



Pregnancy: Fact vs. Fiction

“It is the position of the American Dietetic Association that women of childbearing potential should maintain good nutritional status through a lifestyle that optimizes maternal health and reduces the risk of birth defects, suboptimal fetal growth and development and chronic health problems in their children.”

- MYTH:** Pregnant women should eat 300 additional calories a day.
FACT: No one amount of calories is right for all women. Because every pregnant woman is unique, your doctor will advise you about the weight-gain range that's right for you. That advice depends on your weight before pregnancy, your height, your age and if you're expecting multiples.
- MYTH:** Pregnant women should not eat fish.
FACT: Pregnant and nursing women can eat fish, but should avoid those with high methyl mercury levels, such as swordfish, shark, king mackerel and tilefish. Pregnant women should also pass on raw seafood. But expectant mothers can still enjoy shellfish like shrimp, canned fish such as tuna, smaller ocean fish and farm-raised fish such as salmon. Eat up to 12 ounces of these types of fish every week with a maximum of six ounces of albacore (white) tuna a week.
- MYTH:** One drink of alcohol per day is safe during pregnancy.
FACT: Even at moderate levels (one drink per day), women who regularly consume alcohol during pregnancy may increase their risk for miscarriage or delivering low-birthweight babies.
- MYTH:** Vegetarian eating cannot support a healthy pregnancy.
FACT: Women can follow a vegetarian eating plan and get the nourishment they need for a healthy pregnancy. Consult with a registered dietitian to be sure you're consuming the correct amounts and combinations of protein, calories, vitamins and minerals for a healthy pregnancy.
- MYTH:** Pregnant women shouldn't exercise.
FACT: The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* advise pregnant women to incorporate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, if not all, days of the week. Avoid activities with a high risk of falling or abdominal trauma.

NUTRITION: IT'S A MATTER OF FACT

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign is designed to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. National Nutrition Month also promotes ADA and its members to the public and the media as the most valuable and credible source of timely, scientifically based food and nutrition information.



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