



# My Favorite Foods

## Choose foods from every food group every day:

- Grains                    6 to 11 servings a day
- Vegetables            3 to 5 servings a day
- Fruits                    2 to 4 servings a day
- Milk products        3 or more servings a day
- Protein                 3 to 4 servings a day

### Also make sure to

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid (water, juice, and milk) a day
- Take prenatal vitamins as prescribed every day



This might sound like a lot of food, but for most foods, the serving size is smaller than you think. For example, 1 pancake is 1 serving of grains, but most of us eat several pancakes in a sitting. Also, choosing healthy snacks will help you get all the foods – and nutrients – that you and your growing baby need.

## Choose food with the best nutrients for you and your baby:

### ■ Protein

- Essential for formation of new cells (fetal tissues and organs)
- Essential for new demands on your body (growth of placenta, growth of uterus and breasts, formation of amniotic fluid, increasing maternal blood volume)



**Sources:** Meat, milk, cheese, eggs, fish, poultry, beans, nuts

**My Favorite protein rich foods:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** Food is your only source of protein during pregnancy (prenatal vitamins have no protein). Meat should be well cooked. Be aware of possible toxins in fish. Requirements for protein increase during late pregnancy.

### ■ Calcium

- Essential for development of fetal skeleton and teeth
- Stored in your bones as a reserve for milk production



**Sources:** Milk, yogurt, cheese

**Non-dairy sources:** Sardines, salmon, beans, tofu, kale, turnip greens, cornbread, figs, calcium-fortified orange juice



**My favorite calcium-rich foods:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** You need to consume enough calcium so that your baby can develop without taking calcium from *your* bones, especially during the last trimester. You will need more calcium if you are under 18 years old because your own bones are still developing and storing calcium.

## ■ Iron

- Essential for formation of new red blood cells and increasing the oxygen-carrying capacity of those cells (for increases in maternal blood volume)
- Fetal stores of iron in the liver (enough for the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 to 6 months of life because breastmilk and formula will not provide it)
- Mother should have stored iron to compensate for blood loss during birth

**Sources:** Liver, red meat, poultry (dark meat), eggs, beans, dried fruit, prune juice, apple juice, almonds, walnuts, peanut butter, leafy vegetables, broccoli, whole grains, enriched cereals, blackstrap molasses



**My favorite iron-rich foods:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** Vitamin C increases absorption, vitamin D decreases absorption (so eat iron with orange juice, not milk). Consumption is most important during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy because fetal requirements increase 10-fold. Iron supplements are recommended, but can cause nausea and constipation, so iron-rich foods may be preferable.



## ■ Vitamins

### Folic Acid (folate)

- Essential for rapid growth of cells
- Prevents birth defects of the brain and spinal cord (neural tube defects)

**Sources:** Green leafy vegetables, oranges and orange juice, kidney and lima beans, broccoli, liver, enriched flour, grains, and cereals



**My favorite sources of folate:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** You need double the amount of folate during pregnancy. Folic acid intakes from food are often low, so a daily supplement of 400 micrograms is recommended.

### Vitamin A

- Essential for new cell formation
- Essential for development of enamel-forming cells in gum tissue



**Sources:** Deep-green leafy vegetables, dark-yellow and orange vegetables and fruits, liver, fortified margarine and butter

**My favorite sources of vitamin A:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Vitamin C

- Essential for cell formation
- Enhances iron absorption



**Sources:** Citrus fruit or fruit-juice, peppers, green vegetables, tomatoes, berries, melons, potatoes

**My favorite sources of vitamin C:** \_\_\_\_\_

Prenatal Vitamins

- Ensures that you get a minimum of essential vitamins, including folic acid

**Notes:** Take your prenatal vitamin with a beverage that contains vitamin C (enhances iron absorption), not with milk (calcium inhibits iron absorption).

■ **Water** (and other fluids)

- Essential for maintaining a 50% increase in mother's blood volume and allowing amniotic fluid regenerate every few hours
- Helps prevent early contractions due to dehydration
- Helps prevent bladder infections (common during pregnancy) by keeping urine diluted
- Helps prevent constipation



**Sources:** Water is best (or juice or milk)

**My favorite liquids:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** Caffeinated beverages cause you to urinate more and lose liquid. To help develop the habit of drinking enough water, fill a pitcher and make sure to finish it by the end of the day. Have a glass of liquid with each meal. Gradual, moderate water retention in pregnancy is normal and necessary. Salt intake is important in maintaining fluid balance, so salt food to taste (as normal).