



MOMMY FUEL:

Before, During & After Pregnancy



From the moment expecting moms find out they're pregnant, everything changes. There are limitations on the things they can eat, things they need to start eating, and an increased demand for calories to support the healthy development of their growing fetus.

BEFORE THE GOOD NEWS

March of Dimes recommends all women consume a diet rich in folic acid, even if they aren't pregnant or trying to get pregnant. In most cases, 400 mcg a day is enough to support healthy brain development in a baby through the end of the first trimester.

You don't have to look far to find good sources of folic acid. Your local grocery store carries many different foods rich in this super nutrient. And you probably have several folic acid rich foods in your kitchen at home:



- Fresh fruit
- Whole grains
- Green leafy vegetables
- Peanuts
- Beans
- Sunflower seeds

If you're still worried about getting enough folic acid, you can supplement it with a multivitamin. Most multivitamins for women have enough folate to support healthy conception and early embryonic development.

WITH A BUN IN THE OVEN

Once you're pregnant, you will want to do everything you can to keep your baby healthy. That means there are lots of foods and substances you should avoid because they might harm you or your baby.

Alcohol consumption, smoking, and other drug usage pose significant risk to fetal growth and development. It's important to recognize that these habits are detrimental to both the baby's well-being and the mother's health, even when not pregnant. Studies show that substance abuse significantly increases your risk for stillbirth, neonatal



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abstinence syndrome, birth defects, and more.

But substance abuse isn't all you have to worry about. Some foods increase your risk for illness, fetal development issues, and more during pregnancy:

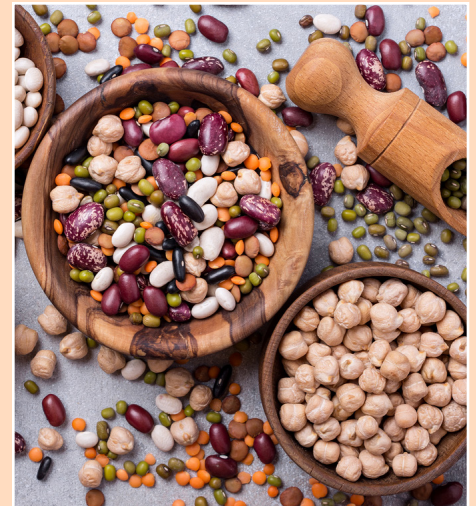
- **Fish with high mercury levels, like big eye tuna, swordfish, and shark**
The mercury in these fish can cause issues in the development of your baby's nervous system.
- **Undercooked eggs, meat, and poultry**
The immune system is suppressed during pregnancy. As a result, expecting moms are more vulnerable to bacteria and viruses from food that isn't fully cooked. The same goes for unpasteurized foods and raw seafood.
- **Herbal tea**
There's limited research available about the effects of certain herbs on fetal development. However, it's best to err on the side of caution when it comes to herbal teas.

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, expecting moms need 300 extra calories to support healthy fetal development. A diet rich in fruits, veggies, lean protein, whole grains, and low-fat dairy helps support a healthy mom and baby. A doctor or midwife approved prenatal vitamin can fill in any nutritional gaps—especially for moms with morning sickness or food aversions.

DURING THE FOURTH TRIMESTER

Once your bundle of joy arrives, your nutritional needs shift again. Pregnancy and delivery take a toll on the body. Your uterus needs to heal from stretching for the baby's growth and the wound left behind from your placenta, whether you have a vaginal or c-section birth. C-section moms also need a little extra healing support since they experienced major abdominal surgery.

A healthy, well-rounded diet is essential to promote healing and recovery. Cleveland Clinic recommends drinking 8 glasses of fluid every day, avoiding alcohol and caffeine, and having healthy meals on hand. Include plenty of fruits and veggies, lean sources of protein, low-fat dairy, and whole grains.



BREASTFEEDING NUTRITION CHEAT SHEET

Eating healthy during the fourth trimester is also crucial for breastfeeding. Nursing moms need up to 400 extra calories to make it through each day. That extra energy helps support the healthy breast milk production your baby needs to thrive. Continuing to take prenatal or multivitamins during this time can also help support breastfeeding moms' nutritional needs.

Sustaining breast milk production is easy for some moms and harder for others. Luckily, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center recommends several foods called galactagogues that boost breast milk production:

- Nuts
- Garlic
- Green leafy veggies
- High protein foods
- Oats and other whole grains
- Beans and legumes
- Brewer's yeast



[Click here](#) for more tips and guidance from Blue Cross Blue Shield Illinois on planning a healthy pregnancy journey before, during, and after.

BREAST MILK COOKIES

Eating to increase breast milk production doesn't have to be boring. Many moms swear by delicious cookie recipes to boost their breast milk supply. Try Piedmont Medical Center's take on this popular recipe yourself!




INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
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| 3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats | ¼ teaspoon salt |
| 1½ cups unbleached organic all-purpose flour | 12 tablespoons organic unsalted butter |
| 5 tablespoons brewer's yeast | 4 tablespoons unrefined organic coconut oil |
| 3 tablespoons ground flax seed | 1½ cups organic cane sugar |
| ½ teaspoon baking powder | 1 large egg + 1 large egg yolk |
| ½ teaspoon baking soda | 2 teaspoons vanilla extract |
| ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon | 1½ cups dark chocolate chips/chunks |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Cream together butter and coconut oil in a bowl using an electric mixer.
3. Mix in sugar until it gets fluffy, about 4 to 5 minutes. You may need to scrape the ingredients down the side of the bowl to mix everything thoroughly.
4. Add your egg and extra egg yolk to the bowl and beat for 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Mix in vanilla extract.
6. Slowly mix in your dry ingredients on low. Be careful not to over mix.
7. Fold in your chocolate chips using a spatula. **Fun tip:** You can also add in nuts, peanut butter chips, dried fruit, or any other bits and morsels you like in your cookies.
8. Roll dough into one-inch balls and place 2 inches apart on a baking sheet.
9. Bake for 10 to 14 minutes.
10. Enjoy!

 Partner with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) to decide the best nutritional plan as you begin your pregnancy journey. If you do not have a PCP, you may call the Health Advocate number on your BCBSIL member ID card or **log on to Blue Access for MembersSM (BAMSM) [bcbsil.com](https://www.bcbsil.com) and use the Provider Finder and use the Provider Finder.** This fast, easy-to-use tool improves members' experience when searching for in-network health care providers. Once pregnant and even postpartum, continue to consult with your physician regarding your nutritional needs.



SOURCES: [MarchofDimes.org](https://www.marchofdimes.org), [Harvard.edu](https://www.harvard.edu), [MayoClinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org), [HopkinsMedicine.org](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org), [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), [UPMC.com](https://www.upmc.com), [TenetHealth.com](https://www.tenethealth.com), [ClevelandClinic.org](https://www.clevelandclinic.org), [NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov)