

Discovering what it really means to “eat for two” begins by busting a few myths.

Myth #1 – One For Me and One For Baby

Eating for two does not mean we are eating for two adults. The person you are growing, though he may have big nutritional needs, he doesn’t need the same number of calories as you do.

Myth #2 – Baby Wants Dessert

Even though any excuse for enjoying dessert may seem like a good one, you do need to consider the amount of sugar you eat while pregnant. Too much sugar can lead to gestational diabetes or gaining too much weight, too quickly.

Myth #3 – Eating More Will Help Me Feel Less Tired

The work of pregnancy is tiring, even with a balanced diet.

In your first trimester, you don’t need to add any extra calories to your diet. In your second trimester, you only need an extra 340 calories per day. If you began your pregnancy at a healthy weight and are only carrying one baby, by your third trimester, you’ll only need about 450 extra calories per day.¹

The Truth

Eating for two is about eating the right kinds of food in the right amounts to keep both you and baby healthy. Typically, if you start your pregnancy at a normal weight, you will only need to gain between 25 to 35 pounds your entire pregnancy.^{2,3,4} Also, your weight should be gained gradually throughout your pregnancy: Zero to five pounds in the first trimester and then half to one pound per week in the second and third trimester.¹ Overeating can cause extra weight gain, which can put you at risk for gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and a bigger baby, which can then lead to more health problems later for your baby.^{1,6,7}






Foods to Limit or Avoid

There are foods you should limit or avoid altogether during pregnancy because they are unhealthy or unsafe to eat.

- Limit high calorie foods that have no nutritional value like candy, chips, and sugary drinks.
- Avoid and limit caffeine. Avoid it in the first trimester to reduce the likelihood of miscarriage, and then limit it in the second and third trimesters.¹⁰
- Avoid raw meats, raw shellfish, raw eggs, and raw sushi.
- Avoid unpasteurized dairy, smoked seafood, refrigerated pâté, and hot dogs. Deli meat should be heated thoroughly until steaming hot before you eat it.
- Some women develop a condition called pica which causes them to crave nonfood items during pregnancy, such as dirt and clay. Eating nonfood substances is potentially harmful to both you and baby, potentially interfering with nutrient absorption or introducing toxins or parasites. Talk to your provider if you are experiencing pica.¹²

Eating well and avoiding unsafe foods can help keep you and your baby healthy and thriving.

The following chart gives suggestions for the amounts and types of food you will need to eat during pregnancy. Your medical provider can confirm if these amounts are right for you.⁹

Food Group	1st Trimester	2nd and 3rd Trimesters	What counts as 1 cup or 1 ounce?
<i>Eat this amount from each group daily.*</i>			
Fruits 	2 cups	2 cups	1 cup fruit or 100% juice ½ cup dried fruit
Vegetables 	2½ cups	3 cups	1 cup raw or cooked vegetables or 100% juice 2 cups raw leafy vegetables
Grains 	6 ounces	8 ounces	1 slice bread 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal ½ cup cooked pasta, rice, or cereal
Protein Foods 	5½ ounces	6½ ounces	1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or seafood ¼ cup cooked beans ½ ounce nuts or 1 Tbsp peanut butter 1 egg
Dairy 	3 cups	3 cups	1 cup milk 8 ounces yogurt 1½ ounces natural cheese 2 ounces processed cheese
<p><i>*If you are not gaining weight or gaining too slowly, you may need to eat a little more from each food group. If you are gaining weight too fast, you may need to cut back by decreasing the amount or change the types of food you are eating.</i></p>			
<p>Get a Daily Food Checklist for Moms designed just for you. Go to ChooseMyPlate.gov/Checklist.</p>			

Courtesy: United States Department of Agriculture. [choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)⁸

Resources include:

1. "Pregnancy Weight Gain." American Pregnancy Association, 16 July 2021, americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/pregnancy-weight-gain, accessed 1/15/2019.
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3. ACOG Medical Staff. "Nutrition." ACOG Womens Health Care Nutrition Before During and Postpartum, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, July 2014, www.acog.org/clinical/journals-and-publications/clinical-updates/2014/07/nutrition, accessed 1/15/2019.
4. Halvorson, Melissa, MD – Ob/Gyn. Interview. 1/15/2019
5. Beil, Laura. "Mom's Weight during Pregnancy Shapes Baby's Health." Science News Mom's Weight during Pregnancy , 8 Aug. 2019, www.sciencenews.org/article/moms-weight-during-pregnancy-shapes-babys-health, accessed 1/15/2019.
6. Beil, Laura. "Poor Diet in Pregnancy, Poor Heart Health for Infants." Science News Poor Diet in Pregnancy, Poor Heart Health for Infants, 8 Aug. 2019, www.sciencenews.org/article/poor-diet-pregnancy-poor-heart-health-infants, accessed 1/15/2019
7. "Healthy "Healthy Eating for Women Who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding." MyPlate Healthy Eating for Women Who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding, U.S. Department of Agriculture, www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/healthy-eating-women-who-are-pregnant-or-breastfeeding, accessed 1/15/2019.
8. "Caffeine during Pregnancy." American Pregnancy Association, 14 Sept. 2021, americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/caffeine-intake-during-pregnancy/, accessed 1/15/2019.
9. Ratledge, Ingela. "3 Fresh Ways to Control Cravings." Health.com, 2 June 2013, www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20435321,00.html#splurge-more-to-lose-more-0, accessed 1/15/2019.
10. "Pica Cravings during Pregnancy." American Pregnancy Association, 16 July 2021, americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-health/unusual-cravings-pica/, accessed 1/15/2019