

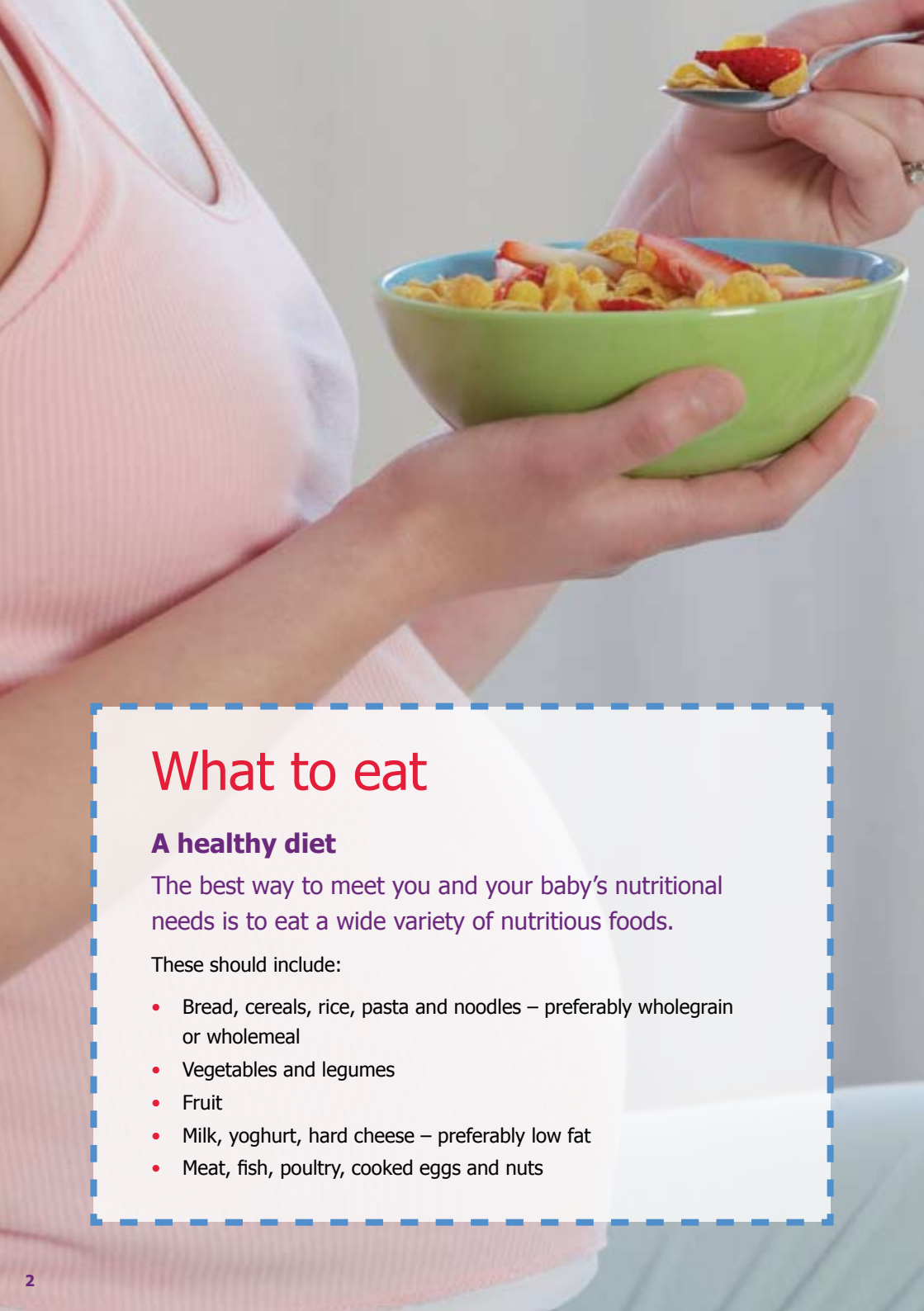


# Food safety during pregnancy



NSW Food Authority

safer food, clearer choices



## What to eat

### A healthy diet

The best way to meet you and your baby's nutritional needs is to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods.

These should include:

- Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles – preferably wholegrain or wholemeal
- Vegetables and legumes
- Fruit
- Milk, yoghurt, hard cheese – preferably low fat
- Meat, fish, poultry, cooked eggs and nuts

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating from the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing recommends:

	Try to consume each day	1 serving =
<b>Breads &amp; cereals</b> (including rice, pasta, noodles)	4-6 servings (preferably wholegrain or wholemeal)	2 slices of bread 1 medium bread roll 1 1/3 cups of breakfast cereal 1 cup cooked rice, pasta or noodles
<b>Vegetables &amp; legumes</b>	5-6 servings	1/2 cup cooked vegetables 1 cup of salad vegetables 1/2 cup cooked dried beans, peas, lentils or canned beans 1 small potato
<b>Fruit</b>	4 servings	1 medium apple 2 small pieces of fresh fruit (apricots, kiwi fruit, plums) 1/2 cup fruit juice 1 cup canned fruit (no added sugar)
<b>Protein</b> (meat, fish, poultry, cooked eggs, nuts)	1 1/2 servings	65-100g cooked meat or chicken 80-120g fish fillet 1/2 cup peanuts or almonds 2 small eggs
<b>Calcium</b> (milk, yoghurt, hard cheese)	2 servings	250ml of milk 250ml of calcium fortified soy beverages 40g (2 slices) of cheese 200g of yoghurt

Weight gain during pregnancy varies between women. It's normal to gain 12-14kg during pregnancy. So it is important not to diet or skip meals while you're pregnant – your baby grows every day and needs you to maintain a balanced, healthy diet.

## Vitamins, nutrients and minerals

During pregnancy your body needs extra vitamins, minerals and nutrients to help your baby develop. The best way of getting these vitamins is through your diet.



### Folate

Folate, a B vitamin, is important for your baby's development during early pregnancy because it helps prevent birth abnormalities like spina-bifida. If you have a family history of neural tube defects you should consult your doctor.

The best way to make sure you get enough folic acid is to take a daily folic acid supplement of at least 400 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) one month before becoming pregnant and during the first three months of pregnancy.

It is also important to eat foods that have added folic acid or are naturally rich in folate. Foods with folic acid added to them (fortified) include some breakfast cereals, breads and fruit juices. Check the nutrition information panel on the package to find out how much folate is present.

**Foods naturally rich in folate include green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, spinach and salad greens, chick peas, nuts, orange juice, some fruits and dried beans and peas.**

### Iron

Pregnancy increases your need for iron. Your baby draws enough iron from you to last it through the first five or six months after birth so it's vital that you consume more iron while pregnant. The recommended daily intake (RDI) of iron during pregnancy is 22mg per day. Some women may require 27mg per day.

Good sources of iron include:

- lean beef
- duck (with the skin removed)
- chicken
- fish
- green vegetables such as broccoli cabbage and spinach
- cooked legumes such as chick peas lentils, kidney and lima beans

Eating foods high in vitamin C will also help you to absorb iron. Try drinking a glass of orange juice when eating green vegetables or lean beef. You also need to watch out for caffeine. Tea, coffee and cola all reduce the body's absorption of iron.

## Calcium

Calcium is essential to keep bones healthy and strong. During the third trimester of pregnancy, your baby needs a large amount of calcium as they start to develop and strengthen their bones.

If you're not getting enough calcium in your diet, the calcium needed by your baby will be drawn from your own bones. To prevent this happening and the risk of osteoporosis later in life make sure you are getting enough calcium in your diet for both of you.

The recommended daily intake of calcium during pregnancy is 840mg per day. Some women may need up to 1000mg/day. **Dairy foods, such as milk, hard cheese and yoghurt, and calcium fortified soy milk are excellent sources of calcium.**

## Omega 3

Omega 3 is important for the development of the central nervous system, brain growth and eye development in your baby before and after he or she is born.

**Good Omega 3 foods include oily fish like salmon, trout, herring, anchovies and sardines. Omega 3 is also found in chicken, eggs, canned tuna and flaxseed oil.**

**If you think you are not getting enough vitamins or nutrients please contact your health practitioner.**

# Safer eating during pregnancy

Red = Don't eat. Purple = Eat with caution. Blue = OK to eat.

Food	Examples	What to do
<b>MEAT, POULTRY &amp; SEAFOOD</b>		
<b>Processed meats</b>	Ham, salami, luncheon, chicken meat etc.	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
<b>Raw meat</b>	Any raw meat, raw chicken or other poultry, beef, pork etc.	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
<b>Poultry</b>	Cold chicken or turkey e.g. used in sandwich bars	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Hot take-away chicken	Purchase freshly cooked, use immediately, store leftovers in fridge and use within a day of cooking
	Home cooked	Ensure chicken is cooked thoroughly, use immediately – store any leftovers in fridge and use within a day of cooking
<b>Paté</b>	Refrigerated paté or meat spreads	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
<b>Seafood</b>	Raw seafood	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Ready-to-eat chilled peeled prawns	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Smoked fish and seafood	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Cooked fish and seafood	Cook until steaming hot, eat while hot, store leftovers in the fridge and use within a day of cooking
<b>Sushi</b>	Store-bought	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Home-made	Don't use raw meat or seafood, eat immediately
<b>Cooked meats</b>	Beef, pork, chicken, mince	Cook thoroughly, eat while hot
<b>DAIRY &amp; EGGS</b>		
<b>Cheese</b>	Soft and semi-soft cheese e.g. brie, camembert, ricotta, fetta, blue etc.	<b>DON'T EAT</b> unless in a fully cooked dish e.g. spinach and ricotta cannelloni
	Processed cheese, cheese spreads, cottage cheese, cream cheese etc.	Store in the fridge, eat within two days of opening pack
	Hard cheese e.g. cheddar, tasty cheese	Store in the fridge
<b>Ice cream</b>	Soft serve	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Packaged frozen ice cream	Keep and eat frozen

Pull this table out to keep as a handy reminder of foods to avoid during pregnancy.

Food	Examples	What to do
<b>Milk</b>	Unpasteurised (raw)	<b>DON'T DRINK OR USE</b>
	Pasteurised	Keep refrigerated, drink within use-by-date
<b>Other dairy</b>	Cream, yoghurt	Check use-by-date, keep refrigerated
	Custard	Don't eat unless heated until steaming hot
<b>Eggs</b>		Cook thoroughly
<b>VEGETABLES &amp; FRUIT</b>		
<b>Salads</b>	Pre-prepared or pre-packaged salads e.g. from salad bars, smorgasbords	<b>DON'T EAT</b>
	Home-made	Wash and dry salad ingredients well just before making and eating salads, store any leftover salads in fridge and use within a day of preparation
<b>Fruit</b>	All fresh fruits	Wash and dry well before eating
<b>Vegetables</b>	All fresh vegetables	Wash and dry well just before eating raw or wash before cooking
	Frozen vegetables	Cook; don't eat uncooked
<b>Parsley</b>	Home-grown and store bought	Don't eat raw; can use in cooked dishes
<b>Bean sprouts</b>	Alfalfa sprouts, broccoli sprouts, onion sprouts, sunflower sprouts, clover sprouts, radish sprouts, snowpea sprouts, mung beans and soybeans.	<b>DON'T EAT</b> either raw or cooked
<b>OTHER FOODS</b>		
<b>Leftovers</b>	Cooked foods	Store leftovers covered in the fridge, eat within a day and always reheat until steaming hot
<b>Canned foods</b>	Tinned fruit, vegetables, fish etc.	Store unused portions in the fridge in clean, sealed containers and use within a day
<b>Stuffing</b>	Stuffing from chicken or poultry	Don't eat unless cooked separately and eat hot
<b>Hummus</b>	Store-bought or home-made	Store in fridge, eat within 2 days of opening/making



## What to avoid

### **Foodborne illness**

When you're pregnant, hormonal changes in your body lower your immune system which can make it harder to fight off illness and infections. Preventing foodborne illness and protecting yourself from other food risks during pregnancy is extremely important.

## Safety tips to prevent foodborne illness:

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep cold food cold and in the fridge (below 5° Celsius) and hot food steaming hot (above 60° Celsius) before serving. This will stop the growth of food poisoning bacteria.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Separate raw and cooked food and don't use the same utensils, especially cutting boards and knives, for both.</li></ul>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Defrost frozen food in the fridge or microwave. Never on the bench or in the sink.</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep utensils and your kitchen clean.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cook food thoroughly. Cook poultry and minced meats until well done, right through to the centre. No pink should be left visible and all juices should be clear.</li></ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• And remember, the best way to prevent the spread of bacteria is to always wash and dry your hands thoroughly before and after handling food.</li></ul> |

## Listeria

Listeria is a type of bacteria found in some foods which causes a serious infection called listeriosis. It can take up to six weeks for the flu-like symptoms to occur and if transmitted to your unborn baby can lead to miscarriage, infection of your newborn and stillbirth. The best way to avoid this is through hygienic preparation, storing and handling of food.

Ideally, you should eat only freshly cooked food and well-washed, (freshly prepared) fruit and vegetables. Leftovers can be eaten if they are refrigerated promptly and kept no longer than a day.

### These mostly chilled, ready to eat foods should be avoided altogether:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soft and semi-soft cheese</li><li>• Cold cooked chicken</li><li>• Cold processed meats</li><li>• Prepared salads</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raw seafood</li><li>• Soft serve ice-cream</li><li>• Unpasteurised dairy products</li><li>• Paté</li></ul> |
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## Salmonella

Salmonella can cause nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, fever and headache. Pregnant women are not at an increased risk of contracting salmonellosis, but in rare cases it may trigger miscarriage.

**So it's advisable to avoid foods that contain raw egg and always cook meat, chicken and eggs thoroughly.** In addition, the NSW Food Authority recommends that pregnant women do not eat any type of sprout (including alfalfa sprouts, broccoli sprouts, onion sprouts, sunflower sprouts, clover sprouts, radish sprouts, snowpea sprouts, mung beans and soybeans) either raw or cooked.

## Other food risks

### Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis while uncommon in pregnant women can occur if you eat undercooked meats, or unwashed fruit and vegetables (particularly from gardens with household cats). Most commonly, however, infection is caused by touching cat and dog faeces when cleaning the kitty litter tray or contaminated soil in the garden. It is particularly important to avoid toxoplasmosis during pregnancy because it can lead to brain damage or blindness in your unborn child.

#### Tips for avoiding toxoplasmosis:

- Don't eat undercooked or raw meat
- Don't drink unpasteurised goat's milk
- Don't handle cat litter
- When gardening wear gloves
- Always wash your hands after touching animals

### Mercury in fish

Fish are rich in protein and minerals, low in saturated fat, and contain Omega 3 fatty acids. Omega 3 fatty acids are important for the development of the central nervous system in babies, before and after they are born.

Although it's really important to eat fish during pregnancy and breastfeeding, you need to be careful about which fish you choose. That's because some fish may contain mercury levels that may harm an unborn baby or young child's developing nervous system.

The following table will help you safely include fish as an important part of a balanced diet.

<b>Pregnant &amp; breastfeeding women &amp; women planning pregnancy</b> 1 serve equals 150g	<b>Children [up to 6 years]</b> 1 serve equals 75g
2-3 serves per week of any fish and seafood not listed below	
<b>OR</b>	
1 serve per fortnight of Shark [Flake] or Billfish [Broadbill, Swordfish and Marlin] and no other fish that fortnight	
<b>OR</b>	
1 serve per week of Orange Roughy (Deep Sea Perch) or Catfish and no other fish that week	

## Also watch out for...

### Alcohol

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth or your baby could be born with foetal alcohol syndrome (slow growth before and after birth, and mental disabilities). As it is not known whether there is a safe level of drinking during pregnancy the National Health and Medical Research Council advises women that it is best not to drink during pregnancy.

### Caffeine

Small amounts of caffeine are safe during pregnancy but excessive volumes may increase the risk of miscarriage and premature birth. Caffeine is in coffee, tea, chocolate and cola (and some other soft drinks). NSW Health recommends that pregnant women limit themselves to 200mg of caffeine daily. That is 2 cups of ground coffee or 2 1/2 cups instant coffee, 4 cups medium-strength tea, 4 cups cocoa/hot chocolate or 6 cups of cola.

### Smoking

Smoking is dangerous for your baby. Smoking increases the risk of premature birth, low birth weight, respiratory problems and SIDS. There is no safe level of smoking. For help to quit smoking call the Quitline on 131848.



For further advice on food safety during pregnancy visit:

**NSW Food Authority**

[www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/pregnancy.html](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/pregnancy.html)

**NSW Health**

Pregnancy Care

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/living/parent.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/living/parent.html)

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)**

Listeria

[www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/factsheets2001/listeriaandpregnancy630.cfm](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/factsheets2001/listeriaandpregnancy630.cfm)

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