



INNER LIGHT BIRTH SERVICES

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Vegan Nutrition

It's not just you – you're eating for two! How do you get what you need for yourself and your growing baby?

Maintaining a healthy vegan diet is possible during your pregnancy if you are willing to eat a varied, balanced diet of whole, healthy, organic foods. If you pay attention to the foods you combine you can probably get all the nutrition you need for yourself and your baby. Remember to follow your body's instincts and eat according to what you feel you need. If your body is asking for a food you don't usually consume, it may be time to try something new! Here are some guidelines to follow that will help you make sure you get all the nutrients you need:

CALCIUM

A pregnant woman needs to consume 1200-1500mg of calcium per day in order to meet the demands of both her body and that of her growing baby. If you don't consume enough calcium it will be leached out of your bones to provide for your baby! Some sources of calcium include almonds, beans, broccoli, dark leafy greens, edamame, sesame seeds, seaweed, soy nuts, and tahini.

Other things to remember: calcium helps you sleep, eliminates leg cramps, and keeps your bowels moving...and don't forget to take it with magnesium!

IRON

Your iron needs increase in pregnancy, to the point where you should be consuming about 30mg per day. Some sources include apricots, beets/beet greens, blackstrap molasses, brewers yeast, broccoli, cherries, kelp, legumes, miso paste, peas, nuts and seeds, prunes, red cabbage, swiss chard, kale, romaine lettuce, spinach, and wheat germ.

Other things to remember: use cast iron pots when cooking, vitamin C assists with iron absorption, vitamin B assists with iron utilization, and iron is depleted by a lack of high-quality protein, coffee, enemas, black tea and stress.

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is essential for tissue repair, wound and bone healing, and healthy skin. It helps your baby grow and build strong bones and teeth, and it assists with iron absorption. Some good sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits, cauliflower, mango, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, and dark leafy greens.

PROTEIN

Aim to eat at least 60-80 grams of protein daily, especially in the third trimester of pregnancy. You can get this protein from a wide variety of sources, including whole grains, legumes, nuts, tofu, wheat germ, and combining the right types of foods. Grains or nuts and seeds can be combined with slightly smaller amounts of beans or legumes to form complete proteins.

Other things to remember: our bodies often crave sweets when they're looking for energy, so if you have a sweet tooth, eat protein first!

- Whole Grains** Choose whole grains whenever possible, and eat 3-4 servings of them per day.
Tip Try grains like spelt, quinoa, and millet for variety.
- Vegetables** Eat 1-2 servings of fresh, green leafy vegetables (mustard greens, collard greens, turnip greens, spinach, lettuce, cabbage, etc) per day. The more green the leafy vegetable, the higher the nutritional value. Orange and yellow veggies are important sources of Vitamins A and C and you should eat 5 servings of them per week. You should also eat a whole baked potato three times per week.
Tip Add greens to smoothies and soups to get more in your diet.
- Citrus** Consume some citrus each day.
Tip Eating whole fruits will give you extra fiber and cause less changes in blood sugar than drinking juice.
- Fat** The “good” fats in olive oil, fish, avocados, coconut oil/milk, and nuts enhance your well being and health and build your baby’s brain. Include a few of these sources of fat in your diet everyday.
Tip Other sources of these good fats are evening primrose oil, hemp oil, and flaxseed oil.
- Fluid** Make sure you stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. An easy guideline to remember is that you should drink about half of your body weight in ounces per day (ie. a 150lb person should drink about 75 ounces of fluid per day).
Tip Focus on drinking water and other clear, non-carbonated beverages.
- Salt** Salt your food to taste for a safe increase in blood volume. A pregnant woman’s blood volume increases by approximately 40% and adequate sodium is needed to assist this function.
Tip When eating processed or prepared foods (e.g. canned soup) be mindful of sodium intake as excessive sodium intake from processed foods can contribute to edema (swelling) and high-blood pressure.

Resources

A Mother’s Guide to Nutrition. Clif Bar & Company. 2009
The Bradley® Method guide to nutrition
The Natural Pregnancy Book by Aviva Jill Romm