



Nutrition During and After Pregnancy

Eating well through pregnancy and while breastfeeding, based on NHS guidance

Good nutrition supports you and your baby through pregnancy and beyond. This is general guidance based on NHS advice, not a substitute for your maternity care. Your midwife, GP and health visitor are your first port of call and can tailor everything to you.

Keep taking your key supplements

- **Folic acid:** 400 micrograms a day until you are 12 weeks pregnant.
- **Vitamin D:** 10 micrograms a day throughout pregnancy and while breastfeeding.
- Avoid supplements containing vitamin A (retinol), and avoid liver.

Eating well in pregnancy

- You do not need to "eat for two." Only a small increase, around 200 kcal a day, is needed, and only in the last few months.
- Base meals on a balanced plate: 5+ fruit and veg, wholegrain carbs, protein, and dairy or fortified alternatives.
- Include iron and calcium for you and your baby.
- 2 portions of fish a week, one oily, but no more than 2 oily portions.

Foods and drinks to avoid (for safety)

- Unpasteurised and mould-ripened soft cheeses (brie, camembert, blue) unless cooked through, and pâté.
- Raw or undercooked meat and cold cured meats unless cooked, liver and high-dose vitamin A.
- Raw or undercooked eggs unless British Lion stamped, and raw shellfish.
- High-mercury fish (shark, swordfish, marlin), and limit tuna to 2 steaks or 4 cans a week.
- Alcohol: none is safest. Caffeine: 200 mg a day or less. Wash fruit, veg and salads, and take care with hygiene.

When in doubt, ask your midwife. The food rules in pregnancy are about safety, not perfection. If you are unsure about a particular food, your midwife or the NHS website will give you a quick, reliable answer.

After the birth and while breastfeeding

- You do not need a special diet. A balanced diet with plenty of fruit, veg, wholegrains, protein and fluids supports your recovery and your milk.
- Keep taking vitamin D 10 micrograms a day while breastfeeding. Breastfed babies are given their own vitamin D drops.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Caffeine: keep to 200 mg a day, as it passes into breast milk. Alcohol: none is safest, and if you do drink, keep it to 1 to 2 units once or twice a week and wait 2 to 3 hours before the next feed.

Your maternity team comes first. Pregnancy and the weeks after are looked after by your midwife, GP and health visitor. Always follow their advice, and see them for anything specific to you or your baby. For personalised pregnancy nutrition, ask to see a registered dietitian.

Where to learn more: the NHS (have a healthy diet in pregnancy, foods to avoid, breastfeeding and diet), the British Nutrition Foundation, and the British Dietetic Association (BDA). Your maternity team leads your care.

This leaflet is general nutritional guidance for education only, based on NHS public health advice. It is not medical advice, diagnosis, treatment or antenatal care, and it does not replace your midwife, GP, health visitor or a registered dietitian. Always follow your maternity team, particularly if you have a health condition or any concern about you or your baby.

Ready to take the next step? Book a free call or start your food diary analysis at performancenutritionlondon.co.uk