

# Nutrition during pregnancy

(Alimentazione in gravidanza)

FOOD TIPS FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY



*During pregnancy, diet, in the sense of eating style, does not differ much from that of other periods of life. The peak energy demand occurs in the second and third trimesters, in order to cover the needs of the mother but also those of the growing baby.*



## THE RIGHT DIET IN PREGNANCY

(La giusta dieta in gravidanza)

Weight gain in pregnancy is normal. However, the desirable gain is not always the same and depends on the starting weight: in normal-weight situations, the desirable gain at pre-pregnancy is between 11.5 and 16 kg.

Excessive weight gain is never appropriate during pregnancy, but neither is a decrease, even if you are starting from an overweight or obese condition. Specific weight gain goals should then be shared with your reference gynaecologist or dietitian.

In the second and third trimesters, there may be a need to supplement meals with small portions of food. This does not mean eating twice as much: it is possible to reach the recommended requirements by increasing the portions of foods already provided in main meals and snacks.

In pregnancy some nutrients become even more important, such as folic acid, iron, vitamin D, and calcium. Check with your gynaecologist the use of any dietary supplements.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

(Indicazioni generali)

In general, nutritional recommendations are those (valid for all) based on a balanced and varied intake of all nutrients:

- organize the eating day into three main meals and two or three structured snacks, never skip meals;
- combine complex carbohydrates, animal and plant proteins, fibres, vitamins and minerals in each meal, all seasoned with a good-quality oil;
- eat two to three servings a day of fresh fruits and seasonal vegetables;
- consume carbohydrates in the form of bread, pasta, potatoes, polenta, cereals in every meal;
- take protein four to five times a week, alternating vegetable sources (legumes) with animal sources (fish, meat, eggs, cheese ...);
- eat fish at least two to three times a week, preferring small blue fish (anchovies, sardines, mackerel) as they present lower risk of contaminants such as mercury;
- favour vegetable fats (extra-virgin olive oil) over animal fats (butter, lard).

## FOOD SAFETY

(Sicurezza alimentare)

Some food can be vehicles for infection, and others contain toxic substances (such as caffeine and alcohol) that can interfere with normal foetal development. For nutrition in pregnancy to be safe, it is therefore important to know good hygiene practices to adopt and foods to avoid or limit.

## HOW TO TREAT FOOD

(Come trattare gli alimenti)

- Wash your hands well before, during and after preparation;
- wash fruits and vegetables (even bagged salads) very well, possibly even with special products;
- when preparing vegetables or fruits, avoid contact with any residual soil, as it is potentially contaminated;
- eat only well-cooked food, particularly eggs, meat and fish.

## Food to avoid

(Cibi da evitare)

- Water from unsafe sources;
- soft and energy drinks, cola drinks, alcoholic beverages of any kind; daily consumption of one or two cups of coffee or four cups of light tea in bags is allowed;
- unpasteurized raw milk and unpasteurized dairy products;
- raw or undercooked eggs and products derived from them (sauces, creams, ice cream desserts, eggnog...);
- raw meat and fish, smoked fish, precooked shrimps, seafood, raw processed meats (e.g., hot dogs), cold cuts and sausages.



### THE INCONVENIENCES OF PREGNANCY

(I disagi della gravidanza)

During pregnancy it is normal for some complaints to occur in a mild form. Should they linger or occur in a more acute form, it is important to share the specific situation with your gynaecologist.

#### NAUSEA AND VOMITING

(Nausea e vomito)

- Avoid long fasts and eat small meals more frequently, preferring dry food (crackers, rice, toast, polenta, potatoes, nuts) and small nutritious snacks (e.g., yogurt or a few pieces of Grana);
- during the day sip small amounts of water, natural or sparkling, avoiding drinking during or immediately after a meal;
- the use of ginger (in hot herbal tea or fresh with lemon) can help;
- avoid meals with strong flavours.

#### HEARTBURN AND REFLUX

(Acidità di stomaco e reflusso)

- Avoid lying down immediately after meals;
- avoid copious meals and prefer dry, nutritious, fractionated snacks;
- drink between meals;

- limit the intake of acidic or irritating food (tomatoes, citrus fruits, chocolate, coffee, spicy foods).

#### CONSTIPATION

(Stitichezza)

- Ensure proper daily intake of fruits and vegetables (two to three servings of both);
- eat legumes, prunes, nuts, oil seeds, avocado (to add to yogurt, salads, or eat alone) on a regular basis;
- ensure proper daily hydration (two to three litres);
- practice light physical activity daily.
- in case these strategies are not enough, check with your doctor the option of taking soluble fibre supplements or the use of probiotics.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

(L'attività fisica)

Regular practice of sports along with spontaneous physical activity related to social life (school, work, home activities) is a key element of a healthy lifestyle. Even in pregnancy, in the absence of obstetrical/gynaecological contraindications, regular exercise brings physical and psychological benefits to the mother and baby.

*The document was drafted by a multiprofessional team from the Operational Unit and the Public Relations Office*

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