

PREGNANCY AND YOUR DIET

Pregnancy lasts a long, demanding nine months. Ensuring that you have a balanced, nutritious diet can help alleviate pregnancy problems such as anemia, and help your baby grow healthy and strong.

INDIAN WOMEN AND ANEMIA^[1]

Unfortunately, because of diet and poor nutrition, anemia is a serious problem among Indian women.

- Nearly 75% of all Indian women are anemic.
- Moderate to severe anemia is most common (50% of all cases) among pregnant women.
- 24% of maternal deaths in India are related to nutritional anemia.
- Nutritional anemia is also a key cause of low birth weight among children, affecting their learning ability.

The key to solving issues like anemia is keeping a nutritious and balanced diet during your pregnancy.

WHAT YOU NEED DURING PREGNANCY^[1]

- Women need an additional 350 calories daily during pregnancy.
- Women also need an additional 0.5g of protein per day in the first trimester, 6.9g per day during the second and 22.7g per day during the third trimester.
- Folic acid is essential throughout pregnancy to prevent malformation in the baby
- Both mother and child need iron for red blood cell formation.
- Calcium is critical for the formation of your baby's bones and teeth. You'll also need it now and later to protect against osteoporosis.
- Vitamin A must be strictly controlled, because it may cause damage to the embryo.

We recommend getting a list of healthy Indian foods and meal planning tips from your doctor. But, in the meantime, keeping a balanced and nutritious diet is easier than you might think.

FOODS TO EAT

- Black grapes, banana, ripe mango, dates, cashews and apricots
- Rice, murmure, pulao, bhakari, khichri, chapati, paratha, gujarati thepla (items made from wheat and rice)

- Cabbage, cauliflower and all long green vegetables such as tondali, turai, louki, parwal, spinach and govari (however, try to avoid only eating vegetables)
- Tea, coffee and ice-cream (in small quantities)

FOODS TO AVOID

- Brinjal, suran/yam, papaya, celery, onion, chili, garlic, ginger, pepper, asafetida, mustard, bajara, carom seeds and jaggery
- Butter, clarified butter, milk, honey, fennel seeds and sweets made from jaggery
- Sandwich bread, bakery bread, buns, dhokla, pizza, handva, pancakes, khaman, steamed rice cake, curd, tomato, tamarind and kadhi
- Leftover, frozen or deep-frozen food
- Cold drinks, mutton, cocoa, chicken, eggs, alcohol, smoking, tobacco, betel nut and pan-masala

1. National Institute of Nutrition, Dietary Guidelines for Indians, A Manual, 2nd Edition 2010; – 14-16, 32-34

Information provided is for general background purposes and is not intended as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment by a trained professional. You should always consult your physician about any healthcare questions you may have, especially before trying a new medication, diet, fitness program, or approach to healthcare issues.