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Foods You Need in Pregnancy

Pregnant women need foods from each of the basic food groups every day. Here are the food groups, the amount of food you need to eat in each group, and why each food group is important:

Protein rich food

You need 3 servings every day

Protein foods include meat, fish, poultry (chicken & turkey), eggs, beans (including kidney, pinto, garbanzo or navy), nuts and peanut butter.

- Protein is the basic building block needed to make new cells and keep other cells healthy
- Protein foods are needed throughout pregnancy but are especially important in the last few months. During this time, your baby's brain cells develop at a very rapid rate. Protein makes smart kids!
- Protein foods also provide iron and B vitamins. Enough iron in your diet allows your baby to store iron. A healthy newborn has enough iron stored for the first 3 to 6 months after birth.
- Protein Tips! Eat nuts instead of chips

Have peanut butter on celery for a snack

Add cheese to your hamburgers

Put extra cheese on your pizza

Add kidney or garbanzo beans to salads

Fish is an excellent source of protein and is rich in essentially fatty acids.

It is recommended that you eat 12 oz of fish per week.

Avoid swordfish, tuna steaks, tilefish or king mackerel. You may have 1 serving light canned tuna/wk

Milk and milk products

You need 3 servings every day

Milk products include cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, and ice cream.

- Milk products provide calcium needed for healthy teeth and bones.
- Milk products promote normal muscle contraction and relaxation and help in the clotting of blood.
- Milk products also provide protein since these foods are protein rich.
- Quick Calcium! Have a milkshake

Try cheese and crackers instead of chips

Have cottage cheese with fruits

Try a yogurt dip with vegetables or fruit

Cream soups and custards are tasty

Fruits & vegetables

You need 4 servings a day

Included in these servings should be

- 1 serving of a Vitamin C rich fruit or vegetable such as grapefruit, oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, melons, green peppers, broccoli
- 1 serving of a Vitamin A rich fruit or vegetable such as dark green lettuce or spinach, yellow or orange vegetables such as carrots or squash.
- These foods provide vitamins and minerals that are needed for tissue to form and grow.
- Fruits & vegetables can also prevent constipation

Grains

You need 9 servings every day

Grains include breads, cereals, rice, noodles, tortillas, spaghetti, pasta, crackers, grits, oatmeal

Grains help provide vitamins and minerals

Grains help you get enough extra calories which are needed for energy

Many of these foods are high in iron

Whole grains like whole wheat breads, cornmeal, brown rice, and foods made with whole grains are best. These foods have more nutrients and add fiber to your diet. That is another way to prevent constipation.

Snacks your unborn baby will love!

- Eat lots of fresh fruit
- Keep fresh vegetables in the refrigerator
- Have some popcorn with little or no butter

- Make cookies with applesauce, pumpkin, carrots, raisins, zucchini or other fruits and vegetables

Foods to limit or avoid

- Foods high in nitrites such as bologna and other deli meats should be limited.
- Exclude soft, non-pasteurized cheeses such as brie from your diet
- It is recommended that you limit your caffeine intake.
- Limit all artificial sweeteners.
- More information regarding mercury content in specific fish may be found at www.epa.gov/ost/fish