

# TOP 10 FOODS TO EAT AND ENJOY WHILE PREGNANT

## 1. DARK LEAFY GREENS - HIGH IN FOLIC ACID

Folic acid, a B vitamin, plays a large role in cell growth and development, as well as tissue formation. Studies show that women who get 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, both prior to conception and during early pregnancy, reduce the risk that their baby will be born with a serious neural tube defect by up to 70%. **Cooking Tips:** Sautéed spinach or kale, swiss chard tart, kale chips made in the oven.

## 2. SWEET POTATOES - LOADED WITH VITAMIN A AND FIBER

Sweet potatoes are loaded with Vitamin A, a fat-soluble vitamin which is important for your baby's embryonic growth. It is particularly essential for women who are about to give birth because it helps with postpartum tissue repair. **Cooking Tips:** Baked or mashed sweet potatoes or sweet potato fries with garlic and rosemary.



## 3. YOGURT - HIGH IN CALCIUM

Calcium is vital for the development of bones, teeth and muscle growth in the baby. It is also important for maintaining a regular heart rhythm in both the mom and the baby. Calcium stored in the body and from the diet will be used to make milk for your baby. **Cooking Tips:** Eat yogurt that has less than 15 grams of sugar.

## 4. WALNUTS - HIGH IN OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Recent studies indicate that infants born to mothers whose diets contain plenty of this essential fatty acid have a developmental edge in terms of schooling. Two other studies that focused on omega-3 fatty acids found that pregnant women who consume omega-3s give birth to babies with a lower risk of food allergies and eczema.

**Cooking Tips:** Make homemade pesto with walnuts, or add walnuts to salads, oatmeal and fresh chopped fruit.

## 5. EGGS - HIGH IN IRON AND IN PROTEIN

Because blood volume in your body increases during pregnancy by almost 50%, pregnant women should consume more iron. Iron-deficiency anemia during pregnancy is associated with preterm delivery, low birth weight, and infant mortality. **Cooking Tips:** Make quiche, scrambled eggs or eggs in a tortilla with fresh salsa and avocado.

## 6. KIWIS - HIGH IN FIBER AND VITAMIN C

Kiwis are very high in vitamin C and in fiber. Vitamin C is a nutrient that is required to convert folic acid into its active form. It also increases the absorption of iron from non-animal foods such as spinach and kale. Fiber is especially important for pregnant women who would like to avoid constipation. **Cooking Tips:** Slice in half and scoop kiwi with a spoon. Also, add to salads or chopped walnuts and honey.

## 7. AVOCADOS - HIGH IN POTASSIUM

While the average woman needs around 2,000 mg of potassium per day, expectant mothers should consume around 4,700 mg per day. Pregnant women require more potassium because the amount of blood in their body nearly doubles, meaning more electrolytes are needed to maintain proper blood volume. **Cooking Tips:** Guacamole, add to eggs and sandwiches.

## 8. OATMEAL - GREAT SOURCE OF COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES AND FIBER

Pregnant women need a lot of energy! Oatmeal is one of the best ways to add carbohydrates and whole grains into your diet. **Cooking Tips:** Make it from scratch so you can avoid the added sugar. Make it with milk for extra calcium.

## 9. ORGANIC CHICKEN OR RED MEAT - GREAT SOURCE OF PROTEIN

It is important to get enough protein throughout your pregnancy, but especially during the second and third trimesters, when your baby is growing the fastest and your organs are getting bigger to accommodate the needs of your growing baby. **Cooking Tips:** Roasted chicken with vegetables, beef kabobs with pineapple and grilled veggies.

## 10. LEGUMES - GREAT SOURCE OF PROTEIN, COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES AND FIBER

Baked beans, black beans and kidney beans all have a very low glycemic load of 7 and will not raise your blood sugar. **Cooking Tips:** Fill corn tortillas with black beans, avocados and cooked diced sweet potatoes.