

Regular physical activity is essential



Physical activity will also help you to cope with labour and get back into shape after the birth. Other benefits include, reducing excessive weight gain, lowering the risk of high blood pressure and diabetes. It also improves fitness, sleep and mood.

Aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity **every week**.

If you have not been practicing exercise before, start gradually and stay active for as long as you **feel comfortable**.

Take care with strenuous exercise, Avoid lying flat on your back for prolonged periods and exercise where there is a risk of falling.

Take caution



Wash raw vegetables thoroughly before eating them, to reduce the risk of infection from **toxoplasmosis** or listeria.

Raw sprouts, including alfalfa and mung beans may carry **salmonella**.

Unpasteurized foods like miso and sauerkraut may contain other harmful bacteria, such as **E.coli**, which could cause premature birth or even miscarriage.

Avoid caffeine



Any amount of caffeine during pregnancy increases risk of miscarriage, stillbirth and low birth weight. Reduce intake over a couple of weeks with the aim to **eliminate completely**. **Decaffeinated versions are safe**. *See our *Diet, lifestyle and fertility factsheet for the caffeine content of some common drinks*.

National Health Service

Eating healthily during pregnancy is important for your own health and the health of your developing baby.

Vegan mums-to-be need to make sure they get enough **iron, vitamin B12 and vitamin D** [Eat Well, 2020]

[nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/vegetarian-and-vegan-mums-to-be](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/vegetarian-and-vegan-mums-to-be)

[nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pregnancy-exercise](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pregnancy-exercise)

References

Diet and fertility: Panth N et al. The Influence of Diet on Fertility and the Implications for Public Health Nutrition in the United States. Front Public Health. 2018 July

Calcium: Hofmeyr GJ et al. Calcium supplementation during pregnancy for preventing hypertensive disorders and related problems. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2014 Jun

Physical activity: [rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/physical-activity-pregnancy](https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/physical-activity-pregnancy)

Alcohol and baby health: [drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/fertility-and-pregnancy/foetal-alcohol-syndrome-fas](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/fertility-and-pregnancy/foetal-alcohol-syndrome-fas)

Alcohol and fertility: [drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/fertility-and-pregnancy/is-alcohol-harming-your-fertility](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/fertility-and-pregnancy/is-alcohol-harming-your-fertility)

Omega-3 fatty acid Middleton P et al. Omega-3 fatty acid addition during pregnancy. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2018;11:CD003402.

Caffeine James JE. Maternal caffeine consumption and pregnancy outcomes. BMJ Evid-Based Medic. August 2020

Healthy Vegan Pregnancy



A well-planned vegan diet provides all the nutrients you need for you and your growing baby.



A healthy pregnancy starts before conception.

Emotional wellbeing, healthy environment and physical activity, along with diet, are all important factors at this significant stage of life.

“A balanced vegan diet can be enjoyed by children and adults, including during pregnancy and breastfeeding, if the nutritional intake is well-planned.”

[British Dietetic Association, 2017]

Dr Miriam Martinez-Biarge
Paediatrician



Planning your pregnancy

Folic Acid B9

Folic acid

Start taking 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid each day. Ideally start 2-3 months before conception. This can reduce the risk of spina bifida by up to 70%.

**Women with a history of neural tube defect and women on anti-epileptic drugs may need to take a higher dose of folic acid.*



Iodine I

Iodine

Plants are low in iodine.

Although some plant milks are fortified, the most reliable source is a supplement (200 mcg daily). Do not start eating seaweed during pregnancy/breastfeeding. If your diet before pregnancy included seaweed do not stop eating them before speaking with a dietitian, as your body might have become used to high iodine intakes.

Vitamin B12

Vitamin B 12

Vegan diets are low in B12 as it's only available from fortified foods or supplements. It is essential for the development of brain and nerve cells. The recommended daily amount is 25-100mcg or 1,000mcg twice a week.



Vitamin D

Vitamin D 3

When your skin is exposed to sunlight, it makes vitamin D. Supplement with 15-25 mcg (600-1,000 IU) of plant-based D3 everyday, when sun exposure is limited, particularly during winter months. Our recommendations assumes that those on a vegan diet may not be consuming vitamin D from food sources. Please do check with your doctor as individual needs may vary.

During pregnancy

Make sure you are eating plenty of **fruits** and **vegetables**, **grains**, **starchy veg**, **beans**, **nuts** and **seeds**.



Vitamin A

Vitamin A

Vitamin A requirements double during breastfeeding, so it is worth increasing intake during pregnancy. Eat carotenoid-rich vegetables, such as sweet potato, carrot, pumpkin, peppers, spinach and broccoli, everyday. Your body converts beta-carotene into vitamin A.



Zinc Zn

Zinc

Essential for your baby's growth. Best plant sources are pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, quinoa, oats and legumes, and nutritional yeast.



Iron Fe

Iron

Include iron-rich foods, (legumes, nuts, seeds, whole wheat bread) in every meal along with vitamin C-rich foods to increase absorption. These include oranges, strawberries, kiwi, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers. Squeeze lemon or lime onto cooked greens or salads.



Protein

Protein

Protein needs increase during the third trimester and breastfeeding from 55g to 80g a day. So include a serving of a high protein food into each meal and snacks. Beans and legumes, soya milk, tofu, tempeh, nuts and seeds are good plant sources.



Calcium Ca

Calcium

High calcium intake may protect against high blood pressure and pre-eclampsia in pregnancy. Daily consumption of calcium-fortified plant milks is one of the best ways to meet your calcium needs. Calcium-set tofu, green vegetables (collard greens, kale, spring greens, pak-choi, broccoli, rocket), chia and sesame seeds, almonds and beans are also high in calcium. If calcium intake is low consider taking a supplement of 500mg of calcium per day.



Omega3

Omega-3 fatty acids

Walnuts, flaxseed and chia seeds provide short-chain omega-3 (ALA). This may not produce adequate amounts of long-chain omega-3 - DHA - which plays an important role in your baby's brain development and may protect against preterm labour. A daily algae-based supplement containing 500mg of DHA+EPA, or DHA alone, is recommended from when you start considering pregnancy, and up to the first year, if you breastfeed. Some women at high risk of preterm labour, other obstetric complications, or who have had a suboptimal diet for any reason, might benefit from higher doses. You should seek professional advice regarding this and only take high doses according to your individual situation.



Any amount of **alcohol** can damage your baby's health. This includes increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, small birth weight and childhood developmental delay (foetal alcohol syndrome). You should **not drink alcohol** or **smoke** during pregnancy.

