

Healthy Vegan Pregnancy



A healthy pregnancy starts before conception

Emotional wellbeing ♦ Healthy environment ♦ Physical activity ♦ Planned diet

“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]

A well-planned diet provides all the nutrients you need, for you and your growing baby. Eat plenty of **fruits and vegetables**, **whole grains**, **starchy root vegetables**, **beans**, **nuts** and **seeds**.



Vitamins, minerals & essential fats

Folic Acid B9

Folic acid

Protects against nerve defects, such as spina bifida. Take 400mcg folic acid each day and ideally start 2-3 months before conception.

Iodine I

Iodine

Plants, except seaweed, are low in iodine. However, levels in seaweed vary from low to excessive. You need to get 150-200mcg daily.



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.



Calcium Ca

Calcium

High calcium intake may protect against high blood pressure and preeclampsia in pregnancy. Green vegetables, chia and sesame seeds, almonds, calcium-set tofu, beans and calcium-fortified plant milks are high in calcium.



Vitamin B12 B12

Vitamin B12

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. Take 25-100mg daily or 1000mcg twice/week.



Vitamin D D

Vitamin D3

If sun exposure is limited, especially over the winter months, then supplement with 15-25 mcg (600-1,000 IU) of plant-based D3 everyday.



Vitamin A A

Vitamin A

Vitamin A requirements double during breastfeeding. Eat carotenoid-rich vegetables, such as sweet potato, carrot, pumpkin, peppers, spinach and broccoli, everyday.



Omega 3 Ω3

Omega-3 fatty acids

Walnuts, flaxseed and chia seeds provide short-chain omega-3 (ALA). This may not produce adequate amounts of DHA & EPA for your baby's brain development. Supplement with algae-based DHA & EPA (500mg/day) during pregnancy and whilst breastfeeding.



Protein P

Protein

Include a serving of high protein food into each meal and snack. Beans and legumes, soya milk, tofu, tempeh, nuts and seeds are good plant sources. Requirements increase in the third trimester and during breastfeeding.



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. Squeeze lemon on to cooked greens or salads.



Other things to know

Regular physical activity is essential



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

Limit or take caution



Limit **coffee** or **herbal tea** to only one or two cups a day. Some **herbal teas**, like sage or parsley tea can be unsafe.

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

Avoid



Raw sprouts and **unpasteurized foods** like miso and sauerkraut as they may contain harmful bacteria, such as **salmonella** and **E.coli**, which could cause premature birth or even miscarriage.

No safe alcohol limit during pregnancy



Any amount of alcohol can damage your baby's health.. The UK's Chief Medical Officer recommends **no alcohol** or **smoking** during pregnancy.

More information

pbhp.uk/health-zone#factsheets

nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/vegetarian-and-vegan-mums-to-be

Information provided by

Dr Miriam Martinez-Biarge - Paediatrician

