


# FOOD DURING PREGNANCY

Source : Anne-Marie Chalifoux, dietician

Food is unquestionably a very popular topic throughout our lives. And it is even more so during and after pregnancy. As part of midwifery care, some food concepts will be addressed to help you better manage this important aspect of your pregnancy. The following tables can help you understand your daily needs and potential sources of the different elements of a healthy diet.

Iron deficiency, or anemia, leaves the mother without reserves in case of excessive bleeding during delivery and plays a role in the incidence of low birth weight babies and premature babies.

## IRON (Requirements in pregnancy: 30 mg / day)

Role :	Needs:	Signs of deficiency:
Formation of hemoglobin (part of red blood cells that carries oxygen in the blood). 	Iron requirements are doubled during pregnancy because of increased blood formation in the mother and baby. One third of the maternal iron is transferred to the baby. However, this increased need is offset by better absorption of iron (10-50%) and less iron loss (cessation of menstruation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue, lassitude, irritability</li> <li>• Cold extremities (fingers and toes)</li> <li>• Constipation</li> <li>• Less resistance to infections</li> <li>• Fast heartbeat</li> <li>• shortness of breath, dizziness headache</li> <li>• Night cramps</li> <li>• Pale complexion, brittle nails</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> </ul>

## IRON (Requirements in pregnancy: 30 mg / day)

What increases absorption :	What diminishes absorption :
Vitamin C: Triple iron absorption • 1st choice: Vegetables: cabbage family, peppers, tomatoes, asparagus, snow peas, parsley ... • 2nd choice: Fruits: citrus, kiwi, cantaloupe, strawberries ... Soaking, sprouting (legumes, nuts, grains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea</li> <li>• Coffee</li> <li>• Calcium supplements (to be taken in between meals)</li> <li>• Antacids</li> <li>• Milk and cheese</li> <li>• Oxalates (spinach, Swiss chard)</li> <li>• Phytates (wheat bran)</li> </ul>

### Sources of Iron

Legumes (1cup)	4,7 mg
Meats (3 ounces)	1,8 mg
Vegetables	1,2 mg
Nuts (2 tablespoons)	0,8 mg
Fruits (1 portion)	0,3 mg
Dairy products	0,15 mg
Whole or enriched grains (1portion)	1,4 mg

### Good sources of Iron

Vegetables	(mg)	Cooked grains 1cup	(mg)
• Spinach 1cup	4	Porridge (oats)	1.7
• Asparagus	2.3	Quinoa	5.3
• Kale	2	Millet	2.2
• Winter squash	1.4	Brown rice	2.1
• Beetroot 1cup	1.3	Cracked wheat (bulgur)	2.8
		Wheat germ	1.4
Cooked legumes 1cup		Other	
• Black beans	7.6	Blackstrap Molasses (2 tablespoons)	4.6
• Lentils (2 tablespoons)	6.8	Sesame seeds	2
• Red beans (1 tablespoon)	6.6	Nutritional yeast	1.4
• Lima beans	5.8	Tofu 100 mg	10.5
<b>Fruits</b>		<b>Meat and fish</b>	
• Figs (10)	4.2	Veal liver	5.2
• Avocados (1)	2.8	Horse	5
• Prunes (10)	2.4	Beef	3
• Seedless grapes 1/2cups	1.7	Pork	1
<b>Nuts and seeds (2/3t.)</b>		Tuna	1
• Almonds 1.9	1.9		
• Pumpkin seeds	11.2		
• Sunflower seeds	3.4		

### SOURCES OF PROTEINS: Daily requirements 50 à 60 gr/day

<b>5 GRAMS</b>
• Grains: 1 cup pasta, rice, couscous, 2 slices of bread...
• Vegetables : 1 cup broccoli, snow peas, Brussels sprouts, spinach... or 1 potato
<b>10 GRAMS</b>
• Nuts : 4 tablespoons of nuts or 2 tablespoons of nut butter
• Dairy products : 1 cup of milk, yogurt or 1 ounce of cheese
<b>15 GRAMS</b>
• Meats: 2 ounces of beef, poultry, fish...
• Legumes : 1 cup
• Tofu : 3-4 ounces

## Eating for 2 means twice as well, not twice as much!

- Don't skip breakfast
- Eat your raw veggies at the beginning of a meal (for better absorption).
- Chew carefully and break up the meals (3 à 5).
- Eat slowly, in a calm environment.
- Reduce animal fat consumption (especially cooked, reduce fried food intake).
- Cook vegetables the least possible (steamed).
- Reduce consumption of refined products (sugar, refined flour, sweetened or refined cereals). Preferably use whole unrefined products.
- Especially avoid: refined foods, fried foods, overly rich or spiced foods (cold cuts, chocolate, coffee, the, alcohol, cigarettes and medications).
- Drink plenty of water (1 L and more/day), preferably in between meals or half an hour before.
- Increase the quality of the proteins but not necessarily the quantity.
- Use seed oils (almonds, sesame, sunflower, nuts, peanuts...) as supplements (at least 3 tablespoons / day) and dairy products (cheese, yogurt...).
- Increased need for CALCIUM: dairy products, tofu, fish (sardines, red salmon), seed oils, green vegetables (dandelion leaves, kale, broccoli, leaks, carrots, dried beans, whole wheat, eggs).
- Vitamin D helps the absorption of calcium (egg yolk, olive oil, sunny green vegetables, yeast, sprouted alfalfa, sunshine bathing).
- Sources of vitamine C : lemon, orange, grapefruit, strawberries, melon (cantalou), apples, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, bell pepper, parsley, cauliflower, spinach, sauerkraut, sprouted grains (especially alfalfa).
- Cigarettes and caffeine destroy vitamin C and B complex vitamins.
- Increase B complex vitamins (especially B1, thiamine), brewer's yeast, whole grains, sunflower seeds, cooked legumes, broccoli, milk, wheat germ, other green veggies, giblets.
- If the requirements for protein, Calcium, Iron and B vitamins are covered, we get in addition the other nutrients in suitable quantities.



**For proper food assimilation, it is essential to get good rest and to do daily physical activities (walking, swimming...)  
Bon Appétit!!**