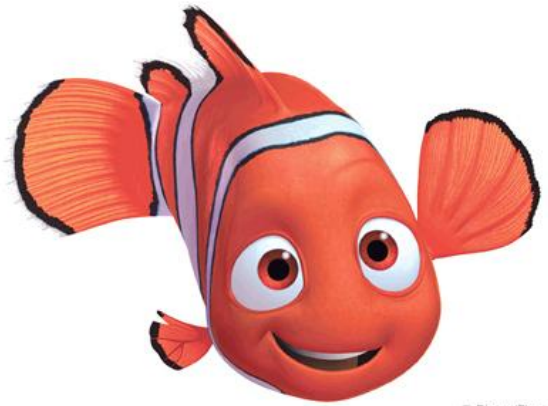


You also want to make sure you're getting enough DHA omega-3. If seafood isn't in your diet, try omega-3 enhanced eggs, walnuts, and DHA-fortified soymilk or juice.

Vitamin B12 is important for your baby's neurological development and is supplied by animal-derived foods like poultry, fish, meat, eggs, and dairy. If you follow a vegetarian or vegan diet and are breastfeeding, you may want to talk to your pediatrician to make sure your baby's getting enough of this nutrient.

Myth: You should eat the fish.

Fact: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advise pregnant and breastfeeding women to eat up to 12 ounces of **low-mercury fish** a week.



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Fish with low levels of mercury

- Anchovies
- Butterfish
- Catfish
- Clams
- Crab (domestic)
- Crawfish/crayfish
- Croaker (Atlantic)
- Flounder
- Haddock (Atlantic)
- Hake
- Herring
- Mackerel (North Atlantic, chub)
- Mullet
- Oysters
- Perch (ocean)
- Plaice
- Pollock
- Salmon (canned)
- Salmon (fresh)
- Scallops
- Shad (American)
- Shrimp
- Sole (Pacific)
- Squid (calamari)
- Tilapia
- Trout (freshwater)
- Whitefish
- Whiting

Fish with moderate levels of mercury

- Bass (striped, black)
- Carp
- Cod (Alaskan)
- Croaker (white Pacific)
- Halibut (Atlantic)
- Halibut (Pacific)
- Jacksmelt (silverside)
- Lobster
- Mahimahi
- Monkfish
- Perch (freshwater)
- Sablefish
- Skate
- Snapper
- Tuna (canned chunk light)
- Tuna (skipjack)
- Weakfish (sea trout)

Fish with high levels of mercury

- Bluefish
- Grouper
- Mackerel (Spanish, gulf)
- Sea bass (Chilean)
- Tuna (canned albacore, ahi)
- Tuna (yellowfin)
- Mackerel (king)
- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tilefish

However, many women think it's just too confusing to understand which fish are OK to eat, so they avoid all types of fish, to the detriment of their child. Women with a low seafood intake (less than 12 ounces a week) had children who scored lower on tests for fine motor, communication, and social development skills from ages six months to eight years, according to a 2007 paper published in the *Lancet*.

Fish contains DHA (docosahexanoic acid), an omega-3 polyunsaturated fat, that is essential for your baby's brain and eye development. Our bodies don't make it, so we need to get it from the food we eat. It's found mainly in fatty cold-water fish, like ***salmon, herring, tuna, trout, and oysters, but now you can find DHA in everything from orange juice to yogurt.***

Unfortunately, most pregnant and breast-feeding women only get about 50 mg of DHA a day. Low levels of DHA in breast milk and low seafood consumption levels have been linked to postpartum depression, which affects 10–15% of mothers. So make sure to get 200 mg a day while you're pregnant and also throughout breast-feeding.



***Only eat it when
it's cooked!***

Myth: “There’s no way to get all the calcium I need naturally while pregnant.”

Fact: You need the same amount of calcium during pregnancy and when breast-feeding as you do when you’re not pregnant—1,000 milligrams per day. In fact, when pregnant, your body becomes superefficient at absorbing the mineral. However, since most of us are deficient in calcium *before* we get pregnant, it is recommended that we take a multivitamin that contains iron, folic acid, calcium, and vitamin D in addition to getting it from food sources.

If you avoid dairy products, there are plenty of other ways to get calcium, which is important for building strong bones for your baby:

- 1 cup fortified cereal (Total Raisin Bran) 1,000 mg
- 1 cup cooked Swiss chard 102 mg
- 1 cup cooked broccoli 61 mg
- 1 cup cooked spinach 245 mg
- 1 cup cooked kale 94 mg
- 1 cup black beans 46 mg

