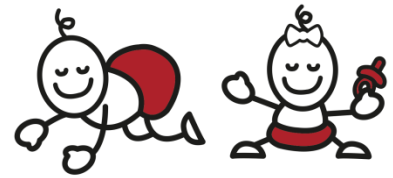


# Diet and Weight: Myth Busters



## **I am pregnant. Should I be eating for two?**

### **It's not true!**

Amazingly, your baby takes everything he or she needs from your body. Up until the third trimester (six months into your pregnancy) your baby grows well without any extra calories at all. It is more important that you ensure your diet is rich in nutrients such as iron, calcium and other vitamins and minerals so that your body can provide enough for the both of you.

## **I think I am several weeks pregnant. Is it too late to take folic acid?**

Folic acid is important in the early weeks of pregnancy to help prevent spina bifida. Women are encouraged to take 400mcg a day before they become pregnant and for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Start taking the supplements daily from now until you have had your scan and know you are beyond 12 weeks. You can keep taking it throughout the pregnancy if you wish but the main benefit to your baby is in those very early weeks.

## **What foods should I avoid in pregnancy?**

When you are pregnant you are more vulnerable to food poisoning. Some food poisoning bacteria can cross the placenta and harm your baby, so take extra care with food hygiene in the kitchen. Don't eat food that is past its use-by date, and make sure that you cook and reheat foods thoroughly.

To find out what food to avoid in pregnancy visit our Foods to avoid during pregnancy fact sheet.

## **When I am out shopping or eating out I keep forgetting what to avoid**

Try printing out our Foods to avoid fact sheet and putting it in your purse for when you're out and about – or keep a list as a note on your mobile phone. Over the course of the pregnancy you'll probably start to remember them.

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## **How much weight will I gain when I'm pregnant?**

All of us gain some weight when we're pregnant, especially at the end of pregnancy, and each of us is different, that is why doctors find it hard to say how much weight gain is OK for each person. The important thing is to keep weight gain to a safe and healthy level for you and your baby. The weight you put on includes your baby, the placenta, and the extra fluid in your bloodstream, the water around your baby, your growing breasts, and some extra fat stores to protect your baby.

## **I hate the thought of putting on weight. Can I do anything to stop it?**

Everyone puts on weight when they're pregnant, and it is important that you do for your health and your baby's. This is definitely not the time for a crash diet! Remember, much of the weight will be lost with the birth of your baby and placenta. Instead of worrying about putting on weight, focus on being as healthy as you possibly can, getting a balanced amount of different foods. This will keep you feeling well and help prevent too much weight gain. It's also really important to stay active during your pregnancy, as this will help keep your muscles in tone.

## **I have always been on and off diets. Can you recommend a safe diet for pregnancy?**

Even if you are overweight, the advice is to avoid going on a diet, unless you have been put on a closely monitored weight management programme by your doctor or dietician. Try instead to improve the quality of what you eat. Look at how to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your diet and cut back on high fat and sugary snacks. Eat proper meals and do not binge or use laxatives.

## **I'm a vegetarian and pregnant - everyone's saying I should eat meat. Is this true?**

You can have a very healthy pregnancy without eating meat. But you do need to make sure that you have enough protein (from foods like beans, lentils, tofu, quorn, milk, cheese and yoghurt), and iron (from lentils, dried apricots, green leafy vegetables).

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