

Quick ideas

- banana sandwiches
- eggs on toast
- baked beans
- ice cream or yoghurt on fruit
- pasta with cheese and a tomato sauce
- tuna on salad or toast
- stir-fried rice with vegetables
- hot fresh take-away chicken and vegetables
- a bowl of cereal
- burritos or tacos
- peanut butter on toast
- homemade pizza

A variety of good foods every day will provide the vitamins, minerals and nutrition you and your baby need. If your lifestyle stops you from eating well or you are not gaining weight, ask for advice. You do not need vitamin tablets unless you are really run down. Always ask a medical professional first before you take anything when you are pregnant.



Contact details

Women's Alcohol and Drug Service
 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday
 264 Cardigan Street Victoria 3053 (03) 9344 3631
 Email: womens.ads@rwh.org.au
 Website: www.rwh.org.au/wads
 After hours assistance
 RWH emergency department (03) 9344 2301

Other important numbers

Drug info line
 for written information
 and resources Free Call – 1300 858 584

Direct Line
 for counselling
 and referral (24/7) Free Call – 1800 888 236

The Royal Women's Hospital (03) 9344 2000

The Royal Women's Hospital
 Young Women's Program (03) 9344 2189
 Website: www.ypp.org.au

YSAS (Youth Substance Abuse Service) (03) 9418 1020

Women's Health Information Centre
 Free information about
 a range of women's health issues
 Melbourne callers (03) 9344 2007
 Rural/country callers 1800 442 007 (free call)
 Email: whic@rwh.org.au
 Website: <http://wellwomens.rwh.org.au>



Eating well and pregnancy

Advice for
 pregnant
 women using
 drugs
 or alcohol



Eating well during pregnancy means both you and your baby will be healthier, stronger and able to cope better with stress. All the nutrition you need can come from a daily intake of healthy food.

When you are pregnant, you need extra nutrition like:

- **Calcium** for healthy bones. Calcium comes from dairy foods like cheese, yoghurt and milk. Have about three serves a day (a milkshake, a small tub of yoghurt or a slice of cheese). If you don't like dairy foods, try soy milk with added calcium or speak to your doctor about a calcium supplement.
- Extra **iron** for your blood to prevent anaemia. Without enough iron you will feel tired and run down. Meat is the best source of iron, then chicken and fish. Other good sources are breakfast cereals with iron added, eggs, baked beans, green vegetables, wholemeal cereals and Milo. You will have a blood test to check for anaemia at your first pregnancy check-up. This will show if you need an iron tablet or not.
- Good quality food full of **vitamins, minerals and nutrition** such as fruit and vegetables, breads and cereals, dairy foods and meat (or eggs, chicken, fish, nuts, beans, tofu). Food does not have to be expensive or complicated, just varied.
- Enough food and rest to gradually gain some **weight** while pregnant. Everyone is different, if you were underweight before pregnancy it is good to gain a bit of extra weight. If you were overweight or are gaining weight quickly ask your doctor or midwife for advice or referral to a nutritionist about what to do.

Other things to be aware of

- **Good food hygiene, storage and handling** help prevent food contamination from bacteria called listeria that can be harmful to the baby. Make sure your kitchen and utensils are clean. Wash salads well; avoid sandwiches that have been sitting around for a long time and heat food well. Avoid cold meats, soft cheeses, paté, soft serve icecream, uncooked seafood and leftover foods.
- Eating fish should be encouraged during pregnancy but there are certain fish that are believed to have **high mercury levels** and should be eaten less. These include shark (flake), broadbill, marlin and swordfish (limit to once a fortnight) and orange roughy and catfish (limit to once a week).
- Most illegal **drugs** and the **lifestyle** around them can upset your appetite and eating. To improve this, start by eating regularly, every few hours. Try to eat whenever you are hungry and drink up to eight glasses of fluid (water is best then milk and juice). If you are stressed, slow down, relax and eat; you will feel better.
- It is hard to eat well if you do not have a stable place to live or enough money for food. You might not have learnt to cook and shop for food, or you might not have a lot of energy or time to cook for the family and yourself. Please **ask for help** if you need it.
- **Smoking** decreases your appetite and increases the amount of vitamins your body needs, so be extra careful to eat well if smoking when pregnant. Smoking also puts the health of your baby at risk.
- **Folate** supplements are recommended before pregnancy and for the first three months to prevent birth defects like spina bifida. Ask for more advice about this if you are concerned.

After you have had your baby, you still need to eat well to cope with your new life and stresses. This is particularly important if you are planning to breastfeed.

Healthy suggestions

- If you are hungry, stop and grab a snack. Try easy snacks like bananas, yoghurt, biscuits and cheese, milkshakes, sandwiches, fruit or a bowl of cereal with milk.
- Have at least one meal a day containing meat, chicken, eggs or fish with some salad or vegetables. This could be a hamburger or an Asian meal, an egg and salad sandwich, pizza or pasta with salad, or a cooked meal.
- Have cereals, fruit or sandwiches at other times and a glass of milk or Milo.
- Ask a friend or family member to cook or shop for you if you can't do it yourself.
- Avoid too much coffee, cola and 'energy' drinks. When you are thirsty drink more water or fruit juice. If you are drinking any alcohol talk to your doctor or midwife.
- If you don't eat fruit, then have a glass of orange juice and some salad or vegetables instead. If you don't eat vegetables, have fruit.

