

Here's to a healthy pregnancy

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(HealthDay)—Take good prenatal care of yourself and not only will you have a healthier baby, you'll also lower his or her risk of type 2 diabetes, obesity and heart disease later in life.

First, you'll want to monitor your weight while pregnant. A baby's future diabetes risk, for example, is higher if mom is under- or over-nourished during pregnancy, according to researchers at Lund University in Sweden. The right amount of weight gain depends on your pre-pregnancy health and [body mass index](#), or BMI—a ratio of weight to height. If you're at a normal starting [weight](#), gaining between 25 and 35 pounds is about right.

Next, focus on eating a healthy diet. Include key food groups such as whole grains; fruits and vegetables; dairy; and proteins like lean meat, skinless poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, nuts and seeds. Many of these choices provide numerous nutrients. Some are particularly important. Folic acid, a B vitamin, is so essential that starting it before you become pregnant is recommended.

To make the blood needed to supply oxygen to your baby, your iron needs will double. Iron-rich foods include dark leafy greens, lean red meat, poultry, dried beans and peas, and fortified cereals. Eating vitamin C-rich [food](#), such as oranges or tomatoes, at the same meals will help your body absorb the iron more easily.

Calcium is key to baby developing strong bones and teeth. When pregnant, women need 1,000 milligrams of calcium every day. That's where low- and no-fat milk, yogurt and cheeses, as well as fortified foods like almond milk can come in.

When possible, work with your doctor before trying to get pregnant, to map out the right dietary strategy for you. Be sure to discuss any foods that should be avoided or limited, such as certain types of fish, alcohol and caffeinated drinks. And, of course, check in as often as recommended throughout your pregnancy.

More information: The American College of Obstetricians and

Gynecologists has a comprehensive FAQ on [nutrition during pregnancy](#).

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