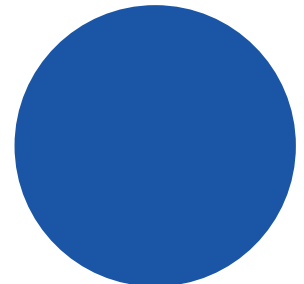
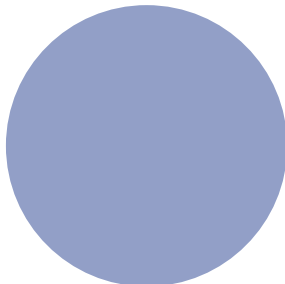
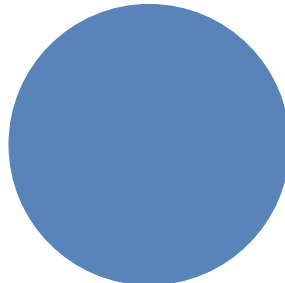
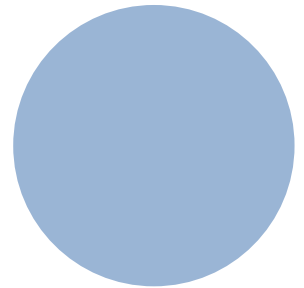
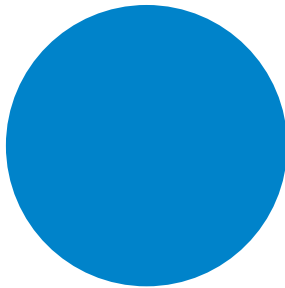


Eating well for a healthy pregnancy

A practical guide



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A practical guide



Dr Helen Crawley

FIRST STEPS NUTRITION TRUST



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This resource is provided for information only and individual advice on diet and health should always be sought from appropriate health professionals.

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First Steps Nutrition Trust is a charity which provides clear, evidence-based and independent information and support for good nutrition from pre-conception to five years of age. For more information, see our website www.firststepsnutrition.org

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About this guide

With so much information available advising people what to eat, it can be difficult to work out what eating well really means. This practical guide shows the sorts of foods, and amounts of foods, that will meet the nutritional needs of women in pregnancy and give the best start to the baby.

Why have we produced this guide?

The aim of this practical guide is to illustrate what a good diet looks like for women in pregnancy. The advice is suitable for all women. A guide specifically for young women aged 15-19 years is also available – see page 92.

Everyone wants the best for their baby and yet many people overlook the importance of eating the sorts of foods and drinks that mean both mum and baby will have a healthy pregnancy. It is well known that, without the right sorts of foods and nutrients, women may deliver babies who will not achieve their full potential in life.

We believe that eating well matters – but enjoyable and delicious food matters too, so this guide is all about easy, tasty meals and snacks that don't break the bank and that women can fit into their day whatever their circumstances. The ideas in this guide have been put together by experts in food and nutrition and are based on government guidelines for healthy eating.

Having a good diet in pregnancy and entering parenthood with an understanding of the importance of eating well for their new family are essential for ensuring current and future health for all. Some women don't eat enough different types of foods, and the foods they do choose tend to be high in fat, salt and sugar and low in the kinds of nutrients that are important for the baby's growth and development. Some women may restrict their food intakes to stay slim, but choose foods that don't provide the important nutrients they need in pregnancy. This practical guide is all about shifting the balance towards better food choices and making it clear what eating well really looks like – and how to do it both now and in the future.



Who is this guide for?

This guide has been designed for all those who support women in pregnancy and want to help them eat well. This includes nurses, midwives, health visitors, GPs, those working in family centres and children's centres, dietitians, registered nutritionists, social workers, teachers and community food workers. It will also be useful for women themselves and their families and friends.

How can it be used?

Some people may use the guide as a reference, some may want to copy parts of it for use in their own work, and others may wish to include any sections they find useful in their own local guidance. We are happy for any sections to be used if they promote public health and make no profit.

What is in this guide?

Part 1

of this guide gives background information on what eating well is all about for pregnant women.

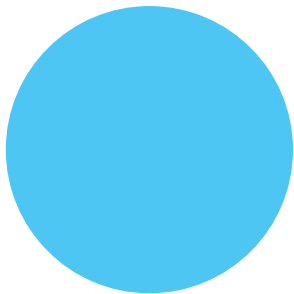
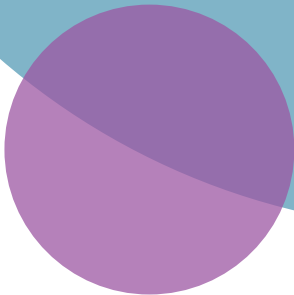
Part 2

provides photos and recipes that show how the eating well advice can be put into practice.

Part 1



Advice on eating well
in pregnancy



Why does eating well in pregnancy matter?

There is a complex inter-generational relationship between the nutritional status of a mother and her newborn baby and the subsequent health and wellbeing of that child and the children they go on to have themselves. Evidence suggests that the root of many diseases of adulthood lies in the nutrient supply from conception to birth and through the first two crucial years. Everyone who has contact with women in pregnancy should be able to offer clear, consistent, evidence-based and practical advice on what a good diet looks like. Supporting women to take their food choices seriously, to spend their money wisely on food and to learn skills in food preparation has to be a priority if we are to reverse current trends in poor nutritional health and tackle health inequalities.

The nutritional status of a woman before she conceives and throughout her pregnancy will impact on the health and wellbeing of her infant in both the short term and long term. The aim of all health advice in pregnancy is to ensure the best outcome for mother and infant, and that includes having a baby born at a good birthweight, with adequate nutrient stores. Poor diet in pregnancy has been associated

- with adverse pregnancy outcomes in a number of studies, and there is evidence that the diets of many women are lacking in some of the essential nutrients associated with good outcomes.
- Despite a popular myth that a baby will take what it needs nutritionally from its mother, neither mother nor baby will thrive if the mother's diet is poor.

The first 1,000 days

The first 1,000 days – that is, the nine months of pregnancy and the first two years of the baby's life – are seen as a critical window of opportunity to get food and nutrition right for every individual around the world. The nutrition of women and children in developed countries is as important as anywhere else and many parents appreciate this period as one where they can make the most important contribution to their child's healthy future. The concept of the first 1,000 days – along with clear information about how good nutrition can be supported during this time – is useful for those supporting families.

Talking with women and their partners and supporters about eating well in pregnancy and beyond

Motivating someone to change their behaviour is a skill and if you have not already attended a course on how to support behaviour change, you may find it useful to do so.

There can be many ways that conversations about food choice in pregnancy may arise and a lot of different questions that women and their partners and supporters may ask about what they can and can't eat. Hopefully you will find answers to many of these in this resource.

It is highly likely that many women and those they live with do not currently eat a diet that is in line with recommendations for a healthy diet. Many will choose fast foods, high-fat, high-salt and high-sugar snacks

- and too many ultra-processed foods, and may have limited cooking skills. Some women may also have limited space to store food or cook food. It is important to be sensitive to this, and use this resource in a way that best supports each individual.
- The aim of this resource is to show best practice. Some women may only be able to make a small number of changes to their diet and it is the role of those offering support to encourage whatever positive changes it might be possible for each person to make. This resource deliberately does not include images of many of the commercially produced and ultra-processed foods that people may choose, as the aim is to offer an alternative view of what is possible.

Talking about eating well in pregnancy and beyond

Below are some ideas you might want to share in discussions about the importance of a good diet in pregnancy, the importance of breastfeeding and the need for a good diet in the early years of a child's life.

The baby will be nourishing itself all day from the mother's stores via the placenta, and it is therefore very important that mum also eats good food regularly so that she has the energy and nutrients to provide for her baby as well as for her own needs.

Babies who are malnourished in the womb because mum isn't eating enough during pregnancy are more likely to face lifelong chronic health problems, and have a higher risk of dying in infancy. This happens in countries like the UK as well as in poorer countries around the world.

Exclusively breastfeeding a baby for the first six months, alongside solids in the second six months, and continued breastfeeding for as long after that as mum wishes, protects both the baby's and the mother's health.

Everyone wants the best for their baby. Spending money on the whole family eating well makes more sense than spending money on expensive clothes and equipment for a new baby.

If mums think they might have more children, eating the same sorts of healthy foods that they give their babies and toddlers will ensure they are able to give the next baby a really good start in life from the beginning.

Eating together with others is an important part of family life, and getting children used to this when young will encourage them to eat better, and it sets a good example for them when they have families of their own.

You can start to eat better and support children to eat better at any time. It's never too late to change habits, and good health is the best gift you can give your children.

For children under the age of 2 years, having a poor diet weakens a child's immune system and makes him or her more susceptible to common illnesses such as chest infections and diarrhoea, and may prevent the child from being as physically strong and mentally able as he or she could be.


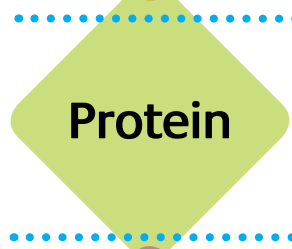
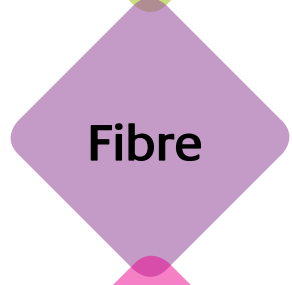


You can't see if someone is poorly nourished, but it can impact on health and wellbeing for life. Just because you can't see a nutrition problem doesn't mean it isn't there.

Eating well in pregnancy – the most important points

- 1** Talk with the woman, her partner or other supporters (this could be her own mum, other relatives, or friends who come with her to meet with health professionals and others) **about the importance of a good diet in pregnancy, both for their baby and themselves.** Some ideas of things to talk about can be found on page 7. There is evidence that women are receptive to information that will benefit their baby and so this is a good time to offer practical advice.
- 2** There are some important nutrients, including some particular vitamins and minerals, that are needed in pregnancy and wherever possible these should be provided by a **good diet.** Good sources of these nutrients are shown on pages 9-12. Some women may be interested in knowing more about these nutrients, while others may be more interested in practical food advice.
- 3** There are two nutrients that all pregnant women should take as a supplement: **folic acid and vitamin D.** Information about these important supplements can be found on page 13.
- 4** Some pregnant women will be eligible for Healthy Start, or in Scotland, the Best Start Foods scheme, which gives families regular payments to help buy milk, fruit, vegetables and pulses, and provides access to free vitamins. Eligible women should be strongly encouraged to sign up for the scheme. See page 13.
- 5** It can also be useful to talk about food groups and to offer simple tips about how to **choose wisely from each food group.** General eating well advice is given on page 15. In Part 2 of this resource there are simple, practical ideas and recipes illustrating how women can eat well across the day.
- 6** Maintaining a healthy body weight and remaining active are important for all women in pregnancy. Information about this can be found on page 23.
- 7** During pregnancy, women are entitled to free dental health care, as women can be more vulnerable to gum disease in pregnancy. This is an ideal opportunity for women to learn how to protect their teeth and their bones through good diet and good oral hygiene. Information on looking after bones and teeth can be found on page 25.

Which important nutrients do women need in pregnancy, and why?

Below we explain which important nutrients – energy (calories), protein, carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals – women need in pregnancy, and why. And we give information about which foods and drinks they are found in.

Nutrient	Why it is needed
 Energy	<p>Energy (calories) is needed for the growth and development of the baby.</p> <p>Most women do not need to have any additional energy above their normal needs until the final stage of pregnancy (weeks 27-40).</p> <p>Energy is provided by the fat, carbohydrate, protein and alcohol in the foods and drinks we consume, but the main source of energy should be from carbohydrate foods such as potatoes, rice, pasta, bread, other grains and starchy root vegetables such as yam.</p>
 Protein	<p>Protein is needed for the growth and repair of tissues, but more is needed in pregnancy. Most adults in the UK get more than enough protein in their diets, and following the advice in this guide will ensure protein needs are met.</p> <p>Protein is found in a wide variety of foods including cereals, dairy foods such as milk, yoghurt and cheese, meat, fish, poultry, nuts, seeds, eggs, peas, beans and pulses.</p>
 Fibre	<p>Fibre in the diet helps to prevent constipation and other bowel problems. Fibre is found in the indigestible parts of foods such as in wholemeal cereals and vegetables, beans and fruits. Oligosaccharides are a component of dietary fibre and these encourage the growth of bacteria which are beneficial to the gut. Eating a good mixed diet will encourage these good bacteria to thrive, and there is no need to take a supplement which contains prebiotics or probiotics to do this.</p> <p>Good sources of fibre include wholemeal bread, wholegrain breakfast cereals, peas, beans, lentils, vegetables, fresh and dried fruit and seeds.</p>
 Carbo- hydrates	<p>Carbohydrates and fats provide energy and other nutrients and pregnant women need to have them in the same proportions in the diet as for all adults. If the ideas for meals and snacks in this guide are followed, these will be consumed in about the right amounts.</p>
 Fats	

Nutrient

Why it is needed

Good sources

Vitamin A

Vitamin A is needed for eye health, cell growth and to support the immune system. Extra vitamin A is needed during pregnancy, but too much of the animal form of vitamin A (retinol) can be toxic. 700 micrograms of vitamin A a day are recommended.

Safe sources of vitamin A can be found via carotenoids in some types of fruits and vegetables. Fish is a good source of vitamin A. Some types of animal products such as liver and liver pâté or liver sausage have high levels of vitamin A and should be avoided. (See page 36 for a list of foods to avoid in pregnancy.)

Intakes of retinol equivalents greater than 3,000 micrograms a day are considered potentially dangerous in pregnancy. This level of intake is most likely to come from supplements including the use of fish oils. A cod liver oil capsule containing 1,000mg or 1g of cod liver oil is likely to contain about 800 micrograms of retinol equivalents. A teaspoon of cod liver oil (5g) will therefore exceed the upper recommended level of 3,000 micrograms.

Animal sources

butter
canned salmon
cheese
egg
full-fat milk
herrings
kidney
pilchards canned in tomato sauce
smoked mackerel

Non-animal sources

apricots (dried, fresh or canned)
blackcurrants
broad beans
broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage (dark)
cantaloupe melon
carrots
honeydew melon
mango
margarine
nectarine
orange
peach
peas
prunes
red peppers
runner beans
spinach
sweet potatoes
sweetcorn
tomatoes
watercress

Riboflavin

Also called vitamin B2

An additional amount of riboflavin is needed during pregnancy. 1.4mg of riboflavin a day is recommended in pregnancy. Riboflavin helps to release energy from food and is important for eye and heart health.

Many women get most of their riboflavin from animal sources and particularly dairy foods and so if they avoid these foods it is important that they regularly eat non-animal sources of riboflavin.

Animal sources

bacon
cheese
eggs
kidney
lean meat or poultry
mackerel
milk
pilchards
salmon
sardines
tuna
yoghurt

Non-animal sources

almonds
fortified breakfast cereals
granary bread
mushrooms
soya beans
spinach
wheatgerm bread

Folic acid

'Folic acid' is the name given to the synthetic form of the B vitamins known as folates, but is used as a general term here for this vitamin.

Folic acid is important before pregnancy and in the first few weeks of pregnancy to prevent neural tube defects, and in later pregnancy to prevent a particular type of anaemia. 400 micrograms a day are recommended.

Women should take a supplement of folic acid (see page 13), but good sources of folic acid should also be included in any healthy diet.

broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage
cauliflower
fortified breakfast cereals
green leafy salads
melon
oranges

parsnips
peanuts
peas
potatoes
runner beans
spinach
tomatoes
wholemeal bread
yeast extract

Calcium

Calcium is important for bone health and, although calcium needs are increased in pregnancy, the body adapts to ensure more calcium is absorbed, so higher intakes are not needed. 700mg of calcium a day is recommended for women. The exception to this is for teenagers in pregnancy where additional calcium is needed for the teenagers' own growth.

A regular intake of dairy products (milk, cheese and yoghurt) throughout pregnancy will ensure that calcium needs are met. If women do not include these foods in the diet, it is important that they choose suitable alternatives. For more on this, see page 26.

Dairy sources

cheese
cheese spread
yoghurt
fromage frais
milk

Non-dairy sources

canned salmon
dried fruit
egg yolk
muesli
orange
peas, beans and lentils
pilchards, sardines
soya drink fortified with calcium
spinach
tofu
white bread/flour

Nutrient

Why it is needed

Good sources

Iron

Iron is important for the production of red blood cells and it supplies oxygen to the cells. Pregnant women are recommended to have 14.8mg of iron a day.

Low iron status in pregnancy is associated with low birthweight babies and premature birth. All pregnant women will be screened at antenatal booking-in to see if they need to take an iron supplement in pregnancy. Encourage women to have this simple blood test if you think they might be anaemic.

Good sources of iron include red meat, fish, peas, beans and lentils, and leafy vegetables.

Animal sources

beef
beefburger
chicken and other poultry
corned beef
egg
herrings
kidney
lamb
pilchards
salmon
sardines
sausage
tuna

Non-animal sources

baked beans
blackcurrants
black-eyed peas
broad beans
broccoli
chick peas
dried apricots
fortified breakfast cereals
lentils
raisins
soya beans
spinach
spring greens
tofu
weet bisks
white bread
wholemeal bread/
flour

Iodine

Iodine helps regulate metabolism and plays an important role within the thyroid in controlling many body processes. Pregnant women are recommended to have 140 micrograms of iodine a day.

Too little iodine in pregnancy is associated with learning disability in infants and children. Iodine deficiency is the biggest cause of mental retardation worldwide.

The main source of iodine in the UK is dairy products. Iodine can also be found in seaweed, fish and seafood. Smaller amounts can be found in meat and meat products and some types of vegetables (depending on the soil where they were grown).

If someone does not have dairy products and does not eat any fish or seafood, it is very important that they have other sources of iodine in their diet (see pages 26 and 32).

It is also important not to have too much iodine, and intakes should not exceed 940 micrograms a day.

Dairy sources

butter
cheese
fromage frais
milk
ice cream
yoghurt

Non-dairy sources

egg
fish
fish paste
seaweed*
shellfish

* Some types of seaweed have very high concentrations of iodine and these are not recommended. See page 26 for useful sources of iodine for women who don't eat dairy foods.

Zinc

Zinc plays a role in enzyme and insulin production, and is important for the baby's health and development.

Zinc helps to form the baby's organs, skeleton, nerves and circulatory system.

The current recommendation for pregnant women is for 7mg of zinc a day.

Some women may have too little zinc in their diet if they don't eat well and if they don't regularly have foods such as meat, fish, eggs, milk, pulses, nuts or cereal foods.

Animal sources

bacon
canned sardines
canned tuna or pilchards
cheese
cold cooked meats
corned beef
eggs
ham
kidney
lean meat
milk
poultry
sausages
shrimps and prawns

Non-animal sources

beans and lentils
brown or wholemeal bread
nuts
plain popcorn
sesame seeds
tofu
wholegrain breakfast cereals, such as puffed wheat, branflakes or weet bisks

Nutrient

Why it is needed

Good sources

Long chain poly-unsaturated fatty acids

Often called omega 3 fatty acids

Choline

Pregnancy causes physiological changes in women, which mean that many nutrients and other dietary components are absorbed more efficiently, or taken from the mother's stores, so that the developing infant will not be deprived of nutrients.

There are some components – such as long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (or omega 3 fatty acids), and choline – that the body can make itself in small amounts, but which it is helpful to have sufficient of in the diet during pregnancy. This is to ensure stores are not depleted and that the infant has sufficient for brain and cell development.

If women eat a variety of meals and snacks as recommended in this resource, it is likely that they will get enough choline and long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids to meet their needs.

Long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids
oil-rich fish, such as salmon, trout, herring, mackerel, sardines and pilchards

Choline
eggs
lean meat
some vegetables, such as green leafy vegetables and peas
tomato paste
tofu
pulses
nuts and seeds

For more information and up-to-date advice on vitamins and minerals, visit the NHS website www.nhs.uk

Weeks 27–40 (the last trimester of pregnancy)

Nutrient

Why it is needed

Good sources

Energy

An additional amount of energy (calories) is needed during the final stage of pregnancy (weeks 27-40) to make sure the baby arrives at a good weight. Low birthweight is associated with more problems at birth, in the first few months and in later life. An extra 200kcal per day is recommended.

The best sources of energy are those that also provide other nutrients, for example:
– starchy foods such as potatoes, bread, pasta and rice
– dairy foods such as milk and yoghurt
– eggs.

Vitamin C

An additional amount of vitamin C is needed during the final stage of pregnancy to increase intakes to 50mg a day. Vitamin C is one of the building blocks for skin and also acts as an antioxidant and protects cells from damage. Eating a range of the meals and snacks shown in this resource will ensure enough vitamin C is consumed.

apples
blackberries
blackcurrants
broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage
canned guava
cauliflower
grapefruit
green and red peppers (raw)
green beans
kiwi fruit
mango
nectarines
orange (and orange juice)
peaches
peas
potatoes
raspberries
satsumas
spinach
spring greens
strawberries
tomato
watercress

Thiamin

Also called vitamin B1

An additional amount of thiamin is needed during the final stage of pregnancy to increase intakes to 0.9mg a day. Thiamin helps to release energy from food and plays an important role in the development of the baby's nervous system.

Animal sources
chicken and other poultry
eggs
lean meat
pork, bacon and ham
Non-animal sources
fortified breakfast cereals
nuts
oatcakes
potatoes
white or brown bread
wholemeal bread
yeast extract

Important vitamins that all pregnant women should take as a supplement

Folic acid

Folic acid is needed before pregnancy and in the first few weeks of pregnancy to prevent neural tube defects, and may help to prevent cleft lip and palate. In later pregnancy, folic acid is needed to prevent a particular type of anaemia. While it is possible to get enough folic acid from the diet if you eat well, **it is currently recommended that all women take a supplement of 400 micrograms of folic acid a day when planning a pregnancy, or as soon as they find out they are pregnant, and that they take it for at least the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.** For those women who have poor or erratic diets that are low in good sources of folic acid such as green leafy vegetables and wholegrain cereal, it is prudent to continue taking the supplement throughout pregnancy. **Healthy Start vitamins** for pregnant women provide 400 micrograms of folic acid, 10 micrograms of vitamin D and 70 milligrams of vitamin C. For more information about Healthy Start (or about Best Start Foods in Scotland), see below.

Eating a range of meals and snacks as recommended in this guide will also help to ensure adequate folic acid intake. A list of good sources of folic acid in food can be found on page 10.

Who might need a higher dose of folic acid?

If there is any family history of neural tube defects (spina bifida or anencephaly), if women are taking some anti-epileptic drugs, if they are diabetic, have coeliac disease or are obese, they are likely to be advised to take a higher-dose supplement of folic acid of about 5 milligrams a day during the first 12 weeks. If you think a particular woman should be taking this higher dose of folic acid, encourage her to check with her GP.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D during pregnancy is very important for bone development in both the pregnant woman and the child, but needs cannot be met through diet alone. Most adults make the majority of their vitamin D through the action of summer sunlight on the skin. Women who are at particular risk of low vitamin D status include those who have darker skin, who rarely go outside, who cover their skin with clothing or sunscreen, who avoid animal foods or who have a very poor diet.

It is currently recommended that all pregnant (and breastfeeding) women should take a supplement of 10 micrograms of vitamin D every day.

Healthy Start vitamins contain 10 micrograms of vitamin D and can be taken throughout pregnancy and while breastfeeding. Women who may be at particular risk of low vitamin D status should be given the vitamins at the first point of contact and should be encouraged to take them regularly.



Healthy Start is the name for the welfare food scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The equivalent scheme in Scotland is the Best Start Foods

scheme. Both schemes aim to provide some additional food and nutrition support to young and low-income women. If pregnant women are under 18 years of age or are entitled to income support or are on a low income, they are likely to be eligible for Healthy Start (or for the Best Start Foods scheme), which includes free Healthy Start vitamins, and a payment to help buy milk, fruit, vegetables and pulses worth (in 2022) £4.25 a week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and £4.50 a week in Scotland (see page 29).

However, registration with Healthy Start does not occur until 10 weeks of pregnancy, so it is useful for all health

professionals to have Healthy Start vitamins available that they can offer to pregnant women as soon as they have any contact with them, as it is in the early stages of pregnancy that the vitamins are particularly important.

Healthy Start vitamins contain 400 micrograms of folic acid, 10 micrograms of vitamin D, and also 70 milligrams of vitamin C. They should be available at children's centres and health centres in most areas. If they are not available, a GP can prescribe these vitamins or they can be bought at a pharmacy. If Healthy Start vitamins are not readily available in your area, make sure that you can signpost women to appropriate named supplements they can buy (see the next page).

More information about Healthy Start, including information on how to apply for the scheme, can be found at: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>

To find out more about Best Start Foods, see <https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods>

Which vitamin supplements are suitable for pregnant women?

It is recommended that all pregnant women take a daily vitamin supplement that contains 400 micrograms of folic acid and 10 micrograms of vitamin D in pregnancy. Some pregnant women may need a higher dose of folic acid (see page 13).

Healthy Start vitamins include folic acid and vitamin D and are suitable for all women except those who choose a vegan diet.

If you cannot source Healthy Start vitamin supplements in your area, or cannot access these while attempting to become pregnant or in the first weeks of pregnancy, the best alternative supplement is a simple folic acid and vitamin D supplement, available from most pharmacies. Boots sell own-brand vitamin supplements with 400 micrograms of folic acid and 10 micrograms of vitamin D, which cost 6p a day to take. You could also take folic acid supplements and vitamin D supplements separately, and you can buy folic acid supplements of the correct strength (400 micrograms a day) from most pharmacies very cheaply. Vitamin D sold as a single product may come in different doses, but many pharmacies sell inexpensive supplements containing between 10 and 25 micrograms of vitamin D suitable for women to take in pregnancy.

What about branded specialist vitamins for pregnant women?

There are a range of expensive vitamin supplements marketed for women planning a pregnancy or during pregnancy, many of which contain a whole range of other vitamins and minerals that are not needed by most women. Some supplements take the form of milkshakes and therefore provide other ingredients such as oils, sugars and sweeteners. Eating a good diet should always be the suggested route for obtaining most of the nutrients needed. Unless someone has been specifically recommended to take supplements containing additional nutrients there may be a risk associated with taking them, and the money spent on them would be more advantageously used on buying additional fruit, vegetables and milk.

• Taking other vitamin supplements

• It is important to remember that only supplements of folic acid and vitamin D – or the Healthy Start vitamins, which contain folic acid, vitamin D and vitamin C – are recommended in pregnancy. No other supplements are recommended and some may be dangerous (see page 37). Taking lots of supplements does not improve health and may have an adverse impact on health.

• Make sure that only vitamins suitable for pregnancy are taken. General multivitamins that contain vitamin A (retinol) are not suitable, as high intakes of this vitamin in supplement form can be dangerous for the fetus.

• Vitamins for vegan pregnant women

• **Folic acid supplements** can be purchased cheaply from a pharmacist or supermarket, and are usually suitable for vegans.

• The Vegan Society produces a supplement called VEG1 which contains riboflavin, vitamin B6, folic acid (200 micrograms), vitamin B12 (25 micrograms), vitamin D (20 micrograms), iodine (150 micrograms) and selenium. (See www.vegansociety.com/shop/veg-1-supplements) This supplement is suitable for pregnant women, but does not contain enough folic acid (as it contains 200 micrograms rather than the required 400 micrograms). So it should be taken with an additional folic acid supplement.

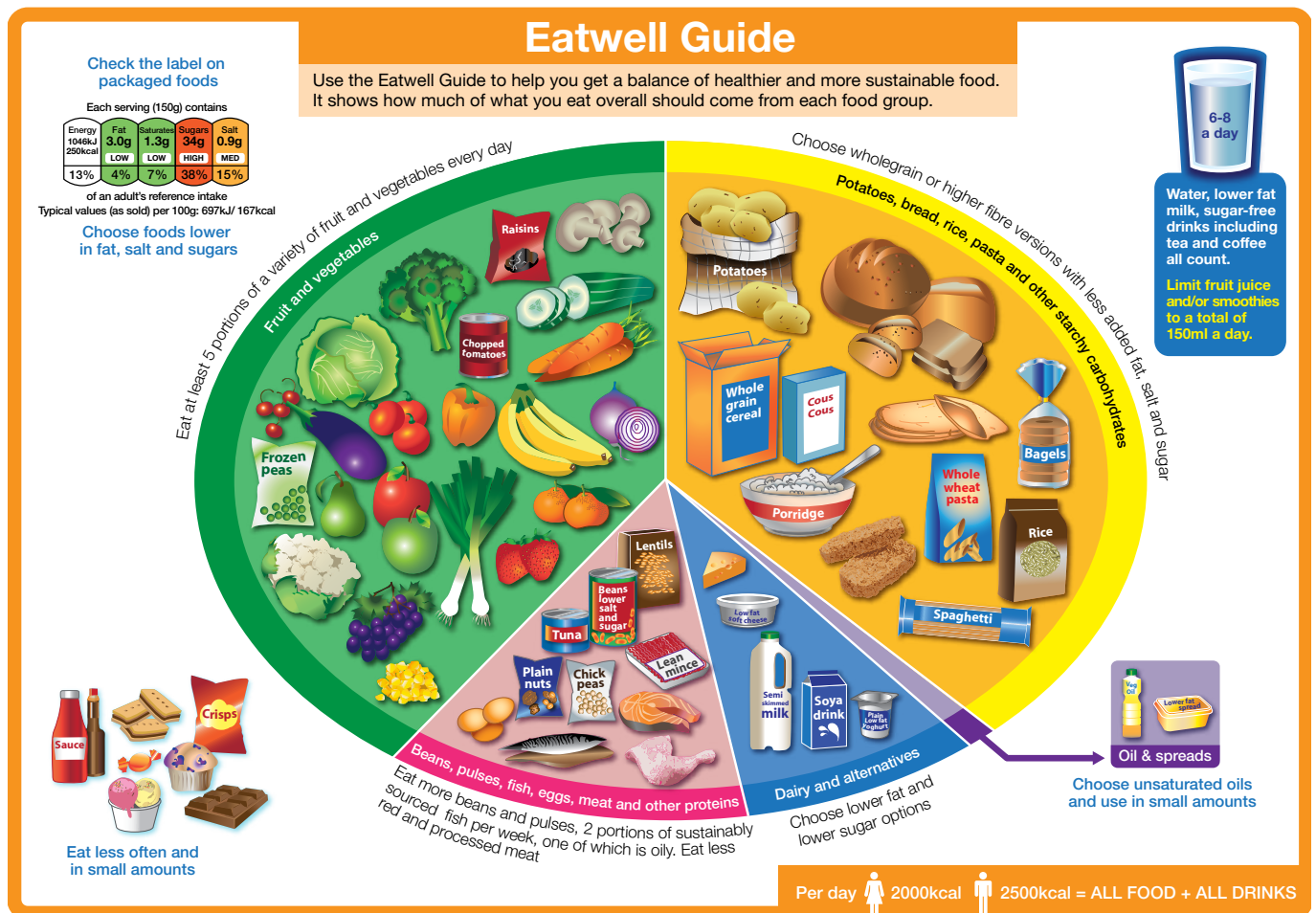
• **Vitamin D supplements** are often marked in IU (international units) rather than micrograms. 400 IU is equivalent to 10 micrograms.

• *Vitashine* vitamin D is recommended by the Vegan Society, and a 1,000 IU supplement (equivalent to 25 micrograms of vitamin D) is available, which is suitable for pregnant women.

• *Ddrops* are also suitable for vegans. These contain 10 micrograms of vitamin D per drop and can be bought in pharmacies and health food shops or online.

• Pregnant vegan women should avoid any supplements that contain vitamin A.

General eating well advice



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Meals and snacks should be based around these two food groups:

- **Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates.** These foods should make up over one-third of the food we eat. Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions with less added fat, salt and sugar.
- **Fruit and vegetables.** These should make up more than one-third of the food we eat. Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.

It is also important to include foods from these two food groups:

- **Dairy and alternatives.** These provide useful nutrients and should be eaten every day in moderate amounts. Choose lower-fat and lower sugar options.
- **Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins.** Eat more beans and pulses, 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish every week, one of which is oily.

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar should be limited in the diet as eating these foods and drinks means that it may be harder to get in all the nutrients you need without having too much energy (calories).

Oils and spreads: Choose oils and fats which are unsaturated, and use in small amounts.

Drinks: Have 6-8 drinks a day. Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count. Limit fruit juices and/or smoothies to 150ml per day as the sugars in these drinks can damage teeth and contribute to overweight.

Food group: Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates

ADVICE

Starchy foods – which include potatoes, bread, rice and pasta – should make up a third of the daily diet.

Eating a variety of breads and other starchy foods such as rice and pasta, including those with more wholegrain flour, will add additional nutrients and fibre to the diet.

WHY?

Starchy foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in the diet. As well as starch, these foods supply fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

All varieties of bread including wholemeal, granary and seeded breads, chapattis, bagels, roti, tortillas and pitta bread

Potatoes, yam, cocoyam, dasheen, breadfruit and cassava

Breakfast cereals

Rice, couscous, bulgar wheat, maize (polenta) and cornmeal

Noodles, spaghetti and other pastas

TIPS

- Potatoes are a useful starchy food as they are cheap, locally produced, contain a range of useful nutrients and are very versatile.
- Serve more pasta and rice and use less sauce.
- When serving rice and pasta, try to use wholemeal, wholegrain, brown or high-fibre versions.
- Some breakfast cereals are nutrient-fortified (that is, with added iron, folic acid and other vitamins and minerals), but avoid those that are high in sugar (those with more than 15g of sugar per 100g of cereal).
- Have a variety of breads, such as seeded, wholegrain and granary. Use thicker slices and have low-fat options for fillings.
- If you are making chips or fried potatoes, use large pieces of potato and have thick or straight-cut chips as these absorb less fat.
- Baked potatoes do not need to have butter or margarine added when served with moist fillings or sauces.
- For people who have allergies to wheat, oats, barley and rye, good alternatives to offer are foods made from maize (such as polenta), rice, rice flour, potatoes, potato flour, buckwheat, sago, tapioca, soya and soya flour.
- Cereal foods which are good sources of iron and zinc include fortified cereals, wholegrain cereals, wholemeal bread and flour, couscous and wholemeal pasta.





Food group: Fruit and vegetables

ADVICE

Fruit and vegetables should make up about a third of the daily diet.

Try and eat at least 5 portions a day. A portion is about 80g (a whole fruit, like an apple or orange, or 2 to 3 tablespoons of vegetables, or a small glass of fruit juice.)

A 150ml glass of 100% fruit or vegetable juice, or 100% fruit and vegetable based smoothie can count as 1 portion of fruit or vegetables each day.

Dried fruit contains useful nutrients but if eaten between meals can damage teeth. So eat dried fruit *with* meals – for example, with breakfast cereals or desserts.

Aim for 1 or 2 portions of fruit or vegetables with each meal, and have fruit and vegetables as snacks.

WHY?

Fruit and vegetables are good sources of many vitamins and minerals.

There is evidence that consuming 400g or more of fruit and vegetables a day reduces the risk of developing chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease and some cancers.

Including fruits and vegetables in the diet will help to increase the intake of fibre.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

All types of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables – for example, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, frozen peas, peppers, swede and sweetcorn

Beans and pulses, including baked beans, chick peas and kidney beans

All types of salad vegetables, including lettuce, cucumber, tomato, raw carrots, peppers and beetroot

All types of fresh fruit – for example, apples, bananas, kiwi fruit, oranges, pears, mango and plums

All types of canned fruit in fruit juice – for example, pineapple, peaches and mandarin oranges

Stewed fruit

Dried fruit

Fruit juice (100% juice) or fruit and vegetable only smoothies. Have no more than 150ml of fruit juice and/or smoothies a day.

TIPS

- Steaming or cooking vegetables with minimum amounts of water, and serving them as soon as possible, will help retain vitamins.
- Use fresh fruit and vegetables as soon as possible, rather than storing them, to avoid vitamin loss.
- Incorporate fruit and vegetables in snack options. Many vegetables can be eaten raw.
- Add vegetables and pulses to curries, casseroles or stir-fry dishes and serve at least two types of vegetables with fish, chicken or meat.
- One daily glass (150ml) of 100% fruit or vegetable juice or 100% fruit and vegetable smoothie can help iron absorption, so have with a meal such as breakfast.
- Add a handful of dried fruit to cereals, porridge and desserts like rice pudding.
- Raw vegetables can increase colour, taste and texture at mealtimes, but if eating vegetables and fruit raw, always wash them before eating.
- Add extra vegetables to dishes such as Bolognese sauce, shepherd's pie, curries, stews and soups.
- Fruit and vegetables which are useful sources of iron include spinach, broccoli, spring greens, dried apricots, raisins, baked beans, broad beans and blackcurrants.
- Fruit and vegetables which are useful sources of folic acid include spinach, broccoli, peas, oranges, melon, green leafy salads and tomatoes.
- Fruit and vegetables which are useful non-dairy sources of calcium include green leafy vegetables, dried fruit and oranges.

Food group: Dairy and alternatives

ADVICE	WHY?	WHAT'S INCLUDED
<p>Have dairy foods such as milk, yoghurt and cheese every day (if you eat these foods).</p> <p>Have low-fat options such as semi-skimmed milk or 1% fat milk, low-fat yoghurt and reduced-fat cheeses.</p> <p>Vegetarians should not rely on cheese as the main protein item.</p> <p>If you don't eat dairy foods (for example, because you are vegan or lactose-intolerant, see page 26), unsweetened calcium-fortified plant-based milk alternatives such as soya milk can be used instead of cows' or other animal milk.</p>	<p>Milk and dairy products are good sources of calcium, protein and vitamin A. Calcium helps to contribute to good bone health.</p> <p>The fat content of different dairy products varies and much of this is saturated fat.</p> <p>If you choose plant-based milk alternatives, make sure they are unsweetened and fortified with calcium.</p>	<p>Skimmed, semi-skimmed, 1% fat and whole milk</p> <p>Dried milk, goats' and sheep's milk</p> <p>Cheeses – for example, Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, cheese spreads, feta, Edam, goats' cheese, Parmesan. For cheeses to avoid during pregnancy, see page 36.</p> <p>Yoghurt</p> <p>Fromage frais</p> <p>Unsweetened calcium-fortified plant-based milk alternatives made from soya, peas, nuts, oats, coconut or hemp, and products such as yoghurt or cheese that are made from them.</p>

TIPS

- Choose reduced-fat hard cheeses, cottage cheese or low-fat soft cheese.
- Some dairy products can contain high levels of salt. Look for lower-salt cheeses and use smaller amounts of stronger cheese rather than larger amounts of milder cheese.
- Have semi-skimmed, 1% fat or skimmed milk, and low-fat yoghurts and fromage frais.
- Use plain yoghurt or fromage frais instead of cream, soured cream or crème fraîche in recipes.
- Try frozen yoghurts as an alternative to ice cream.
- For those on dairy-free diets, serve unsweetened calcium-fortified plant-based milk alternatives in place of milky drinks.
- Avoid sweetened milk drinks, as sugars in these drinks can damage the teeth.



There are lots of practical meal and snack ideas and recipes in Part 2.



Food group: Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

ADVICE	WHY?	WHAT'S INCLUDED
Everyone is encouraged to eat more pulses and beans in their diet. Vegetarians and vegans should eat a range of meat alternatives.	Beans, pulses, eggs, meat alternatives such as tofu, tempeh, textured vegetable proteins, and nuts all provide good sources of nutrients.	Beans and pulses such as chick peas, lentils, kidney beans, butter beans, textured vegetable protein, nuts, nut butters, seeds, soya products such as tofu, and Quorn.
Everyone is encouraged to eat two portions of sustainably sourced fish a week, one of which is an oil-rich fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, pilchards or sardines.	Oil-rich fish provides a good source of omega-3 fats, which may help to protect against heart disease. Oil-rich fish are also a source of vitamins A and D.	Fish includes all fresh and frozen fish (including coley, cod, haddock, mackerel, salmon, trout), canned fish (such as sardines, tuna, pilchards) and shellfish or crustaceans (such as crab, lobster, prawns and mussels). Choose sustainably sourced fish. Good white fish options include coley, pollack, hake, flounder, dab and whiting. Find out more at www.mcsuk.org .
Limit the amount of processed fish and dishes (such as fish cakes, fish fingers and battered fish products).	Fish products such as fish cakes and fish fingers may have a low fish content and may be high in fat and salt.	
Eggs can be eaten at breakfast and as part of main meals.	Eggs are a good source of protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, choline and some minerals.	Boiled, poached or scrambled eggs, or omelettes.
Eat a variety of meat and meat alternatives at main meals.	Meat and meat alternatives are a good source of protein, vitamins and zinc.	Meat includes all cuts of beef, pork, lamb, poultry (chicken and turkey), game (such as venison or rabbit), offal (such as kidney or heart), and meat products such as bacon, sausages, beefburgers, pies and cold meats such as ham or salami.
Use lean meat (meat which has a fat content of about 10%) and limit the amount of processed meat products consumed, such as sausages, burgers, canned meats, pies, pasties and crumbed or battered meat products.	Some meat and meat products can contain a lot of fat, saturated fat and salt, and buying meat diluted with other ingredients is poor value for money.	

TIPS

- Eggs and canned pulses such as chick peas and red kidney beans, or easy-to-use dried pulses such as lentils, are cheap alternatives to meat and fish. There are lots of useful recipes using these in this resource.
- Buy good-quality meat and use smaller amounts.
- Use more vegetables, pulses and starchy food to make meals go further, and to add more texture and flavour. This will also mean that less meat is needed, reducing both the fat content and the cost of the meal.
- Avoid cheap processed meat products such as sausages, burgers, canned meat products, coated and battered products, pies, pasties and sausage rolls. These often contain small amounts of meat but lots of fat and salt, and are not good nutritional value for money.
- Always cook meat dishes thoroughly, particularly if they are bought ready-prepared. Make sure that any leftover meat dishes are stored and reheated safely (see page 35).
- Canned fish provides useful nutrients and can be a cost-effective ingredient in recipes.
- Frozen fish is often cheaper than fresh fish.
- Buy fish from sustainable fish stocks. Look for the Marine Stewardship Council logo.
- Reduce the amount of processed fish products eaten – particularly those that are fried or coated, such as fish fingers or fish cakes – as these are often poor nutritional value for money.

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

ADVICE	WHY?	WHAT'S INCLUDED
<p>Fatty and sugary foods can add palatability to the diet but should be eaten in small amounts each day.</p> <p>Reduce the amount of foods containing fat – for example, fat spreads and butter, cooking oils and mayonnaise.</p> <p>Other foods containing fat and sugar – such as cakes and biscuits – should be eaten only occasionally.</p>	<p>Foods that are high in fat and/or sugar often provide a lot of calories and a lower proportion of other nutrients.</p> <p>Some foods in this group are also high in sodium/salt.</p> <p>Foods and drinks containing sugar often contain few other nutrients, and having them frequently between meals can contribute to tooth decay.</p>	<p>Foods containing fat include: butter, margarine, other spreading fats and low-fat spreads, cooking oils, oil-based salad dressings, mayonnaise, cream, chocolate, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cakes, puddings, ice cream, rich sauces, and gravies.</p> <p>Foods and drinks containing sugar include: soft drinks, sweets, chocolate, jams, sugar, cakes, puddings, biscuits, pastries and ice cream.</p>

TIPS

- Use fat spreads rich in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.
- Use cooking oils high in monounsaturates, such as soya, rapeseed or olive oils.
- Avoid serving pastry dishes frequently.
- Have low-fat yoghurt with puddings or pies, rather than cream.
- Base desserts on fresh fruit, canned fruit in juice, and yoghurt or low-fat custard.
- Have water, unsweetened fruit juices and chilled milk drinks rather than sugary soft drinks.
- Have wholegrain or plain cereals rather than sugar-coated cereals.
- If you currently add sugar to hot drinks such as tea and coffee, try cutting back a little bit at a time to get used to a less sweet taste.

Simple food swaps

Here are some simple food swaps that can make a diet healthier.

If someone says they eat:

Doughnuts, croissants, Danish pastries, sweet tarts or pastries

Savoury pasties or sausage rolls

Take-away pizza

High-fat, high-salt ready meals

Sweet fizzy drinks

Crisps and salted snacks in bags

Suggest they could have this instead:

Plain or fruit scones, currant buns, toasted teacakes, fruit cake or bread pudding

Bread rolls with savoury fillings such as egg, salad, soft cheese or lean meat

Ready-made thin-based pizza cooked at home with added vegetable toppings, or eaten with salad. Take-away pizzas with thin crusts, avoiding pepperoni and processed meat toppings and extra cheese

Other quick and easy meals such as scrambled egg on toast, pasta with tomato sauce, or jacket potato cooked in the microwave and served with baked beans

Tap water, fresh fruit or vegetable juice or 100% fruit and vegetable smoothies (up to 150ml a day), fruit juice with sparkling water, or milkshake

Monkey nuts, other dried fruit and nut mixes, pretzels, or plain popcorn

Cutting down on saturated fat, sugar and salt

Checking food labels

It is useful to look at the nutrition information labels on foods, and to choose those that are lower in salt, sugar and fat. The *Check the label* guide below shows how to check labels to see if foods are high in fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt.

Check the label

Use this information to find out if a product is high or low in sugars, fats and salt. Compare these figures with the 'per 100g' figures on the food label.

All measures are per 100g.

	LOW	HIGH
Sugars	5g or less	More than 15g
Fat	3g or less	More than 20g
Saturated fat	1.5g or less	More than 5g
Salt	0.3g or less	More than 1.5g
Sodium	0.1g or less	More than 0.6g

Eating less fat, and less saturated fat

If meals are based around carbohydrate foods such as potatoes, bread, pasta, rice and fruits and vegetables, it is likely that you will reduce the amount of foods high in fat and saturated fat that you have. Easy ways to reduce fat intakes are to use semi-skimmed milk and lower-fat dairy products, cut visible fat off meat, use less fat spread on bread and in cooking, and cut down on processed meat products, ultra-processed cakes, biscuits and fried snacks, and fast food and take-away meals such as pizza, burgers, and Chinese and Indian meals.

Eating less sugar

Sugar is not just the white crystals we put in tea and coffee. There are two types of sugar.

- One type of sugar is found naturally in some foods such as vegetables, fruit and milk. This type of sugar is not harmful to our teeth.
- The other type of sugar is the sugar that is taken out of sugar beet or sugar cane, or out of fruit, and then put back, as sugar, into other foods and drinks. This type of sugar damages teeth. Also, many of the foods and drinks with this type of sugar tend to have lots of calories (which can contribute to overweight), but they have few other nutrients.

We don't need to add sugar to our food, or have sugary foods or drinks, as most of us can get all the energy (calories) we need from starchy foods such as potatoes, rice, beans or pasta. Our bodies break these foods down into glucose, which the body then uses to give us a steady supply of energy.

Did you know?

If fruits and vegetables are highly processed, for example in purées, the sugars are set free from the cell walls and become the damaging sort of sugars. This means that the sugars in fruit juice, smoothies, fruit purées (including those sold for babies in jars and pouches), are all high in sugar.

If your diet has a lot of sugar in it, you are more likely to become overweight or to have tooth decay. Most people in the UK eat too much sugar. It can be hard to avoid having lots of sugar as it is put into many common foods. See the box below.

Foods and drinks that have a lot of sugar

FOODS

- Biscuits
- Cereal bars and flapjacks
- Cakes
- Pastries
- Fruit pies and pie fillings
- Puddings such as sponge puddings, cheesecake, mousse or tarts
- Sweetened breakfast cereals
- Sweetened yoghurts and fromage frais
- Ice cream
- Sweets

DRINKS

- Soft drinks
- Squashes
- Fizzy drinks
- Energy drinks
- Some smoothies and fruit juice drinks
- Milkshakes
- Some sweet alcoholic drinks such as sweet wine, drinks with mixers, or bottled cocktails and shots

You can usually find information about how much sugar there is, either in a portion or in 100g of the food, by looking at the nutrition information on the pack. (See *Check the label* on the left.) But it's not always easy to tell whether the sugar in the food is the type that can damage teeth. As a general rule, if a food says it has 15g of sugar or more per 100g, it is probably high in sugars that can damage teeth and contribute to overweight.

Some ways of cutting down on sugar

- Have fewer sugary drinks and foods. Try to have them only at mealtimes.
- Try unsweetened fruit juice mixed with fizzy water at mealtimes, and limit fruit juice to a glass (150ml) a day.
- If you have sugar in tea or coffee, try to cut down on how much you have, until you don't have any at all.
- Instead of biscuits and cakes, try currant buns, scones, malt loaf or fruit bread.
- Add dried fruit or fruit purée to dishes to sweeten them, instead of adding sugar.
- Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals instead of cereals that are coated in honey or sugar.
- Add your own flavouring – such as chopped-up fruit, or a little honey – to natural yoghurt, instead of buying flavoured yoghurt which is often very sweet.
- Where you can, make your own food. Processed foods such as dried soups, sauces, dried rice dishes, ready meals, ready-made desserts and packaged cakes and biscuits often have much more sugar in them than you would use in a recipe yourself. And many of these dishes are simple and cheap to prepare.
- Many ready-made foods and drinks labelled 'diet', 'low/reduced sugar' or 'no sugar' contain sweeteners such as acesulfame-potassium (acesulfame-K), aspartame, saccharin and sucralose. While the NHS advises that sweeteners are safe in pregnancy (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/are-sweeteners-safe/>), it is better to choose unprocessed and minimally processed foods and drinks over ready-made meals and snacks, which are more likely to contain sweeteners and other additives.

Having less salt

Salt (sodium chloride) is essential in the diet to maintain fluid balance. But having too much salt in the diet can lead to high blood pressure, which can contribute to stroke and coronary heart disease in later life.

Most of the salt we eat is in ready-made foods. The list below gives some examples of ready-made foods that have a lot of salt. Current nutritional guidelines suggest that everyone aged 11 years and over should have no more than 6g of salt a day. It is easier to reduce the amount of salt if food is prepared from ingredients rather than buying ready-made foods. The meals and snacks shown in this guide provide lots of nutrients without lots of salt – and taste good.

Foods that have a lot of salt

- Soups
- Bottled pasta sauces and other cooking sauces
- Sauces, spreads, pickles, chutneys and soy sauce
- Mayonnaise and salad cream
- Savoury ready meals
- Savoury snacks such as crisps, salted nuts, papadums and savoury biscuits
- Bread, rolls, garlic bread and flavoured breads
- Some breakfast cereals
- Meat pies and pasties, and canned meat products
- Some sweet foods such as buns, pastries and hot chocolate powder
- Smoked foods and smoked meats such as ham and bacon
- Fast food and take-away meals such as pizza, burgers, and Chinese and Indian meals.

How to add flavour to your food without using salt

- Taste food before you add salt when cooking or at the table. You might not need it!
- Cut down on the salt you add when cooking potatoes, pasta and rice. After a while you'll find you don't need to add any at all.
- Add fresh herbs to pasta dishes, vegetables and meat.
- Use garlic, ginger, chilli and lime in stir-fries.
- Make your own stock and gravy, instead of using cubes or granules. Or use low-salt bouillon.
- Squeeze lemon or lime juice onto fish and into casseroles and stews.
- Try using different types of onion – brown, red, white, spring onions or shallots.
- Use black pepper instead of salt, to season foods like pasta or scrambled egg.
- Buy good-quality fresh ingredients as they will have more natural flavour.
- Add fruit to meat dishes to give a naturally sweet flavour – for example, pork and apricots.
- When making cheese dishes, use a small amount of strong cheese rather than a larger amount of milder cheese. Add a little mustard powder to bring out the cheese flavour.

Weight and activity

Women need to gain enough weight in pregnancy to ensure that their baby is born at a good birthweight, as that gives the baby the best chance of feeding well and growing and developing normally. Women who are themselves short and thin, those who may have been born at a low birthweight, and those who smoke and who gain little weight in pregnancy, are at greatest risk of having a baby with low birthweight. Women under 20 are at greater risk of having low weight gain in pregnancy compared to older women.

Weight gain in pregnancy

It is important that everyone gives a clear and consistent message about eating well in pregnancy first and foremost and takes a considered view of weight gain in pregnancy, which is likely to vary for each woman.

If a woman has had an eating disorder, it is important that extra support and advice are sought from a GP or paediatric dietitian to ensure that everyone is clear about whether the woman is gaining enough weight, and that the pregnancy is carefully monitored.

How much weight should women gain during pregnancy?

In the UK we do not currently have specific guidance on the amount of weight that should ideally be gained during pregnancy, but it is generally agreed that women who enter pregnancy underweight should be encouraged to gain more weight than those who enter pregnancy overweight or obese. The amount of weight gained will be different for different women, and the most important thing to encourage is a good diet rather than a specific weight gain. An average weight gain of about 12kg (just under 2 stone) is often used as a guide, but young women who are still growing, women who are having multiple births, or those who are very thin, or very fat, when entering pregnancy should be given individual advice.

Women who enter pregnancy overweight

Being overweight in pregnancy impacts on the health of pregnant women, the delivery, and the health and wellbeing of the baby. Women who enter pregnancy overweight are more likely to gain too much weight in pregnancy, and find it harder to lose it afterwards.

In the UK there is guidance for health professionals on managing weight in pregnancy for women before they become pregnant, or if they are overweight or obese during pregnancy, and to support women whose weight is classified as overweight or obese after pregnancy. For details of this, see the *Resources* section on page 88.

Gestational diabetes

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of developing gestational diabetes, a disorder that develops in about 5-9% of pregnancies in the third trimester leading to raised blood glucose levels. Other risk factors include: having a family history of gestational diabetes; having a first degree relative with diabetes; or coming from a south east Asian or African-Caribbean ethnicity. Women with gestational diabetes are more likely to deliver larger babies and are usually advised to manage weight gain in pregnancy and to eat a diet which is rich in fruit and vegetables and wholegrain cereals and to limit intakes of sugars, particularly from soft drinks.

Dietary counselling is advised for women who have previously experienced gestational diabetes or who are at high risk.

Don't obsess about weight measurements and body size

The most important thing a woman can do in pregnancy is to eat well and be active (and not to smoke, drink alcohol or take party drugs). It's essential to encourage all women to eat well, regardless of whether they are underweight or overweight.

Why does birthweight matter?

Babies who are born small or thin are at greater risk of ill health and poor development. Babies born at less than 2.5 kilos (5 pounds 8 ounces) are called low birthweight babies. These babies may need more care and may be at greater risk of illness and development delays in both the short term and the long term.

Weight worries

Women who are pregnant might worry about gaining weight in pregnancy and then not being able to lose the weight after the birth. It is important to explain that:

- Much of the weight gain is water, and this increase in fluid is needed to ensure that there is a good flow of blood and nutrients from mum to baby through the placenta.
- Some weight is gained to provide the energy stores for breastfeeding, and breastfeeding is the ideal way to protect both the baby's and the mother's health and for the mother to regain a pre-pregnancy figure.
- Eating well in pregnancy is one of the most important things you can do to give your baby the best start in life. Trying not to gain much weight may mean that the baby is deprived of the energy and nutrients needed to develop.
- Gaining the right amount of weight does not mean having a bigger baby which will be harder to deliver. It is a myth that a smaller baby means an easier delivery. Every woman has a different birth experience and the most important thing is to eat well and have a healthy baby.

Dieting in pregnancy is never recommended. If women are worried about their weight, the best advice is to follow the guidance in this resource about eating well during pregnancy and to talk to a midwife or GP after the birth about accessing support on how to lose weight effectively.

Research suggests that just six months of breast-feeding can reduce the risk of obesity in women in later life, as well as reducing the risk of breast cancer.

Activity in pregnancy

It is beneficial to be active during pregnancy. The advantages of being active are:

- Management of weight gain.
- Better sleep.
- Mood may be improved.
- Constipation is less likely.
- Back ache and leg cramps may be less of a problem.
- It may help reduce the risk of some complications in pregnancy such as gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia.
- Labour is often easier.

Most moderate exercise is safe in pregnancy, but women should check with a doctor that the sort of activity they do is safe. It is a good idea to do at least 30 minutes of some sort of moderate activity every day in pregnancy. At the least, encourage everyone to walk for at least 30 minutes a day outside. For other activities, encourage women to wear a good support bra (without underwiring) when exercising, and to drink plenty of fluids. If there is any discomfort, dizziness, pain, breathlessness or exhaustion when exercising, women should stop the activity and seek advice.

For more information see:

- the UK Chief Medical Officers' *Physical Activity Guidelines*, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-pregnancy-and-after-childbirth> and
- *Tommy's Exercise in pregnancy*, at <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/being-healthy/exercise>

Pregnant women can enjoy activity such as:

- walking and gentle jogging
- swimming
- yoga and pilates with trained instructors
- cycling
- non-competitive tennis and badminton.

Pregnant women should avoid:

- high-intensity physical activity such as sprinting and squash
- contact sports or higher risk sports such as horse-riding, trampolining, gymnastics, martial arts, football, rugby, netball, diving, skiing and climbing
- sports where they might fall and injure themselves or the baby.

Looking after bones and teeth – for both baby and mum

The body adapts in pregnancy to ensure that calcium from food and drink is well absorbed, but it is important to make sure that women have adequate amounts of the two nutrients that are very important for healthy bones: vitamin D and calcium.

Vitamin D

People make vitamin D in their skin when the skin is exposed to summer sunlight. The UV rays are strong enough to do this in most parts of the UK between April and September. However, it is now thought that lots of people in the UK do not make enough vitamin D in their skin to last them all year round. New recommendations suggest that most people might benefit from a vitamin D supplement in the winter months. Pregnant women, however, should take extra vitamin D throughout pregnancy, as low vitamin D status in the pregnant woman can impact on the bone health of the baby throughout its life. Some women may be at particular risk of low vitamin D status:

- Women with darker skin (for example, those from South Asian, Caribbean or African descent) may be at greater risk, as darker skin requires more sun exposure to make sufficient vitamin D.
- Women who rarely go outside may not make enough vitamin D. They may not go outside because they are unable to do so because of a disability, because they are in a residential setting, or because they choose to stay inside.
- Women who are obese and those who have gestational diabetes are also at particular risk of vitamin D insufficiency.
- If women wear concealing clothing when they are outside – for example, if they never have their shoulders or arms exposed to the sun – they may not be able to make enough vitamin D.
- Women who do not eat meat or fish may get less vitamin D from their diet (dietary vitamin D). Although dietary vitamin D alone does not prevent vitamin D insufficiency, it can provide a useful additional source.

All pregnant women should take a supplement of 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day throughout pregnancy. This is included in the Healthy Start vitamins. (See opposite.)

Calcium

It is also important to get adequate amounts of calcium from the diet. Milk, cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are the best sources of calcium, but other foods also contain some calcium. (See page 10.) Many of the recipes in this resource are good sources of calcium.

Women who drink large amounts of fizzy drinks, particularly cola drinks, may also be more prone to bone problems, as the phosphorus in these drinks makes it harder for the body to absorb calcium.

**HEALTHY
START**

Healthy Start vitamins contain 10 micrograms of vitamin D, 400 micrograms of folic acid and 70 milligrams of vitamin C. See page 13 for more on how to get these vitamins.

For information on vitamin supplements for vegan women, see page 14.

Women who don't eat or drink dairy products

Some women may avoid dairy products (milk, yoghurt and cheese) because they are lactose-intolerant or, more rarely, have a cows' milk allergy, or because they choose a vegan diet. Lactose is the sugar naturally occurring in milk and all milk-based products, and lactose intolerance is frequently found in some women of Asian and African descent. It is caused by a deficiency in the enzyme lactase. Intolerance of dairy foods can be variable. Some people experience unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, bloating and nausea when they have even small amounts of lactose, while others can consume small amounts without severe effects.

If dairy foods are avoided for whatever reason, intake of calcium, riboflavin and iodine might be low, so it is important that good sources are included in the diet.

Calcium: Unsweetened calcium-fortified plant-based milk alternatives such as soya, pea, nut and oat-based milks can be used instead of milk as a drink and in recipes. (Some brands of milk alternatives may also include vitamin B12 and vitamin D, which can be useful additions to the diet. However, milk alternatives on their own may not provide enough of these nutrients.)

Non-dairy sources of **calcium** include: spinach, sardines, pilchards and other canned fish eaten with the bones, tofu, calcium-fortified plant-based milk alternatives such as soya, pea, nut and oat-based milks, bread, sesame seeds, peas, beans and lentils, dried fruit, oranges and egg yolk.

Non-dairy sources of **riboflavin** include: kidney, malted drinks, fortified breakfast cereals, almonds, lean meat and poultry, and eggs.

Non-dairy sources of **iodine** are fish, eggs and seaweed.*

* Some seaweed such as kelp has a very high iodine content and should be avoided. Dried nori seaweed used in making sushi is safe to include in the diet and can be sprinkled on soups and stews and included in home-made burgers and other dishes. Very high intakes of iodine are also dangerous and if women take an iodine supplement this should provide no more than 150 micrograms a day.

Looking after teeth

Hormonal changes in pregnancy can make gums more prone to infection, and keeping teeth and gums healthy is important to prevent future tooth loss.

Free dental treatment for pregnant women

All pregnant women are entitled to free NHS dental treatment during the pregnancy and for 12 months after the baby's birth. Women should be encouraged to use this service.

Over-18s will need a MATB1 certificate (issued by a midwife or GP), or a valid prescription maternity exemption certificate (MatEx) if they are not otherwise entitled to free treatment because of their age or because they are on income support or certain other benefits.

Top tips for looking after teeth

- **Cut down on fizzy and soft drinks.** One of the biggest risk factors for poor dental health is the frequent consumption of soft drinks, fizzy drinks, squashes, juices, smoothies and sports drinks. Drinking water, milk or unsweetened decaffeinated tea or coffee between meals will not damage teeth. For more information on which drinks to choose during pregnancy, see page 30.
- **Avoid eating sugary snacks throughout the day** – for example, sucking or chewing on sweets or eating biscuits regularly between meals. Teeth constantly bathed in sugar are more likely to decay.
- **Brush teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.**
- **See a dentist and dental hygienist regularly.**

Top tips for meal planning in pregnancy

There is a lot of advice available for pregnant women to support them to eat well in pregnancy, and other useful and expert resources are outlined on page 88. Here we give some specific practical tips that may be useful when supporting women during their pregnancy.

Make time for breakfast

A small snack in the morning may help with nausea in early pregnancy. If breakfast is missed, it is more likely that people will snack mid-morning on high-fat, high-salt and high-sugar foods and miss out on some important nutrients like B vitamins, fibre, iron and zinc that are found in cereals and breads. Most breakfast cereals are a good source of energy, fibre and other nutrients, and low-sugar, low-salt cereals like weet bisks, puffed wheat, crisped rice, cornflakes and malted wheat are good breakfast choices and can also be snacks at other times of the day.

It is a good idea to have a glass of 100% fruit juice with breakfast, as fruit juice is a good source of vitamin C, and vitamin C may help the body to absorb iron from cereal foods.

Breakfast does not have to include traditional breakfast foods, however. Practical examples of nutritious breakfasts or other meals and snacks that could be eaten in the morning can be found on page 46.

Start the day with an egg

Eggs are an important source of nutrients, and having an egg for breakfast several mornings each week will contribute to intakes of vitamin A, vitamin D, thiamin, riboflavin, vitamin B12, iron, calcium, zinc and choline, many of which are particularly important in pregnancy. Eggs are cheap, very easy to cook and very versatile. Example breakfasts, snacks and meals that include eggs* can be found on pages 49–85.

* We use free-range eggs in our meal and snack ideas. You can eat well and ethically on a budget.

Eat more vegetables

Almost everyone would benefit from eating more vegetables every day. There is excellent evidence that eating more vegetables is associated with better health throughout people's lives. And vegetables taste good, and are cheap, versatile and colourful, so it's very unlikely someone won't find a vegetable they like.

Everyone should aim to have at least three different types of vegetables or salads every day at portions of 80g or more. A wide variety of fresh, dried, canned and frozen vegetables can be included in the diet. It is fine to eat more, and in lots of countries they now say that half of all your main meals should be vegetables.

Everyone should have **at least 5** portions

of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. This one step alone will really help pregnant women meet a lot of their nutrient needs.

People who say they don't like vegetables may be more willing to try:

- sweetcorn or baby corns
- raw carrot sticks, slices of red and yellow peppers, or cherry tomatoes
- tomato sauce on pasta
- 'bubble and squeak' (green cabbage and mashed potato mixed together)
- stir-fry vegetables
- vegetable soup
- vegetable curry
- grated carrot as a salad.

Eat more fruit

Everyone should have at least two different types of fruit a day. One of these can be a glass of 100% fruit juice and the other can be a piece of fresh fruit or a small portion of dried fruit or some canned or frozen fruit.

People who say they don't like fruit may be more willing to try:

- canned or fresh pineapple, peaches or fruit salad in fruit juice
- fruit smoothies (fresh or canned fruit in juice liquidised together with other fruit, natural low-fat yoghurt or fruit juice), or fresh fruit milkshakes made with skimmed milk and fruit
- raisins, or other dried fruit such as dates, apricots, pear or mango
- banana with ice cream or custard
- fresh fruit jellies or home-made lollies
- fruit kebabs
- frozen bananas.

Eating more locally and organically grown fruits and vegetables

We are able to grow a wide range of fruits and vegetables in the UK and it is better for the environment, and the economy, if we all try and eat foods that do not have to travel long distances. Also, it is better for the environment if fruits and vegetables are grown without the need for artificial heat, or for lots of added chemicals.

Everyone can be encouraged to think about joining a local box scheme that sources organic fruit and vegetables, or using a local farmers' market. (Any vendor who sells the appropriate foods and takes

- electronic payments can accept Healthy Start
- payments using the prepaid card. See the next page.)
- Organic fruits and vegetables do not necessarily
- contain more nutrients than conventionally grown
- ones, but farmers who grow food organically make
- an important contribution to protecting wildlife and
- keeping the land and soil healthy. Local box schemes,
- food co-ops and farmers' markets offer good-value
- local fruit and vegetables, and most local authorities
- can provide information on food schemes in their
- area.

Eat more potatoes

Potatoes are an excellent source of nutrients and fibre, as well as being a starchy, 'energy-giving' food. Potatoes grow well in the UK and can often be sourced locally. Potatoes are really versatile, are very good value for money and are easy to cook. Jacket potatoes with fillings such as mashed tuna fish or baked beans or low-fat soft cheese, and served with a salad or hot vegetable, can be a very quick, easy and nutritious meal.

Ideas for fillings for baked potato

Baked beans	Low-fat soft cheese
Baked beans with a few drops of chilli sauce	Mashed tuna
Cheddar cheese and chopped cherry tomatoes	Mashed tuna, grated carrot and chopped cherry tomatoes
Chicken and broccoli	Mozzarella, chopped tomato and basil
Chilli con carne	Plain yoghurt mixed with coriander, chopped cucumber and spring onion
Cottage cheese with chopped pineapple	Roasted peppers
Cottage cheese with onion and chives	Scrambled egg with chopped tomatoes and red pepper
Grated cheese and tomato	Tomato salsa
Ham and chopped pineapple	Tuna and sweetcorn mayonnaise
Houmous	



Healthy Start food payments

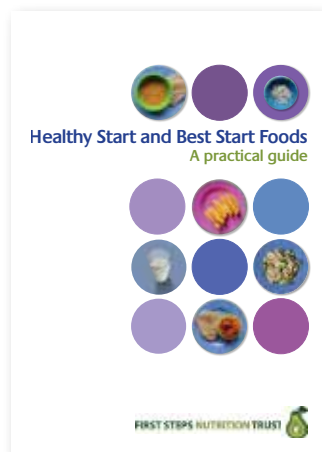
Women who are under 18 years of age, or who are entitled to income support or are on a low income, are likely to be eligible for the Healthy Start scheme (or in Scotland, the Best Start Foods scheme), which includes free Healthy Start vitamins and a payment of £17 every four weeks (equivalent to £4.25 a week) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and £18 every four weeks (equivalent to £4.50 a week) in Scotland. These payments may be used to buy milk, fruit, vegetables and pulses. For more information on how to apply for the Healthy Start scheme, see page 13.

Healthy Start payments are delivered via a prepaid card system. Any outlet which sells the appropriate foods and which takes electronic payments can accept the Healthy Start prepaid card, as registration is not necessary.

For a collection of recipes using ingredients that can be bought with the Healthy Start food payment, suitable for pregnant women and families, see the resource *Healthy Start and Best Start Foods: A Practical Guide*, available at www.firststepsnutrition.org

For more information about the Healthy Start scheme, visit the NHS website at: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

For more information about Best Start Foods see: www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/



What can be bought with the Healthy Start food payments?

The Healthy Start food payments can be spent on: liquid cows' milk; fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables; fresh, dried or canned pulses; and fresh potatoes. (In Scotland, Best Start Foods also include eggs.) Below are some examples of how you might spend your food payments.

Sadie is 7 months pregnant with her first baby and gets a Healthy Start payment of £17 every four weeks. She tries to spend about **£4.25** of this each week. Sadie usually spends this on: milk, fruit and vegetables so that she can make herself a fruit milkshake in the morning and vegetable sticks for her packed lunch. For example, she can buy:

4 pints (2.27 litres) 1% fat milk	£1.15
500g frozen fruit or berries	£2.20
350g bananas	28p
1 cucumber	49p
350g carrots	14p
Total	£4.26

Ayesha is 3 months pregnant. She spends her Healthy Start payment of £17 every four weeks (equivalent to **£4.25** a week) at her local fruit and vegetable market where she can usually buy:

1kg sweet potatoes	£1
500g onions	35p
A large cauliflower	£1
A large mango	80p
500g tomatoes	95p
Total	£4.10

Ayesha's Healthy Start payment of £17 is worth £4.25 a week. She can keep any unspent funds on her card for the following week.

Drinks to choose

The best drink to quench thirst is **tap water**. Tap water can be chilled in the fridge if cold drinks are enjoyed. Tap water is the most sustainable and the cheapest drink option for all.

100% fruit juice or smoothies can be a good source of vitamin C, but they are also high in sugar, so they should be served with meals rather than between meals, and limited to 150ml per day.

Milk – semi-skimmed milk, 1% fat milk, or skimmed milk – can be served with snacks or between meals, as this will not damage teeth.

Other drinks such as squash, carbonated drinks, fizzy drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks and flavoured milk – regardless of whether they contain sugar or

Drinks which contain caffeine – such as coffee, tea, cola and energy drinks – should be limited in pregnancy.

Have no more than 200mg of caffeine a day.

- 1 mug of filter coffee = 140mg
- 1 mug of instant coffee = 100mg
 - 1 mug of tea = 75mg
 - 1 can of cola = 40mg
- 1 can of energy drink = 80mg

Decaffeinated coffee and tea can be drunk freely.

artificial sweeteners – can damage teeth and, if served, should only be served with meals. It is easy to drink a lot of some of these soft drinks without realising that they add lots of extra calories – but no other nutrients – to the diet.

Why soft drinks are frequently linked to having too many calories

If someone drinks 500ml of soft drink every day – for example, half a large bottle, a small bottle or two large glasses of squash or fizzy drinks – they are likely to drink this without changing what they eat. This is because, after having a sweet drink, the person does not always feel as if he or she has eaten calories and it might not alter their appetite for other meals and snacks. In one week, those drinks alone will provide about an extra 1,700kcal – equivalent to about 80% of a whole day's food.

However, although those drinks provide a lot of calories, they are unlikely to provide any other nutrients. So, by drinking soft drinks, people are likely to miss out on important nutrients.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	TOTAL FOR THE WEEK
2 large glasses of squash	Half a large bottle of fizzy drink	1 large glass of squash + 1 large glass of fizzy drink	1 can of fizzy drink + 1 large glass of squash	1 small bottle of soft drink	1 large glass of fizzy drink + 1 large glass of squash	1 can of fizzy drink + 1 large glass of squash	
= 250kcal	= 215kcal	= 250kcal	= 260kcal	= 215kcal	= 250kcal	= 260kcal	=1,700kcal

Herbal teas and preparations

Avoid any herbal teas except those that are made with ingredients that would be a normal part of the diet – for example, mint tea, peppermint tea, blackcurrant, orange or lemon tea. Ginger tea is often recommended in pregnancy and this is fine as long as large quantities of ginger itself are not consumed.

There is no evidence that **raspberry leaf tea** will induce labour. Small amounts of weak raspberry leaf tea in the last trimester of pregnancy are unlikely to do any harm.

Chamomile tea is thought by some people to help with sleeping well, but it is not known if it is safe to drink this in pregnancy. Small amounts of weak chamomile tea are unlikely to cause harm.

Many herbal products may not be safe in pregnancy. For a list of herbal preparations that are not safe in pregnancy, see page 37.

Packed lunches

Pregnant women may take a packed lunch with them when they go out for the day or go to work.

It is important that a packed lunch provides the same variety of foods and nutrients as the meal it might be replacing. A packed lunch should contain:

- A starchy food. For example, any sort of bread, pitta bread, chapatti, crispbreads, rice cakes, or wraps. Choose lower-salt breads where available. Pasta or rice salad, couscous or tabouleh can also be useful starchy foods to include.
- A meat, fish or alternative. Alternatives include, for example, egg, cheese, peanut butter, or houmous.
- One portion of vegetables. For example, raw vegetables or salad.
- One portion of fresh or dried fruit or fresh fruit juice.
- A drink. Water, milk or fresh fruit juice are good choices.

Additional snacks such as plain popcorn, breadsticks, unsalted nuts, pumpkin or sunflower seeds, rice crackers or pretzels could be added occasionally and a yoghurt or fromage frais provides a good source of

- calcium. For women in weeks 27-40 of their pregnancy, some more energy-dense foods may also be appropriate (see page 42). For more ideas for snack foods and examples of packed lunches, see pages 63-78.

Eating out, meal delivery and take-aways

- It is now possible to have all types of meals and snacks delivered to your door day and night at the touch of a button. Eating out, meal delivery and take-aways are an important part of lifestyle for many people and offer the opportunity to meet friends and socialise or just take a break from food preparation and clearing up. However, habitually eating foods prepared outside of the home is likely to mean that intakes of fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar are much higher than recommended, particularly where fast foods like burgers, chips and fried chicken are treated as snacks rather than meals. Food eaten out is also very expensive and on pages 49-85 we give ideas for similar foods that can be made at home which will be both much healthier and much cheaper options.

Eating out, meal delivery and take-away tips

General tips

Check restaurant menus online before you order or visit. These may give you lots of information about ingredients and how meals are cooked. Grilled, baked and steamed foods are a better choice than foods that have been fried.

Try to avoid cream- and cheese-based sauces which are high in fat. Tomato-based sauces are a good choice and work well with most meats, fish and pasta.

If not included in your meal, have a side dish of vegetables or salad to add important nutrients to your meal.

When ordering, don't be afraid to ask if you can replace chips or roasted or sautéed potatoes with baked or boiled potatoes.

Avoid pastry-based products like pies and tarts as these are high in fat, including saturated fat.

Avoid fatty meats like pork belly, sausages and salami as these are high in fat, saturated fat and salt, and cut any visible fat off meat.

Bakery foods and sandwiches

Avoid sausage rolls, pasties and pastry-based products. Good sandwich choices are those that don't contain mayonnaise, are made with brown or wholemeal bread, and contain some salad vegetables. Check sandwich labels and choose those lower in fat and salt.

Bread-based cakes such as currant buns, teacakes or iced buns are better choices than pastry-based cakes.

Pizza

Choose thin-crust pizzas and pizzas without cheese-stuffed crusts.

Avoid having extra cheese, or fatty meat toppings such as pepperoni. Add more vegetable or fish toppings instead. Avoid side dishes like garlic bread.

Indian meals and curries

Good choices: Tandoori chicken or other meat or fish, tikka

chicken or other meat or fish (on a skewer without sauce), dry curries, vegetable curries, dahl, plain boiled rice, chapatti or roti breads.

High-fat foods to avoid: Fried foods such as papadums, samosas and onion bhajis, creamy or coconut-based sauces (such as korma sauces), fried rice (such as pilau rice), and breads which have a lot of fat added (such as stuffed naan breads).

Chinese meals

Good choices: Stir-fries, chicken, vegetable or prawn chop suey, steamed fish, vegetable dishes, boiled noodles, dishes with steamed tofu.

High-fat foods to avoid: Battered food such as sweet and sour dishes, crispy fried meat and fruit fritters and fried foods such as spring rolls and prawn crackers. Avoid fried rice and fried noodles.

Fish and chips and fried chicken

Fish and chicken are good choices but foods that are coated in batter or breadcrumbs and fried are high in fat, so try to eat less of the coating. Avoid battered sausages and pasties. Add some vegetables to your meal. Mushy peas or baked beans work well with fish. Choose smaller portions of chips.

Burgers

Choose a plain burger in a bun with a salad. Avoid extra cheese, mayonnaise, thick milkshakes, chicken nuggets or other battered dishes such as onion rings.

Avoid 'super-size' meal options and choose smaller portions of chips. Or ask for salad or raw vegetables instead of chips.

Salads

Salads served in restaurants and ready-made salad bowls may be designed for two. Check the labels on ready-made salad bowls and choose lower-fat, single portions. In restaurants, ask for dressings to be served on the side to allow you to manage how much you use.

Vegetarian diets

A vegetarian diet can provide all the nutrients needed for good health and there is evidence that vegetarian diets are associated with better health and lower rates of some diseases. However, it is important not to assume that all vegetarian diets are healthy, as some women may just remove meat from their diet without consuming suitable alternatives.

The body absorbs **iron** more easily from animal sources – such as meat – than from non-animal sources such as cereals or vegetables. This means that vegetarians have to take extra care to make sure that they get enough iron. There is some evidence that some vegetarian women have low levels of iron. For foods that are good sources of iron, see page 11.

Zinc intakes may also be lower among vegetarians. Eating a good variety of foods ensures that vegetarians have adequate zinc intakes. Sources of zinc include fortified breakfast cereals, tofu, nuts, peas, beans and lentils, sesame seeds and milk and cheese.

Vegetarians should make sure they include milk and eggs in the diet regularly, to ensure they get enough calcium, riboflavin, iodine and choline. For other foods that are good sources of these vitamins and minerals, see pages 10–12.

Advice on vegetarian diets can be obtained from the Vegetarian Society (see page 91).

Vegan diets

Vegans generally adopt a diet free of all animal products and do not eat milk, cheese, yoghurt or eggs, as well as avoiding meat and fish. It is possible to eat well as a vegan in pregnancy, but care has to be taken to get all the nutrients needed. It would be useful for any woman who plans to eat a vegan diet in pregnancy to talk with a midwife or other health professional about how they will manage this.

Vegans should take care to include sources of vitamin B12, iodine and riboflavin (see pages 10–11) in their diet as there will not be enough of these vitamins in the food they eat, and to take supplements of vitamin D and folic acid as recommended for all pregnant women. Healthy Start vitamins are not suitable for

vegans as the vitamin D is sourced from sheep's wool. Information on vitamin D supplements suitable for vegans can be found on page 14.

The only dietary source of vitamin B12 for vegans are plant foods exposed to vitamin B12-producing bacteria such as some fermented products, or those fortified with vitamin B12.

Some plant foods such as seaweeds and spirulina contain vitamin B12 but this is not active in humans. Pregnant and breastfeeding vegans will need to take a supplement of vitamin B12 or to have a significant amount of fortified foods (for example, fortified milk alternatives, or fortified cereals or other foods) to ensure they obtain enough B12 in their diet.

Advice on vegan diets can be obtained from the Vegan Society (see page 91).

Who might be at particular risk of low iodine intakes?

If someone avoids dairy products and does not eat fish, it is unlikely they will obtain sufficient iodine in their diet. Women should be encouraged to eat eggs and a range of vegetables, and to consider buying iodised salt for use in the home. Seaweed is an excellent source of iodine and small amounts of nori seaweed used in sushi, added to veggie burgers or sprinkled into stir-fries may be acceptable to some people. However, avoid seaweeds with a very high or variable iodine content such as kelp (see page 26).

Where there is real concern that the diet may be low in iodine, a supplement may be needed and women should seek advice on appropriate supplements to take to ensure they get enough, but not too much, of the nutrients they need. As a rule of thumb, avoid supplements that contain vitamin A and any non-nutrient herbs or other substances, and aim for daily amounts of vitamins and minerals that are no more than 100% of daily recommendations. If in doubt, check preparations with a pharmacist or dietitian.

Food for all: culture and diversity

Eating together, having special foods or avoiding particular foods are all intimately related to aspects of people's family life, cultural and religious beliefs. It is important to value the contributions that different cultures and nationalities make to the variety of foods eaten in the UK today.

While many people who have settled in the UK still try and preserve many of their traditional food patterns, their children and grandchildren do not necessarily follow all their parents' food practices. For example, they may eat fewer ethnic foods and

- more ready-made foods or soft drinks. It is therefore
- essential to treat each person as an individual and
- not make assumptions about what they might
- eat and drink. Some of the food-related customs
- commonly observed among ethnic and religious
- minority groups are shown below. However, each
- family or individual may interpret these in different
- ways.
- For women who have limited English language or
- experience of food commonly served in the UK, the
- use of a picture food dictionary may be helpful.

Food choices of different religious and cultural groups

	Jewish	Hindu*	Sikh*	Muslim	Buddhist	Rastafarian**
Eggs	No blood spots	Some	Yes	Yes	It varies	It varies
Milk/yoghurt	Not with meat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	It varies
Cheese	Not with meat	It varies	It varies	Possibly	Yes	It varies
Chicken	Kosher	It varies	It varies	Halal	No	It varies
Mutton/lamb	Kosher	It varies	Yes	Halal	No	It varies
Beef and beef products	Kosher	No	No	Halal	No	It varies
Pork and pork products	No	Rarely	Rarely	No	No	No
Fish	With fins and scales	With fins and scales	It varies	It varies	Some	Yes
Shellfish	No	It varies	It varies	It varies	No	No
Butter/ghee	Kosher	It varies	It varies	It varies	No	It varies
Lard	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cereal foods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nuts/pulses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fruits/vegetables	Yes	Yes***	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fasting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Strict Hindus and Sikhs will not eat eggs, meat, fish, and some fats.

** Some Rastafarians are vegan.

*** Jains have restrictions on some vegetable foods. Check with the individuals.

Supporting women living in hostels or temporary accommodation

Some pregnant women may be living in hostels, bed and breakfasts or other temporary accommodation and may find it difficult to store and cook food. It is useful to have some simple ideas for healthy and cost-effective meal and snack choices for young women in this situation who may only have access to a kettle and a microwave for example, and for whom there may be limited opportunities to keep food cold.

One of the key messages for pregnant women is to drink some milk every day. If they are eligible for Healthy Start or the Best Start Foods scheme, they can spend their food payment on cows' milk and fresh fruit which can provide snacks throughout the day.

Other useful foods that require no refrigerated storage and limited preparation:

- **Eggs** will keep safely at a cool room temperature for a week after buying them. If there are very limited facilities, eggs can be boiled in the kettle or cooked as scrambled egg easily in a microwave. If there is access to a frying pan and hob, bread soaked in egg and fried served with baked beans makes a cheap and wholesome meal.
- **Canned beans, peas and lentils** (baked beans, chick peas, red kidney beans, mixed bean salad, chilli beans, lentils and peas) are cost-effective and nutritious and can be eaten hot or cold.
- **Couscous** can be simply made by pouring boiling water on it and leaving it to swell for a few minutes. Adding canned chick peas and seasoning or a can of mixed bean salad to the couscous makes a tasty and simple meal.
- The Healthy Start or Best Start Foods payment can be used to buy **vegetables** that can be eaten raw. (Carrots, peppers, cucumber, celery, broccoli, mushrooms and green leaves can all be eaten raw and can be a reasonable price if they are in season or bought at a market.) These can be dipped in houmous or low-fat soft cheese and eaten with any type of bread as a light meal.
- If buying hot foods from take-aways, think about how you can add nutritional value. For example, if you buy a bag of chips to take home, can you have these with a fried egg and a tin of tomatoes? If you buy a portion of boiled rice, can you add some canned fish and canned sweetcorn to make a simple risotto?
- Simple and nutritious sandwich fillings include houmous, mashed canned fish, spreading cheese, peanut butter, mashed egg or mashed banana. Wholemeal bread has more nutrients and is more filling than white bread.

For ideas for recipes using ingredients that can be bought with the Healthy Start or Best Start Foods payments, suitable for pregnant women and families, see the resource *Healthy Start and Best Start Foods: A practical guide* (details on page 29). For more ideas for simple, quick, low-cost meals and snacks, see www.firststepsnutrition.org



Food skills

Most of the meals and snacks shown in this resource require only basic cooking skills and it is important to encourage all parents to see cooking food as a normal part of life and something they are more than capable of doing. If someone can follow instructions for their mobile phone, they can follow simple cooking instructions. If pregnant women and their partners or supporters want to improve their skills, it may be possible to refer them to local *Cook and taste* classes. Basic cooking skills will also be helpful when it is time to start offering first solid foods to their child, when the baby is about 6 months old. Encourage women to let their children see them cooking and preparing food and to see this as an activity that children should also be involved in so they can be confident about preparing food for themselves when they are older.

Many people choose 'ready-made' foods such as ready meals and cooking sauces and soups in packets and jars, as they believe they will be cheaper than preparing them at home, or that the dishes are too complicated for them to make themselves. This is rarely true, as making your own meals and snacks can be much cheaper and a lot more nutritious than ready-made foods and can sometimes be quicker than heating a ready meal. Many ready-made foods are 'ultra-processed' which means that they have undergone extensive industrial processing and may contain a range of ingredients not usually found in a domestic or restaurant kitchen.

If someone is buying all the ingredients from scratch, the meal will seem expensive, but many of those ingredients can also be used to make other meals and snacks. Planning ahead can help save money and save on food waste and can help people to eat a more balanced and varied diet. All the meal and snack ideas in this resource give a guide price for the recipe.

Eating well recipe book

For lots of simple recipes that use little equipment and that are suitable for the whole family, see the *Eating well recipe book* at <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years>

Food safety

It is important that pregnant women and women who care for babies and young children are aware of the importance of ensuring food is safe. The most important things to remember when preparing, cooking or storing foods are:

- It's essential to wash hands well with soap and water before handling food.
- Follow instructions on food to store it safely, and eat foods before the 'best before' date.
- Wash vegetables and fruit thoroughly, making sure there are no traces of soil left before using.
- Eggs which are stamped with the British Lion mark or produced under the 'Laid in Britain' assurance scheme can be eaten lightly cooked or raw. All other eggs (including non-hen's eggs) should be cooked until the yolk and white are firm.
- Always keep cooked meat and raw meat apart and make sure they are well covered and cannot cross-contaminate each other.
- Cook foods such as pork, burgers, sausages, kebabs, and poultry such as chicken and turkey, thoroughly before eating.
- If previously cooked foods are reheated, make sure they are piping hot in the middle before serving.
- Cook any ready-made meals thoroughly before eating.

For other tips and resources to support good food hygiene, see *Resources* on page 88.



Foods and drinks to limit or avoid during pregnancy

Food	Health advice	Reason to avoid or limit
Eggs, including non-hen's eggs, that are not Lion-marked or produced under the 'Laid in Britain' assurance scheme.	If eggs are not Lion-marked, or produced under the 'Laid in Britain' assurance scheme, avoid eating them lightly cooked or raw. And if making foods such as mayonnaise, mousse and some desserts which require raw eggs, only use eggs that are Lion-marked or produced under the 'Laid in Britain' assurance scheme.	Increased risk of food poisoning from <i>Salmonella</i> bacteria
Unpasteurised milk and products	Use pasteurised milk and dairy products only. Or thoroughly boil unpasteurised milk before using it. Unpasteurised cheese should be cooked until it is steaming hot.	Increased risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listeriosis - Toxoplasmosis - <i>Campylobacter</i>
Soft mould-ripened cheeses Brie, Camembert, soft goats' cheese and blue-veined cheeses	Avoid unless cooked until steaming hot.	Increased risk of Listeriosis
Pâté All types of pâté, including vegetable pâtés	Avoid completely.	Increased risk of Listeriosis. High levels of vitamin A should be avoided (see page 10).
Game meats Goose, partridge, pheasant, rabbit	Avoid completely.	Game meats may contain lead shot.
Raw or undercooked meat Particularly poultry and minced meat, salami and Parma ham (prosciutto)	Cook all meat and poultry thoroughly so there's no trace of pink meat or blood.	Increased risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Salmonella</i> - Toxoplasmosis
Liver and liver products	Avoid liver and liver products during pregnancy.	These foods have a high retinol (vitamin A) content and this can be dangerous to the fetus if large amounts are consumed.
Undercooked ready meals and other ready prepared dishes Ready-made salads, quiches, microwave meals, meat pies/ pasties	Cook thoroughly before eating, or make your own from fresh.	Increased risk of Listeriosis
Unwashed fruit and vegetables	Wash thoroughly, making sure there are no traces of soil left before using.	Increased risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listeriosis - Toxoplasmosis
Untreated water	Avoid completely.	Increased risk of <i>Campylobacter</i>
Some fish and shellfish Some types of oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines and trout Some types of non-oily fish – such as tuna (fresh or canned), dogfish (rock salmon), seabass, sea bream, turbot, halibut and crab Raw shellfish Shark, marlin and swordfish	Limit oily fish to two portions per week. Have no more than two fresh tuna steaks in a week (about 140g cooked or 170g raw each) or four medium-sized cans of tuna a week (about 140g when drained). Avoid eating raw fish that has not been previously frozen or smoked. Avoid raw shellfish as it can cause food poisoning. Avoid shark, marlin and swordfish.	High levels of pollutants can be found in oily fish and in shark, marlin and swordfish. These can affect the development of a baby's nervous system.
Alcohol All alcoholic drinks such as wine, lager, beer, cider, spirits or alcopops	Avoid drinking alcohol completely if you're pregnant or trying to get pregnant. If you choose to drink alcohol, have no more than 1 or 2 units of alcohol once or twice a week. (1 unit = 1/2 a pint of lager, a small glass of wine, or 1 pub measure of spirits.)	High intakes can cause miscarriage or fetal abnormalities, such as fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), or may mean babies are born with some learning disability that can affect their learning and behaviour.

Food	Health advice	Reason to avoid or limit
<p>Caffeine Caffeine is found in many drinks and some foods, but is particularly high in drinks such as coffee and tea, energy drinks, cola drinks and cocoa-based drinks and foods.</p> <p>Some energy drinks or shots have a very high caffeine content and should be avoided. Drinks that contain caffeine from whatever source at a level over 150mg per litre (mg/l) must state: 'High caffeine content. Not recommended for children or pregnant or breastfeeding women.'</p>	<p>Have no more than 200mg of caffeine a day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 mug of filter coffee = 140mg • 1 mug of instant coffee = 100mg • 1 mug of tea = 75mg • 1 can of cola = 40mg • 1 can of energy drink = 80mg • a 50g bar of plain (dark) chocolate = 50mg • a 50g bar of milk chocolate = 25mg 	<p>High intakes can cause miscarriage or fetal abnormalities.</p>
<p>Certain food additives Artificial colours E102, E104, E110, E122, E124, E129, or the preservative sodium benzoate (E211).</p>	<p>Avoid these additives.</p>	<p>These additives have been linked to increased hyperactivity among some children and many people now choose to avoid these. To find out if a food or drink contains any of these additives, check the <i>Ingredients</i> list on the packet or label. For more information, go to https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-colours-and-hyperactivity/ and our report <i>Artificial food colours and children</i> at https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/additives-colourings</p>
<p>Vitamin A supplements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any supplements containing vitamin A • High-dose multivitamin supplements • Fish liver oil supplements. 	<p>Avoid completely.</p>	<p>High intakes can cause miscarriage or fetal abnormalities.</p>
<p>Kava kava This is wrongly suggested as an aid for anxiety and sleep.</p>	<p>Avoid all these completely.</p>	<p>These herbs are prohibited in the EU but people can access them through the internet. They are considered harmful if consumed.</p>
<p>Calabash chalk This is not a conventional food, but is eaten by some pregnant women, traditionally those from the Nigerian and wider West African community, as a remedy for morning sickness.</p>		<p>The Food Standards Agency has advised people, especially pregnant and breastfeeding women, not to eat Calabash chalk, because samples tested have revealed high levels of lead.</p>
<p>Blue or black cohosh Wrongly suggested as inducing labour.</p>		<p>Cohosh can be toxic and cause blood to thin, as well as being potentially damaging to the liver.</p>
<p>Certain herbal preparations</p>	<p>The following should be avoided as they may not be safe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aloe, angelica, apricot kernel, asafoetida, buckthorn, burdock, calendula, coltsfoot, cottonroot, devil's claw, echinacea, eucalyptus, evening primrose, fenugreek, feverfew, foxglove, gentian, germander, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, hawthorne, hops, horseradish, horsetail, juniper, mandrake, meadowsweet, milk thistle, mistletoe, myrrh, nettle, passionflower, pennyroyal, red clover, senna, St Johns wort, valerian 	

Managing food and eating during pregnancy

Managing morning sickness

Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy is usually called morning sickness, but it can happen at any time of day. It is estimated that 70-85% of pregnant women experience nausea in the first half of pregnancy and about 50% of women may have some vomiting. About 1-2% of women may have very severe vomiting which can cause dehydration and may lead to significant weight loss and it is important to seek medical help if this happens. No-one knows why women feel nauseous in pregnancy and there are a number of theories that it may act as a mechanism to protect the mother and baby from foods containing substances that may be damaging. Mild or moderate morning sickness has not been shown to have adverse effects on pregnancy and may encourage women to think about what they eat and drink and make some improvements.

Suggestions for managing morning sickness include:

- Have small, bland or dry snacks regularly.
- Have a dry snack on waking.
- Avoid fatty or spicy foods, or foods with strong smells.
- Have foods or drinks with ginger in them – for example, ginger tea, ginger biscuits or ginger ale. High intakes of ginger supplements should be avoided, but a number of studies have found that up to 1g of ginger supplement a day benefits some women and is not linked to adverse events.

Calabash chalk

In Nigeria and some West African countries, Calabash chalk is consumed in pregnancy to prevent morning sickness, but this is a prohibited food substance in the UK as it contains lead and should be avoided.

Constipation

Some women may find they become constipated during pregnancy, and this may be because they are eating differently or are being less active. To avoid constipation it is important to:

- drink plenty of fluids (at least 1.5 litres a day if constipation is a problem)
- eat a diet that contains fibre (see page 9), and
- be active (walk for at least 30 minutes every day).

If women decide to add more fibre to the diet to try and prevent constipation, it is important to do this gradually and to make sure they also increase their fluid intake. Laxatives are intended as a short-term measure to alleviate constipation only. If someone is a habitual user of laxatives, it is useful to talk about what they eat and encourage them to eat more foods such as fruit and vegetables or to change to a higher-fibre bread, as well as having more fluid and doing more activity.

Cravings and aversions

Many pregnant women experience dietary cravings and aversions for certain foods and drinks, and there are a lot of old wives' tales about why this might be. It is likely that there are changes in taste sensitivity in pregnancy that might impact on food preferences, and some of the common aversions to alcoholic drinks, canned drinks, caffeinated drinks, fatty foods and some strongly flavoured foods may in fact be beneficial in pregnancy. The most frequently craved foods include dairy and sweet foods, fruit and fruit juices, and savoury snacks, and many of these foods can be useful in a healthy diet. However, if cravings and aversions mean that a very limited diet is eaten, this could mean that important nutrients are missing from the diet and support from a dietitian might be needed.

Craving for non-food items – such as soil, coal, pencil leads or washing powder – is called pica, and has sometimes been reported among pregnant women. This can be harmful as some non-food items can contain heavy metals or substances that could be harmful. There is no benefit at all from eating non-food items and clear advice should be given not to do this.

For details of foods and substances such as herbs to avoid during pregnancy see page 36.

Heartburn

Heartburn can be a problem for some women towards the end of pregnancy as the baby takes up more space in the abdomen. It is caused by stomach acid leaking out of the top of the valve into the stomach and feels like a burning sensation in the chest. The best way to avoid heartburn is to eat little and often throughout the day and to avoid large meals, particularly in the evening. Some women find spicy foods lead to heartburn and a milky drink can help to alleviate the burning sensation.

Questions and answers

Can I eat spicy food and curry when I am pregnant?

There is no need to avoid spicy food or curry if you enjoy these and eat them regularly. Some women experience heartburn in the last trimester of pregnancy and some women may find spicy food is linked to heartburn at this stage.

There is no evidence that eating hot and spicy food will encourage labour to begin.

Can I eat pineapple and other acidic fruits?

There is no need to avoid foods like pineapple or other acidic fruits if these are enjoyed. These fruits can be a good source of vitamin C and other important nutrients.

I don't like drinking milk. Where else can I get my calcium?

Any foods made from milk contain calcium – such as yoghurt, fromage frais and cheese. Women may like processed cheese triangles or soft cheeses on toast or in jacket potatoes, yoghurt served with fruit or breakfast cereal, or grated cheese sprinkled on savoury dishes or omelettes. For information on non-dairy sources of calcium, see pages 10 and 26.

Is it safe to have probiotic drinks when I am pregnant?

It is fine to drink or eat live probiotic drinks or yoghurts when pregnant, but they do not provide any special benefits for most people. Probiotic drinks can be high in sugar and are expensive and eating a good mixed diet is more important.

Can I eat shellfish like prawns?

As long as shellfish like prawns are cooked thoroughly, it is fine to eat them when you are pregnant.

Can I have honey when I am pregnant?

It is fine for pregnant women to eat honey, but it is advised that babies under 1 year of age are not given honey due to a very low, but serious, risk of infant botulism (food poisoning).

Is it OK to eat peanuts?

The latest research shows that there is no clear evidence to say if eating or avoiding peanuts during pregnancy affects the chances of a baby developing a peanut allergy. Obviously if someone has a peanut allergy they should not eat peanuts or foods containing peanuts.

I am a vegetarian. Is it OK not to eat meat during my pregnancy?

It is perfectly possible to eat well as a vegetarian and to get all the nutrients needed for a healthy pregnancy. Women will have a blood test in pregnancy to find out if they have sufficient iron and iron is provided as a supplement if necessary to any woman who has a low iron status. It is important to eat a good, varied vegetarian diet, and there are lots of ideas in this resource for meals made with pulses, cereals, dairy products, fruit and vegetables.

Is it alright to carry on eating fast food like fried chicken when I am pregnant?

As long as food is cooked well and safely in fast food restaurants, it will not cause harm. However, a diet that contains a lot of fast food will be high in salt and fat and low in other important nutrients, so think about eating a wider variety of foods.

Fast food is also very expensive, and for the same price as one fast-food meal you can eat well for a whole day. So it is worth thinking about how you can add some home-prepared meals and snacks to your week.

Do I need chocolate and sweets for energy when I am pregnant?

The body is able to convert any carbohydrate food to sugars, so you don't need to eat sweet things to get energy. Starchy foods such as bread, potatoes, rice, yam and chapattis can provide energy. The sugars in fruit and vegetables also provide energy. The sugars in starchy foods and fruit and vegetables are released more slowly by the body, so they keep you going for longer. Sugary foods and drinks are often low in other nutrients and contain the type of sugars that damage teeth, so it is a good idea to have only small amounts of these.

Preparing to breastfeed

The majority of women in the UK want to breastfeed their baby, and everyone needs to make sure that they provide pregnant women and their partners and supporters with clear, positive images about breastfeeding and encourage them to consider the benefits of breastfeeding, while supporting them to meet their breastfeeding goals.

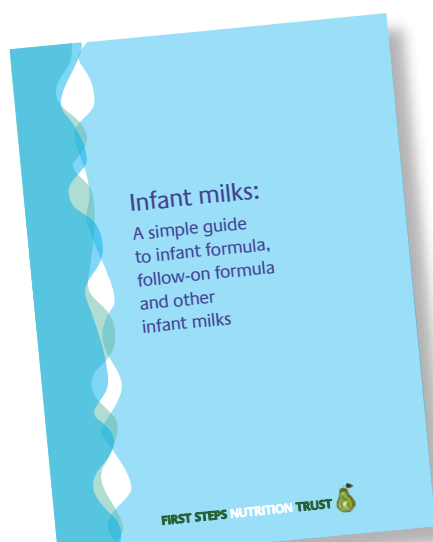
Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding protects the health of mothers and babies, and breastmilk is a free, sustainable resource that everyone should value.

Women should be enabled to make an informed decision about whether to breastfeed and/or formula feed their baby. Breastfeeding is the normal way for infants to be fed and there are enormous benefits for everyone, and for the environment, in enabling women to breastfeed in the first year of life and beyond. All mums-to-be should be given advice and information about how to successfully breastfeed their baby and should be actively supported to do this to protect both their own health and that of their baby. Parents who are eligible for the Healthy Start (or in Scotland, Best Start Foods) scheme can continue to spend their food payment on cows' milk, fruit, vegetables, pulses and potatoes for themselves rather than on expensive infant formula, although the payment can be used to buy first infant formula by parents who are mixed feeding or using only formula to feed their baby. It is useful to remind all women that they are protected by equality laws and that they are legally allowed to breastfeed their baby wherever they choose, provided it is safe to do so.

For more information on where breastfeeding mums can get help and support, you can download *Breastmilk and breastfeeding: A simple guide* from <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-infants-new-mums>

All new mums should eat well. You can download the resource *Eating well for new mums* from <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-infants-new-mums>



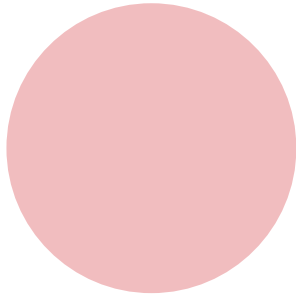
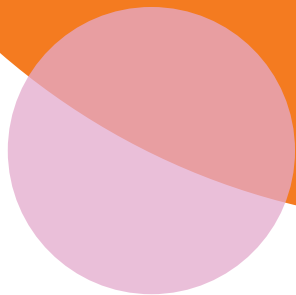
Infant formula

Where mums decide not to breastfeed, it is essential that they obtain independent advice on infant formula and safe and responsive bottle feeding. Independent information on infant milks, for health professionals and families, can be found at <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers> and www.infantmilkinfo.org These resources also explain the importance of making up infant formula safely, and the latest guidance on how to do this.

Part 2



Putting the
eating well advice
into practice



Putting the eating well advice into practice

In order to make sense of all the general guidance on eating well in pregnancy, we have devised some menu plans and example meals and snacks which can be recommended to women to support them to meet their energy and nutrient needs.

The aim of this resource is to provide practical support to eating well, but all the work is underpinned by recommendations from scientific committees in the UK about the amounts of energy and nutrients needed for good health.

How much do pregnant women need to eat?

Healthy women aged between 19-44 years old who are moderately active need about 2,150kcal a day to meet their energy needs during most of their pregnancy. Very active, or very inactive women may need more or less than this.

During the first and second stages of pregnancy (weeks 1-26), extra energy (calories) is not needed: pregnant women don't need to eat 'for two', but may have to eat more smartly to ensure all their nutrient needs are met.

- They may need some extra energy (about an extra 200 calories) in the last stage of pregnancy (weeks 27-40) when the baby is growing rapidly, providing they maintain the same activity level as they did in weeks 1-26.
- Below we give estimates of daily energy needs for pregnant women.

Activity level	Weeks 1-26 First 2 trimesters	Weeks 27-40 Third trimester
Less active Normal daily activities but no strenuous exercise on most days and less than an hour a day of walking, swimming, cycling or other moderate activity.	1,980kcal	2,180kcal
Moderately active Normal daily activities and an hour per day of moderately strenuous activity such as walking, swimming or cycling.	2,150kcal	2,350kcal
Very active Normal daily activities and 1-2 hours or more of moderately strenuous activity a day such as walking, swimming, cycling, or a job where the woman is active most of the day.	2,365kcal	2,565kcal

Example meals and snacks

On pages 46-85 we show a range of meal and snack ideas which offer some suggestions for how women can meet average energy and nutrient requirements.

Information about how the menus in this resource were put together can be found in *Creating Eating Well photo resources: A practical guide* which can be downloaded from the website www.firststepsnutrition.org

Flexible eating patterns

In order to allow for the different ways that people choose to eat across a day – for example, having just one large meal and several snacks, or lots of small meals or snacks throughout the day – the meals and snacks in this guide have been grouped into different categories, depending on the number of calories (see below). All the meals and snacks provide a range of important nutrients. Different combinations can be

chosen, depending on the woman’s preferred eating pattern, but it is important to remember that:

- A variety of meals and snacks should be eaten each day, and across each week.
- If a woman avoids certain foods or food groups, more care is needed to balance the meals and snacks.

The categories of meals and snacks in this resource are colour-coded as follows:



Eating well on a budget

It is possible to eat well on a budget, but it is difficult to do this without cooking at home and if lots of packaged and processed foods and drinks are eaten. We have devised seven one-day menu plans which will ensure that energy and nutrient needs are met by pregnant women in the first two trimesters (weeks 1-26). These menu plans are shown on pages 46-47. Ideas for additional snacks for the third trimester (27-40 weeks) can be found on page 82.

We suggest that a pregnant woman can eat well for about £4 a day or £28 a week, which is equivalent to about £24 plus a Healthy Start weekly food payment of £4.25. But to eat well for this amount of money requires some cooking skills, careful shopping, and cooking for more than one meal at a time. These costs do not allow for the fuel costs of cooking food or the cost of heating water to wash up. Planning ahead, shopping wisely, and buying larger, cheaper packs of foods can all help to cut down on food costs. Eating well is money well spent in pregnancy. Encourage each woman to think about how important it is for their baby's future health and wellbeing that she eats well – much more important than having expensive baby equipment which will only be useful for one year, for example.

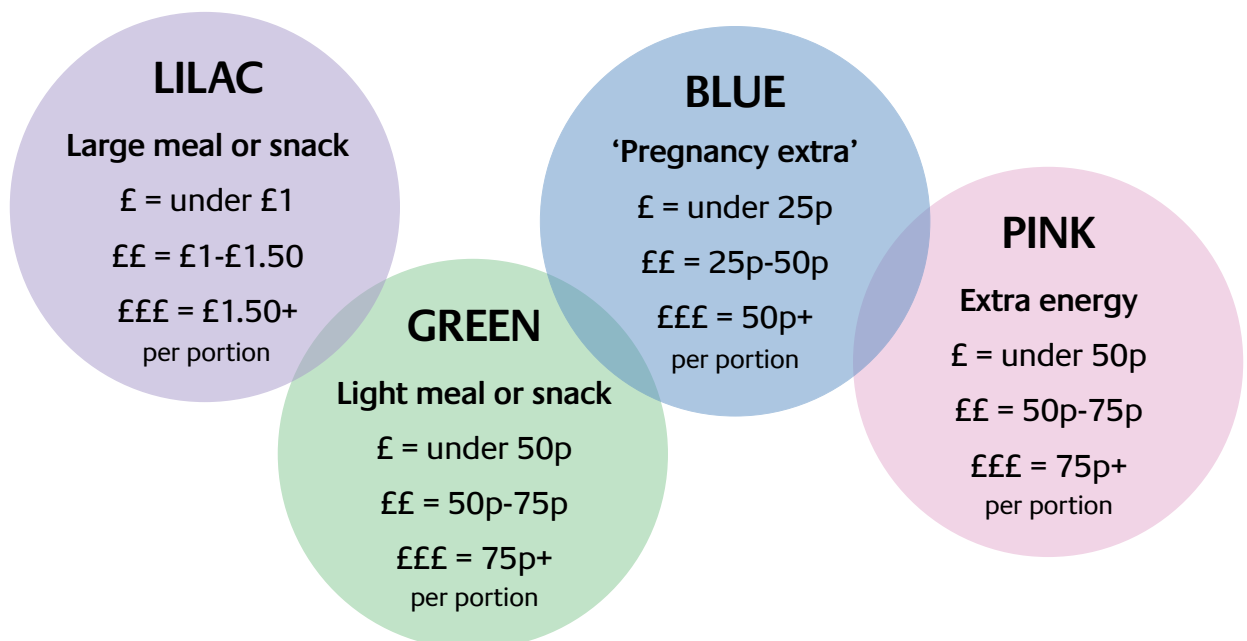
How did we calculate food costs?

We estimated the price of foods in the original edition of this resource from mysupermarket.com. For this 2022 edition, prices were re-checked (in 2021) for fit with our price guides, using data from major online supermarkets. The best prices available were used for the following ingredients:

- Meat prices were based on meat that was produced in the UK.
- Fish prices were based on fish sourced from sustainable stocks. Frozen fish is usually cheaper than fresh fish.

- Egg prices were based on eggs from free-range hens.
- Milk prices were based on the average cost of 1 litre of milk from a supermarket. Buying organic milk can help support local farmers and the environment and some people may decide that the small extra cost of organic milk is good value for money.
- All other food prices were based on the standard supermarket brand prices.
- We give a price guide for all the meals and snacks shown on pages 49-85. See the *Price guide* below.

Price guide



Top tips to eat well on a budget

- There are some good staple and healthy foods that are great value for money:
 - potatoes, pasta, rice and couscous
 - canned peas, beans and lentils
 - wholemeal bread, rolls and pitta bread.
 - For some items it makes nutritional and cost sense to buy 'saver' or 'value' range items. These may be available for:
 - canned fruit in juice
 - canned beans and pulses
 - canned tomatoes
 - frozen vegetables
 - dried fruit and nuts
 - fat spread
 - soft cheese
 - natural yoghurt and fromage frais
 - flour
 - breakfast cereals
 - bread, rolls and other bread products
 - rice and pasta
 - herbs and spices
 - mayonnaise
 - jam and marmalade
 - peanut butter
 - fruit juice.
- Some fresh fruit and vegetables and potatoes are also available as supermarket saver brands.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables are usually cheaper if they are in season, and if you can find a source of locally produced fruit and vegetables this can be both cheaper and better for the environment. Look out for special offers on fruit and vegetables in supermarkets.
 - Cheap ready-made food and ready meals might seem like good value for money, but they are often of low quality – and even if they seem cheap remember the manufacturer and retailer are still making a profit! One portion of a meal might seem good value at £1, but you might be able to make four portions for £2 using much better ingredients.
 - Take-away foods and fast foods are often expensive for the nutritional value they give you and you can make your own versions much more cheaply. Pizzas delivered to the door are very expensive and often very high in fat and salt, and in the time you take to order them and have them delivered, you can make some speedy pizzas at home much more cheaply.
 - Only buy the amount of food you know you will eat or be able to store. If you regularly throw food away, think about how you can reduce the amount you buy at a time or plan meals better.



For ideas and recipes for cost-effective family meals see the *Eating well recipe book*, which you can download at <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years>

Eating well for £4 a day

Recipes for many of these meals and snacks are given on pages 49-85.

MONDAY

Breakfast

Muesli with milk
Orange juice
Healthy Start vitamin

Snack

Toasted teacake
Decaffeinated tea
or coffee

Lunch

Vegetable frittata with a crusty roll
and salad
Fruit fool

Snack

Mixed dried fruit and nuts
Decaffeinated tea or coffee

Evening meal

Jacket potato with cheesy
bean filling and salad

Evening snack

Milk
Apple

TUESDAY

Breakfast

Porridge with jam
Orange juice
Healthy Start vitamin

Snack

Malt loaf
Decaffeinated tea or coffee

Lunch

Vegetable curry with lentil dahl
and rice
Yoghurt with kiwi

Snack

Small bowl of unsalted peanuts
Decaffeinated tea or coffee

Evening meal

Macaroni cheese and broccoli

Evening snack

Milk
Pear

WEDNESDAY

Breakfast

Eggy bread with baked beans
Orange juice
Healthy Start vitamin

Snack

Fruit bread with orange wedges
Decaffeinated tea or coffee

Packed lunch

Ham and cheese sandwich with
cucumber sticks and cherry tomatoes
and juice
Banana

Evening meal

Vegetable risotto, tomato salad
and crusty bread
Quick microwave sponge pudding
and custard

Evening drink

Milk
Oatcakes with honey

LILAC

Large meal or snack

GREEN

Light meal or snack

BLUE

'Pregnancy extra'

THURSDAY



Breakfast

Weet bisks with milk and raisins
Healthy Start vitamin



Packed lunch

Cream cheese bagel with boiled egg,
cucumber and celery sticks.
Malt loaf and a pear



Snack

Milkshake
Baguette with humous, carrot and
cucumber sticks



Evening meal

Vegetable and bean couscous
Greek yoghurt with banana



Evening snack

Milky decaffeinated coffee with
gingernut biscuits

FRIDAY



Breakfast

French toast
Orange juice
Healthy Start vitamin



Snack

Apple rings with peanut butter
Decaffeinated tea or coffee



Lunch

Veggie burger and salad
Canned pineapple with yoghurt



Evening meal

Sweetcorn fritters with tomato salsa
and a bagel
Carrot cake



Evening drink

Milky decaffeinated coffee

SUNDAY



Breakfast

Omelette with grilled tomatoes
and toast
Orange juice
Healthy Start vitamin



Snack

Wholemeal toast with peanut butter
Milky coffee



Lunch

Fish pie with broccoli
Apple crumble



Snack

Greek yoghurt with honey



Evening meal

Beef slice ciabatta with relish and salad
Orange

SATURDAY



Breakfast

Peanut butter and banana sandwich
Apple
Orange juice
Healthy Start vitamin



Snack

Peanuts and raisins
Milky tea



Lunch

Sweetcorn chowder with toasted tortilla
Fruit scone with jam



Snack

Malt loaf
Decaffeinated tea



Evening meal

Jacket potato
with roasted vegetables
and tomato filling

Ideas for meals and snacks

The recipes we give on the following pages are all easy to prepare and we have tried to come up with cost-effective and tasty meal and snack choices that you can use to talk about food and drink choices with pregnant women. The meals and snacks are grouped here by the meal and snack colour codes described on page 43.

We have costed the recipes on the basis of the prices of typical foods bought in supermarkets and give an approximate recipe cost. To see the decisions made on costing foods and how to buy wisely, see page 44.

The photos and recipes in this section can be downloaded from www.firststepsnutrition.org. A recipe book for mums-to-be themselves is also available from the same website.

Planning meals and snacks

The key to eating well is to have a variety of foods, as that is the best way of getting a range of nutrients. Eating well also means food should taste good and look good, as we all make our food choices with our eyes as well as our tastebuds.

When planning meals and snacks:

- Start with the carbohydrate base. For example, will this be potato, pasta, rice or bread?
- What vegetables can you add? These can be cooked from fresh or frozen, canned or eaten raw.
- What protein or alternative will you have? This could be eggs, fish, beans, nuts or meat or a meat alternative, for example.
- If you are using a ready-prepared food such as pizza, what can you add to it to make it a more nutritious meal? Could you add extra vegetables to the topping? Eat it with a salad? Have it with baked beans? Add a jacket potato?
- Making simple pasta sauces and vegetable soups and stews saves money and they can be made in one pot. Canned and frozen vegetables can be used and there is no difference between cheaper and more expensive varieties.

Eating less meat

It is likely that everyone will have to eat less meat in future, as it will become increasingly expensive. Growing food to feed animals is becoming more difficult around the world due to shortages of land and water, and meat production is one of the biggest contributors to environmental damage.

There are lots of alternatives to meat and there are lots of ideas in this guide about how to eat well using other foods. Good alternatives to meat to include in meals include eggs, beans, peas and pulses, nuts, seeds and meat alternatives such as soya products and Quorn.

If you're buying meat, it is better to buy smaller amounts of better quality meat and avoid cheap meat products that are often high in fat and salt.

Price guide

LILAC

Large meal or snack

£ = under £1

££ = £1-£1.50

£££ = £1.50+ per portion

GREEN

Light meal or snack

£ = under 50p

££ = 50p-75p

£££ = 75p+ per portion

BLUE

'Pregnancy extra'

£ = under 25p

££ = 25p-50p

£££ = 50p+ per portion

PINK

Extra energy

£ = under 50p

££ = 50p-75p

£££ = 75p+ per portion

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Jacket potato with cheesy bean filling and salad

£



Jacket potato	220g
Cheesy bean filling	130g
Salad	80g

Cheesy bean filling

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 130g.

- 2 spring onions, chopped
- 1/2 small red pepper, chopped
- 1 small can (220g) baked beans
- 1/2 large (400g) can mixed beans, rinsed and drained (about 130g when drained)
- 1/2 small can (100g) chopped tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- 80g grated cheese

1. Dry-fry the onion and pepper for 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add the baked beans, mixed beans, chopped tomatoes and chilli powder and cook for 5 minutes over a medium heat until heated through.
3. Remove from the heat, add the cheese and stir thoroughly before serving.

Jacket potato with roasted vegetable and tomato filling and vegetable sticks

£



Jacket potato	220g
Roasted vegetable and tomato filling	130g
Vegetable sticks	80g

Roasted vegetable and tomato filling

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 130g.

- 1 medium courgette
- 8 medium mushrooms
- 1 medium onion
- 1 small red pepper
- 1 small yellow pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 can (400g) chopped tomatoes
- 60g Cheddar cheese, grated

1. Heat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
2. Cut the vegetables into chunks.
3. Place all the vegetables except for the tomatoes on a baking tray, sprinkle on the mixed herbs, and drizzle with the oil.
4. Roast for 25 minutes until tender. Add the tomato, mix well and cook for a further 5 minutes.
5. Sprinkle the cheese over the filling just before serving.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Jacket potato with chicken and sweetcorn filling and salad

£



Jacket potato	220g
Chicken and sweetcorn filling	80g
Salad	80g

Chicken and sweetcorn filling

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 80g.

- 200g cooked diced chicken
- 2 tablespoons frozen or canned sweetcorn, defrosted or drained
- 2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise

1. Mix the chicken, sweetcorn and mayonnaise together in a bowl.

Jacket potato with tuna and sweetcorn filling and salad

£



Jacket potato	220g
Tuna and sweetcorn filling	125g
Salad	80g

Tuna and sweetcorn filling

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 125g.

- 1 can (185g) tuna in spring water, drained (drained weight 140g)
- 1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons low-fat natural yoghurt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 350g frozen or canned sweetcorn, defrosted or drained

1. Flake the tuna and mix with all the other ingredients.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Macaroni cheese with broccoli and garlic bread

£



Macaroni cheese 220g

Broccoli 80g

Garlic bread 60g

Macaroni cheese

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 220g.

150g dried macaroni
40g vegetable fat spread
1 tablespoon flour
1 teaspoon English mustard powder
500ml semi-skimmed milk
150g mature Cheddar cheese, grated

1. Cook the macaroni in boiling water for 10 to 12 minutes (see packet for cooking time) and then drain.
2. Melt the vegetable fat spread in a saucepan, and then mix in the flour and mustard powder to make a thick paste. Cook gently for 1 or 2 minutes, stirring all the time.
3. Slowly add the milk to the flour mixture, stirring continuously to make a smooth sauce.
4. Bring to the boil until the sauce thickens, and then reduce the heat.
5. Add the grated cheese to the sauce and stir until smooth.
6. Add the drained macaroni and stir well until all the pasta is coated with sauce.

Vegetable and bean couscous

£



Vegetable and bean couscous 300g

Salad 80g

Vegetable and bean couscous

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 300g.

1 small onion
1 small red pepper
1 small yellow pepper
100g green beans
2-3 tablespoons frozen or canned sweetcorn, defrosted or drained
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 teaspoons dried mixed herbs
200g couscous
400ml boiling water
1/2 teaspoon black pepper powder
1/2 large (400g) can mixed beans, rinsed and drained (about 130g when drained)

1. Prepare the vegetables and then dice them into similar-sized pieces.
2. In a large frying pan, heat the vegetable oil and fry the vegetables and mixed herbs until the vegetables are softened.
3. To prepare the couscous, put the couscous into a bowl, pour the boiling over it, mix gently, cover and allow to stand for 5 minutes. Then fork over the couscous to separate the grains.
4. Add the black pepper to the couscous. Combine the couscous with the cooked vegetables and drained mixed beans.

Vegetable curry with lentil dahl and rice



 Vegetable curry 200g

 Lentil dahl 80g

 Rice 180g

Vegetable curry

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 200g.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 150ml water
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 1/2 small head of cauliflower, florets only
- 1 large potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 small (200g) can sweetcorn (about 160g when drained)
- 1/2 small (150g) carton low-fat natural yoghurt

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan and cook the onion until softened and beginning to brown.
2. Add the curry powder and garlic and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add the water.
4. Add the carrots, cauliflower, potato and sweetcorn and bring to the boil.
5. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
6. Remove from the heat and stir in the yoghurt. Return the pan to a low heat and cook gently for 2 minutes.

Lentil dahl

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 80g.

- 150g split red lentils
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon mild chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 small tomato, diced
- 150ml water

1. Boil the lentils in water until tender. Drain off any excess water.
2. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pan and fry the cumin seeds for about a minute, until they 'pop'.
3. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, chilli powder and turmeric and fry for several minutes until the onions soften.
4. Add the cooked lentils to the pan, along with the diced tomato and the water, and cook for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Vegetable frittata with a crusty roll and salad

£



Vegetable frittata	200g
Salad	80g
Crusty roll	60g

Vegetable frittata

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 200g.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 200g left-over (or cooked) vegetables (Any green vegetables such as peas, spinach, leeks, cabbage, asparagus or broccoli work well.)
- 1 large boiled potato, peeled and sliced or diced
- 8 large eggs, beaten
- 60g Cheddar cheese, grated

Each portion uses $\frac{1}{4}$ tablespoon of oil, 50g of vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ potato, 2 eggs and 15g of cheese.

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the vegetables and cook gently for 5 minutes.
2. After 5 minutes, turn up the heat, add the sliced potatoes and pour the beaten eggs over the potatoes and vegetables.
3. Turn down the heat to the lowest setting, sprinkle the cheese over and cook for 5 to 10 minutes.
4. Place the frying pan under a hot grill for a few minutes to make sure all the egg is cooked through from the top, but be careful not to burn the pan handle.

Vegetable risotto, tomato salad and crusty bread

£



Vegetable risotto	160g
Tomato salad	80g
Crusty bread	45g

Vegetable risotto

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 160g.

- 40g vegetable fat spread
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small onion, diced
- 1 medium carrot, diced
- 30g frozen peas
- 8 medium mushrooms, sliced
- 4 baby sweetcorn (or 1 heaped tablespoon frozen sweetcorn kernels)
- 150g risotto rice
- 300ml water
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese (or vegetarian hard cheese if serving to vegetarians)

1. Melt the vegetable fat spread in a pan, add the onion, carrot, peas, mushrooms and sweetcorn, and cook gently for 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add the rice, cook without colouring for a further 2 to 3 minutes stirring occasionally, and then add the water.
3. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat, cover with a lid and allow to simmer gently until the rice is cooked.
4. Mix in the cheese with a fork and serve.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Roasted vegetable and soft cheese wrap with potato wedges and salad

£



Roasted vegetable filling	100g
Soft cheese	35g
Tortilla wrap	60g (large)
Potato wedges	150g
Side salad	80g
Tomato sauce	40g

Roasted vegetable filling

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

- 1 small courgette
- 8 medium mushrooms
- 1 medium onion
- 1 small red pepper
- 1 small yellow pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. Heat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
2. Cut the vegetables into chunks.
3. Place the vegetables on a baking tray, sprinkle on the mixed herbs, and drizzle with the oil.
4. Roast for 30 minutes until tender.

Veggie burger with salad

£



Veggie burger	100g
Burger bun	70g
Green salad	80g

Veggie burger

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 300g vegetarian mince
- 1 small can (200g) kidney beans, rinsed, drained and mashed (about 120g when drained)
- 1 heaped tablespoon wholemeal flour
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon tomato purée
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the onions until they are soft, then add the garlic and cook for a further minute.
2. Put the cooked onion mix and all the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and, using your hands, combine well.
3. Divide the mixture into four and, with wet hands, shape it into burgers about 2cm thick.
4. Cook the burgers under a hot grill for 2 minutes on each side, and then reduce the heat and grill for a further 10 minutes, turning occasionally.



Jerk chicken	100g
Rice and peas	180g
Callaloo	80g

Jerk chicken

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

4 chicken breasts, skin removed

For the jerk seasoning:

- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons garlic granules
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil

1. Place the chicken in a shallow bowl.
2. Mix together the jerk seasoning ingredients and then pour the mixture over the chicken breasts. Stir them around to cover them with the mixture. Cover and leave to marinade for at least one hour in the fridge.
3. Remove the chicken from the fridge and cook on both sides under a hot grill for 2 minutes. Reduce the heat and grill for a further 20 to 25 minutes, turning occasionally.

Rice and peas

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 180g.

- 1 small can (220g) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 400ml water
- 200g long grain rice

1. Place all the ingredients except for the rice into a saucepan and bring to the boil.
2. Add the rice and stir.
3. Boil rapidly for 3 to 4 minutes then lower the heat and simmer gently for 10 to 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the rice is tender.

Meatballs in tomato sauce with herb mash and broccoli

£



Meatballs in tomato sauce 180g

Herb mash 150g

Broccoli 80g

Meatballs in tomato sauce

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 180g.

300g beef mince
 1 egg, beaten
 1/2 teaspoon black pepper powder
 1/2 tablespoon vegetable oil
 1 medium onion, finely chopped
 1 large (400g) can chopped tomatoes
 100ml water

1. Put the mince, egg and pepper into a large bowl and, using your hands, mix together thoroughly.
2. Roll the mixture between your hands to make about 12 small balls.
3. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onions and meatballs until browned.
4. Add the tomatoes and water and simmer for 30 minutes.

Herb mash

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 150g.

4 medium-sized old potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
 20g non-dairy fat spread
 1 tablespoon chopped chives

1. Boil the potatoes until tender, and then drain.
2. Mash the potatoes with the non-dairy fat spread until smooth.
3. Mix in the chopped chives.

Spaghetti Bolognese with salad

£



Bolognese sauce 180g

Pasta 180g

Salad 80g

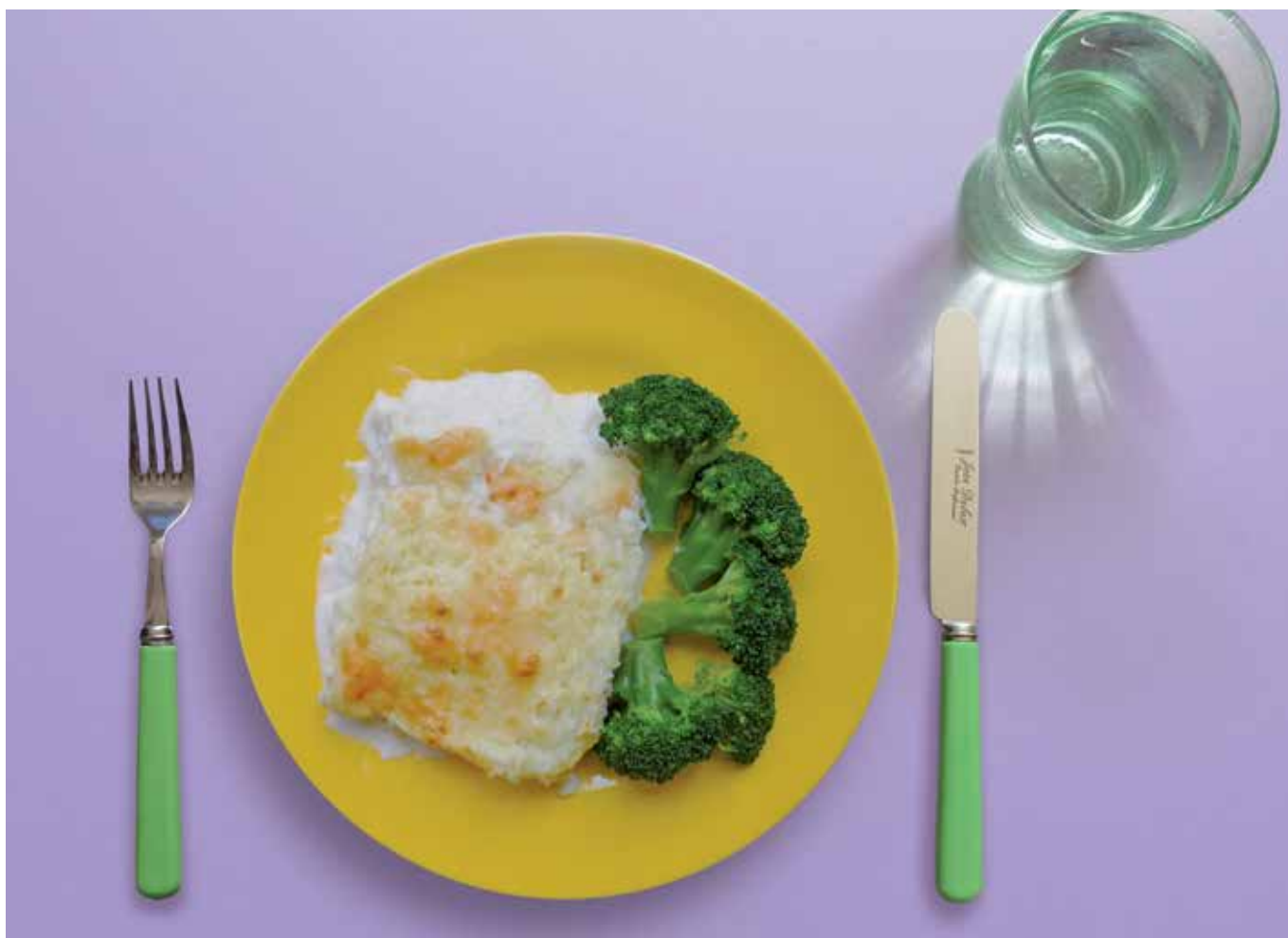
Bolognese sauce

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 180g.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 400g lean minced beef
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 stick celery, diced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 1 large (400g) can chopped tomatoes

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the minced beef and cook for 5 minutes, until lightly browned.
2. Add the onions, celery, crushed garlic and mixed herbs.
3. Stir and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add the chopped tomatoes. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer uncovered for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Fish pie with broccoli



Fish pie 300g

Broccoli 80g

Fish pie

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 300g.

400g frozen or fresh white fish fillets – or a mixed fish pie pack (Choose fish from sustainable sources.)
 600g potatoes, peeled and diced
 45ml semi-skimmed milk
 60g Cheddar cheese

For the sauce:

1 tablespoon vegetable fat spread
 1 tablespoon plain flour
 350ml semi-skimmed milk
 1/2 teaspoon white pepper

1. Heat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
2. Poach and flake the fish.
3. Boil the potatoes and mash with the first quantity of milk.
4. Melt the vegetable fat spread in a saucepan, and then mix in the flour to make a thick paste. Cook gently for 1 or 2 minutes, stirring all the time.
5. Slowly add the milk to the flour mixture, stirring continuously to make a smooth sauce. Then season with the pepper.
6. Add the flaked fish to the sauce.
7. Place the fish mixture in an ovenproof dish, cover it with the mashed potatoes and sprinkle with cheese.
8. Bake for about 20 minutes, until the potatoes are golden.

Note: When serving fish, make sure that all bones are removed.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

African beef stew with cassava and plantain

££



African beef stew 160g

Cassava 100g

Plantain 80g

African beef stew

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 160g.

350g lean beef stewing steak
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 small (200g) can chopped tomatoes
1/2 medium green pepper, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
100g spinach leaves, chopped

1. Cut the meat into thin strips.
2. Heat the oil over a medium heat and fry the onion without browning.
3. Add the meat, ginger and garlic and fry until the meat browns.
4. Add the tomatoes, green pepper and cayenne pepper and continue cooking for about 40 minutes until the meat is tender.
5. Add the spinach and cook for a further 5 minutes.

Chicken piri piri with savoury rice and salad

££



Chicken piri piri 100g

Savoury rice 180g

Salad 80g

Chicken piri piri

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g (edible portion, without bones).

12 chicken thighs, skin removed
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons mild chilli powder
1 clove garlic, crushed
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano

1. Score the flesh of the chicken thighs with a sharp knife and place in a shallow bowl.
2. Put all the remaining ingredients into a small bowl and whisk together with a fork to make a marinade. Pour the marinade over the chicken and mix well. Cover the dish with cling film and chill for 2 hours or overnight in the fridge.
3. Remove the chicken from the marinade and cook on both sides under a hot grill for 2 minutes, then reduce the heat and grill for a further 20-25 minutes, turning and basting occasionally with the remaining marinade.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Salmon couscous with salad and bread £



Salmon couscous 225g

Pitta bread 60g

Salad 80g

Salmon couscous

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 225g.

1 large (420g) can red salmon, drained (about 350g when drained) (Buy fish from sustainable sources where possible.)

150g couscous

3 spring onions, finely sliced

300ml boiling water

1/2 lemon

1/4 medium cucumber, finely chopped

10 cherry tomatoes, quartered

1/2 teaspoon fresh mint, finely chopped

1/2 teaspoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

1/2 teaspoon fresh coriander, finely chopped

1. Drain and flake the salmon and keep chilled until required.
2. Put the couscous in a large bowl and mix in the spring onions.
3. Bring the water to the boil and pour it over the couscous. Stir gently, cover, and leave for about 4 minutes and then fluff the couscous with a fork.
4. Zest the lemon (that is, finely grate the outer rind), and squeeze the juice out of the lemon.
5. Mix the salmon, couscous, cucumber, tomatoes, herbs, lemon zest and lemon juice thoroughly and chill until serving.

Tuna and tomato pasta with salad ££



Tuna and tomato pasta 300g

Salad 80g

Tuna and tomato pasta

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 300g.

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 medium onion, diced

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 1/2 large (400g) cans chopped tomatoes with herbs (total of 600g)

1 teaspoon sugar

250g dried pasta shapes such as penne

1 1/2 cans (185g) tuna in spring water, drained (210g drained weight) (Buy fish from sustainable sources where possible.)

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan and cook the onion until softened.
2. Add the chopped garlic and cook for a further minute.
3. Add the chopped tomatoes and sugar and bring to the boil.
4. Reduce the heat and allow to simmer without a lid for about 12 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in boiling water, following the instructions on the packet.
6. Flake the drained tuna with a fork and stir into the pasta sauce to warm through.
7. Drain the cooked pasta well and return it to the pot, pour the sauce over the pasta and mix gently.

Salmon fish fingers, tomato salsa, oven chips and salad

££



Salmon fish fingers 90g

Tomato salsa 50g

Oven chips 140g

Salad 80g

Salmon fish fingers

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 90g.

- 350g salmon fillet
(either fresh, or frozen and thoroughly defrosted) (Buy fish from sustainable sources where possible.)
- 2 eggs
- 3 slices of bread, crumbed

1. Heat the oven to 190°C / 375°F / Gas 5.
2. Cut the salmon fillet into 12 even-sized strips.
3. Beat the eggs in a shallow dish to make an egg wash.
4. Dip the salmon strips in the egg wash and then roll the strips in the breadcrumbs until fully coated.
5. Place the coated strips on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 15 minutes.

Note: When serving fish, make sure that all bones are removed.

Tomato salsa

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g.

- 100g or 1/2 small (200g) can chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 medium tomato, diced
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

1. Mix all the ingredients together. Chill before serving.

LARGE MEALS AND SNACKS

Eggy bread with baked beans

£



Eggy bread	180g
Baked beans	120g

Eggy bread

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 180g.

- 8 eggs
- 8 thick slices wholemeal bread
- 8 teaspoons butter

Each portion uses 2 eggs, 2 slices of bread and 2 teaspoons of butter.

1. Beat the eggs in a shallow dish.
2. Dip the bread in the egg on both sides.
3. Melt the butter in a frying pan.
4. Fry the bread in the butter over a gentle heat until the egg coating is well cooked. Turn the bread over and cook the other side.

Beef slice ciabatta with relish and salad

££



Sundried tomato ciabatta roll	85g
Beef slices	65g
Relish	50g
Salad	80g

LARGE MEALS (PACKED MEALS)

Peanut butter and banana sandwich with apple

£



Peanut butter and banana sandwich 175g
Apple 80g

Peanut butter and banana sandwiches

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 175g.

4 small bananas
4 tablespoons peanut butter
8 slices brown or wholemeal bread

Each portion uses 1 small banana, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter and 2 slices of bread.

1. Mash the bananas with a fork.
2. Fill each sandwich with peanut butter and mashed banana.

Ham and cheese sandwich with cucumber sticks and cherry tomatoes, and a carton of orange juice

££



Ham and cheese sandwich 140g
Cucumber sticks 40g
Cherry tomatoes 40g
Orange juice carton 200ml

Ham and cheese sandwiches

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 140g.

140g Cheddar cheese
4 teaspoons vegetable fat spread
8 slices brown or wholemeal bread
100g sliced ham
4 large leaves of lettuce

Each portion uses 35g of Cheddar cheese, 25g of ham, 1 lettuce leaf, 1 teaspoon of spread and 2 slices of bread.

1. Cut the cheese into slices.
2. Spread a thin layer of vegetable fat spread on each slice of bread.
3. Fill the sandwiches with the ham, cheese and lettuce leaves.

LARGE MEALS (PACKED MEALS)

Cream cheese bagel with boiled egg, cucumber and celery sticks, malt loaf and a pear £



Bagel	60g
Low-fat soft cheese	25g
Boiled egg	50g
Cucumber sticks	40g
Celery sticks	40g
Malt loaf	50g
Pear	170g

Egg and cress roll with cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, natural yoghurt and blueberries £



Egg and cress roll	120g
Cucumber sticks	40g
Cherry tomatoes	40g
Natural yoghurt	125g
Blueberries	80g

Egg and cress roll

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 120g.

- 4 wholemeal rolls
- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 punnet mustard and cress

Each portion uses 1 wholemeal roll, 1 hard-boiled egg, 1/2 tablespoon of mayonnaise, and 1/8 punnet of mustard cress.

1. Mash the hard-boiled eggs and mayonnaise together.
2. Halve the roll, spread with the egg mixture, and sprinkle the mustard and cress on top.

LARGE MEALS (PACKED MEALS)

Falafel and houmous pitta with carrot sticks, grapes, fruit yoghurt, and a carton of orange juice

££



Falafel and houmous pitta	170g
Carrot sticks	40g
Grapes	40g
Fruit yoghurt	125g
Orange juice carton	200ml

Falafel and houmous pitta

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 170g.

- 4 pitta breads
- 4 tablespoons houmous
- 12 falafel, sliced
- 4 lettuce leaves

Each portion uses 1 pitta, 1 tablespoon of houmous, 3 falafel and 1 lettuce leaf.

1. Toast the pitta and cut open while hot.
2. Spread the houmous in the pitta and then put in the sliced falafel and lettuce leaves.

Tuna and sweetcorn pasta, carrot and cucumber sticks, yoghurt, and a carton of orange juice

££



Tuna and sweetcorn pasta	160g
Carrot sticks	40g
Cucumber sticks	40g
Low-fat fruit yoghurt	125g
Orange juice carton	200ml

Tuna and sweetcorn pasta

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 160g.

- 100g pasta shapes
- 1 can (185g) tuna in water, drained (about 140g when drained)
- 1 small (195g) can sweetcorn, drained (about 160g when drained)
- 2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise
- 2 spring onions, finely sliced

1. Cook the pasta shapes, following the manufacturer's instructions. Drain and allow to cool.
2. Combine the cooked pasta with all the other ingredients and mix well.
3. Chill until serving.

Carrot cake



Carrot cake 65g

£

Carrot cake

This recipe makes 8 portions of about 65g.

- 1 large carrot, peeled
- 1 egg
- 75g brown sugar
- 5 tablespoonfuls vegetable oil
- 75g wholewheat flour
- 1 teaspoon powdered cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 25g sultanas
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1. Heat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
2. Grease the base of a small baking tin with a little vegetable oil and line with baking parchment.
3. Grate the carrot.
4. Whisk the egg and sugar together until thick and creamy.
5. Whisk in the oil. Slowly add the grated carrots and the remaining ingredients and mix together.
6. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, level the surface and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until firm to the touch and golden brown.
7. Cool on a wire tray.

Gingerbread loaf



Gingerbread loaf 50g

£

Gingerbread loaf

This recipe makes 8 portions of about 50g.

- 90g unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 tablespoons golden syrup
- 125ml semi-skimmed milk
- 100g caster sugar
- 125g plain flour
- 1 heaped tablespoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

1. Heat the oven to 160°C / 320°F / Gas 3. Grease and flour a small loaf tin.
2. In a saucepan, combine the butter, syrup and milk. Bring to the boil and then set aside.
3. Mix the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and then add the boiled mixture and stir well. Pour the mixture into the loaf tin and place in the oven.
4. Bake for 1 hour or until cooked. To test if the loaf is cooked, put a skewer or sharp knife into the cake. If it comes out clean, the cake is cooked.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Apple and cinnamon crumble and custard

£



Apple and cinnamon crumble 90g

Custard 80g

Apple and cinnamon crumble

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 90g.

75g plain flour
75g porridge oats
2 teaspoons powdered cinnamon
2 tablespoons brown sugar
60g vegetable fat spread
500g cooking apples

1. Heat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
2. Grease the base of a small, deep, ovenproof dish with a little vegetable fat spread.
3. Mix all the dry ingredients together.
4. Melt the vegetable fat spread and add it to the dry ingredients. Mix well with a fork until a crumbly texture is achieved.
5. Peel, core and slice the apples and put them in layers in the base of the dish.
6. Place the crumble mixture on top of the apples and bake for 45 minutes until golden.

Mango fritters with yoghurt

££



Mango fritters 130g

Yoghurt 50g

Mango fritters

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 130g.

75g plain flour
1 large egg
60ml semi-skimmed milk
2 large ripe mangos
20g sugar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. Sift the flour into a large bowl.
2. Make a well in the centre of the flour, add the egg and gradually beat in the milk to form a smooth batter.
3. Mash the mangos and then add them and the sugar to the batter and mix well.
4. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Once hot, fry spoonfuls of the mixture for about 2 minutes on each side. Serve immediately.

Baked banana

£



Baked banana 200g

Baked banana

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 200g.

- 8 small bananas
- 4 tablespoons orange juice
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 4 orange slices for garnish (optional)

Each portion uses 2 small bananas, 1 tablespoon of orange juice and 1/2 teaspoon of sugar.

1. Lay the bananas in a flat bowl suitable for the microwave or grill.
2. Pour the orange juice over the bananas and sprinkle with the sugar.
3. Either cover with cling film and microwave on high for about 3 minutes until the bananas are soft, or place under a hot grill for 4 to 5 minutes.

Quick microwave sponge pudding and custard

£



Quick microwave sponge pudding 60g

Custard 60g

Quick microwave sponge pudding

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

- 75g vegetable fat spread
- 75g caster sugar
- 75g self-raising flour
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon semi-skimmed milk
- 4 tablespoons of fruit (for example, blackberries, blackcurrants, raspberries or chopped canned fruit)

This recipe is made in the microwave. You will need either 4 small pudding pots (plastic or ceramic), or 1 larger bowl to make one big pudding.

1. Put the vegetable fat spread, sugar, flour, egg and milk together in a large bowl and beat together until well mixed and smooth.
2. Place the fruit in the bottom of the individual bowls or a large bowl.
3. Divide the sponge mix between the bowls or place it in the large bowl.
4. Cover with cling film and microwave on high for 1 minute for an individual pudding, or for about 4 minutes for a large pudding.
5. Remove the cling film and turn the pudding upside down onto a plate.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Rice pudding with canned mandarin oranges

£



Rice pudding 200g
Mandarins canned in juice (drained) 50g
(= 1/3 of a 300g can of mandarins)

Rice pudding

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 200g.

80g pudding rice
900ml milk
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon or nutmeg (optional)

1. Place the rice and milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 to 35 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the sugar and butter and then stir until the sugar has dissolved and the butter has melted.
3. Sprinkle with cinnamon or nutmeg before serving.

Baguette with houmous, and carrot and cucumber sticks

£



Baguette 60g
Houmous 40g
Carrot sticks 80g
Cucumber sticks 40g

Cheese and tomato quesadillas

£



Cheese and tomato quesadillas 140g

Cheese and tomato quesadillas

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 140g.

1 tablespoon tomato purée
1 teaspoon mild chilli powder
4 medium tomatoes, diced
60g Cheddar cheese, grated
8 small tortilla wraps

1. Mix together the tomato purée, chilli powder, diced tomato and cheese.
2. Place a tortilla in a frying pan and spread with a quarter of the tomato mixture. Place another tortilla on top and dry-fry until brown. Turn the tortilla over and dry-fry until brown.
3. Remove the tortilla from the pan and cut into triangles.
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Tuna melt muffin

££



Tuna melt muffin 140g

Tuna melt muffin

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 140g.

- 2 muffins
- 4 teaspoons tomato purée
- 2 medium tomatoes, sliced
- 1 can (185g) tuna in spring water, drained and flaked
- 60g Cheddar cheese, grated

Each portion uses 1/2 muffin, 1 teaspoon of tomato purée, 1/2 tomato, 1/4 can tuna and 15g Cheddar cheese.

1. Cut the muffins in half.
2. Spread the tomato purée on the cut surface of the muffins, and then layer on the sliced tomato and tuna. Sprinkle with cheese and then cook under a hot grill until browned.

Mini fish finger sandwich

£



2 fish fingers 56g
Baguette 50g
Lettuce 20g
Tomato 30g

Pitta bread crisps with a chilli dip and grapes

£



Pitta bread crisps 50g
Chilli dip 30g
Grapes 80g

Pitta bread crisps

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g.

4 pitta breads

Each portion uses 1 pitta bread.

1. Heat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
2. Cut the pitta bread into triangles and spread out in a single layer on a baking tray. Bake in the oven for about 7 minutes until crisped and beginning to brown.

Chilli dip

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 30g.

- 1/2 small (200g) can chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 jalapeño pepper, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/2 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice

1. Mix all the ingredients together. Chill before serving.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Tortilla crisps with a curry dip and apple £



Tortilla crisps 40g

Curry dip 50g

Apple 80g

Tortilla crisps

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g.

4 small tortilla wraps

Each portion uses 1 tortilla wrap.

1. Heat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
2. Cut the tortillas into triangles and spread out in a single layer on a baking tray. Bake in the oven for about 10-15 minutes until crisp.

Curry dip

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g.

- 1/2 small onion, grated
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon horseradish sauce
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 150g fromage frais
- 1 heaped tablespoon reduced-fat mayonnaise

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl and chill until serving.

Tortas fritas with guacamole ££



Tortas fritas 40g

Guacamole 60g

Tortas fritas

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g.

- 100g plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 tablespoon vegetable fat spread
- 60ml water
- 60g semi-skimmed milk
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together in a bowl, then rub in the fat spread, mixing well.
2. Gradually add the water and milk to form a smooth dough. Cover with a damp cloth and set aside for 5 minutes.
3. Take golf ball size pieces of the dough and roll into balls. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough balls into circles about 7cm across, and then prick them with a fork.
4. Heat the oil in a frying pan and then add the circles of dough. Cook until golden brown, turning occasionally. Repeat for each bread.
5. Allow to cool slightly before serving.

Guacamole

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

- 2 avocados, peeled and de-stoned
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- 2 tablespoons lime juice (fresh lime)
- 1 heaped tablespoon plain yoghurt (low-fat)
- 1 small tomato, chopped

1. Place all the ingredients, except for the chopped tomato, in a bowl and mash with a fork until smooth.
2. Stir in the chopped tomatoes and chill before serving.

Pitta bread pizza

£



Pitta bread pizza 110g

Pitta bread pizza

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 110g.

- 4 pitta breads
- 4 teaspoons tomato purée
- 120g grated cheese
- 60g mushrooms

Each portion uses 1 pitta bread, 1 teaspoon of tomato purée, 30g cheese and 1 or 2 mushrooms.

1. Heat the grill to a medium temperature and toast the pitta breads on one side.
2. Remove the bread from the grill and place the tomato purée, mushrooms and cheese on the untoasted side of the pitta bread.
3. Place under the grill for a few minutes until the cheese has melted.

Tip: You could try using other vegetables for toppings. Peppers, sweetcorn or left-over vegetables can be used instead of mushrooms.

Leek and potato soup with a wholemeal roll

£



Leek and potato soup 250g

Wholemeal roll 80g

Leek and potato soup

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 250g.

- 4 medium leeks
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled and diced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
- 500ml water
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 250ml semi-skimmed milk

1. Chop the top off the leeks and trim the roots. Chop the leeks in half lengthways and wash under running water, fanning out the layers, to make sure they are thoroughly clean. Chop the leeks roughly.
2. Heat the oil in a large pot over a medium heat and add the leeks, onions and potatoes. Stir, reduce the heat to low, and simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to stop browning.
3. Add the water, bay leaf and seasoning, stir well and bring to the boil. Then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes, until the potatoes are soft.
4. Take out the bay leaf and purée the soup in a liquidiser or with a hand-held blender. Add the milk, and heat through before serving.

Noodle salad with peanut sauce

£



Noodle salad with peanut sauce 230g

Noodle salad with peanut sauce

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 230g.

- 4 noodle nests
- 4 tablespoons peanut butter
- 4 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 small carrots, grated
- 1/2 small cucumber, chopped
- 1 small red pepper, cored and diced

Each portion uses 1 noodle nest, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, 1 teaspoon of soy sauce, 1/2 grated carrot, 2cm cucumber and 1/4 red pepper.

1. Cook the noodles according to the manufacturer's instructions. Drain the noodles, run them under cold water and then set them aside to cool.
2. In the meantime, make a sauce by mixing together the peanut butter and soy sauce in a large bowl. Add the carrots, cucumber and red pepper and mix well.
3. Add the noodles to the vegetables and sauce and mix well. Divide between four bowls and serve immediately.

Omelette with grilled tomato and toast and a small glass of orange juice

££



Omelette 60g

Grilled tomatoes 80g

Wholemeal toast 35g

Vegetable fat spread 8g

Orange juice 150ml

Omelette

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 teaspoons butter

Each portion of omelette uses 1 large egg, 1/2 tablespoon of water and 1/2 teaspoon of butter.

1. Break the eggs into a jug or mixing bowl.
2. Add the water to the eggs and beat together using a fork.
3. Heat an omelette pan or frying pan over a medium heat.
4. Add the butter to the hot pan and as soon as it sizzles, swirl the pan and add the egg mixture. Don't allow the butter to brown.
5. Allow the egg mixture to cook until the omelette is set.
6. Fold the omelette in half and serve.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Mexican scrambled egg wrap

£



Mexican scrambled egg 100g
Tortilla wrap 40g

Mexican scrambled egg

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 2 spring onions, chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon mild chilli powder

Each portion uses 1 egg, 1/2 teaspoon of butter, 1/2 spring onion, 1/2 tomato and 1/4 teaspoon of chilli powder.

1. Beat the eggs in a bowl.
2. Melt the butter in a non-stick saucepan.
3. Add the eggs, stirring all the time over a low heat until the egg is thoroughly set.
4. Mix in the spring onions, tomatoes and chilli powder.

Fish balls with tomato salsa

£££



Fish balls 160g
Tomato salsa 80g

Fish balls

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 160g.

- 300g frozen or fresh white fish fillets
(Use fish from sustainable sources where possible.)
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 5 spring onions, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons plain flour
- 1 teaspoon paprika powder
- 1 tablespoon semi-skimmed milk

1. Poach the fish in water for 10 to 15 minutes until opaque.
2. Boil the potatoes for 10 to 15 minutes, drain and then mash them.
3. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a frying pan, add the onions and gently fry for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the parsley and stir well.
4. Place all the ingredients except for the remaining oil into a bowl, mix well and allow to cool.
5. Once the mixture has cooled, take pieces of the mixture and roll into balls.
6. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a frying pan, add the fish balls and fry until golden. Drain on paper before serving.

Tomato salsa

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 80g.

- 1 small (200g) can chopped tomatoes
- 1 small tomato, diced
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/2 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice

1. Mix all the ingredients together. Chill before serving.

Spanish tortilla with garlic mushrooms and tomato salad

££



Spanish tortilla	140g
Garlic mushrooms	40g
Tomato salad	80g

Spanish tortilla

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 140g.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 medium boiled potatoes, sliced
- 4 large eggs, beaten

Each portion uses 1/4 tablespoon of oil, 1/4 onion, 1/2 potato and 1 egg.

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the onion and cook gently for 10 minutes.
2. Turn up the heat, add the sliced potatoes and pour the beaten eggs over the potatoes and onions.
3. Turn down the heat to the lowest setting and cook for 10 minutes.
4. Place the frying pan under a hot grill for a few minutes to make sure all the egg is cooked through from the top, but be careful not to burn the pan handle.

Garlic mushrooms

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 40g.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2-3 teaspoons of garlic purée
- 200g mushrooms, quartered

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Add the mushrooms and garlic purée. Mix well and fry for 3 to 4 minutes.

Porridge with jam and a small glass of orange juice

£



Porridge	250g
Jam	10g
Orange juice	150ml

Porridge

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 250g.

- 1 litre semi-skimmed milk
- 125g rolled oats

Each portion uses 250ml of milk and about 30g of oats.

1. Place the milk and oats in a non-stick saucepan.
2. Heat gently until boiling, and then turn the heat down and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the oats are softened and have absorbed the milk.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Scrambled egg and tomato with toast and a small glass of orange juice **££**



Scrambled egg	55g
Grilled tomato	80g
Wholemeal toast	35g
Vegetable fat spread	8g
Orange juice	150ml

Scrambled egg

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 55g.

- 4 eggs
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 4 teaspoons butter

Each portion of scrambled egg uses 1 egg, 1/2 tablespoon of milk and 1 teaspoon of butter.

1. Beat the eggs in a bowl with the milk.
2. Melt the butter in a non-stick saucepan.
3. Add the eggs, stirring all the time over a low heat until the egg is set thoroughly.

Sweetcorn fritters with tomato salsa and a bagel **£**



Sweetcorn fritters	110g
Tomato salsa	50g
Bagel	80g

Sweetcorn fritters

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 110g.

- 100g plain flour
- 1 medium egg
- 120ml semi-skimmed milk
- 1 small can (200g) sweetcorn, drained
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. Sift the flour into a large bowl.
2. Make a well in the centre of the flour, add the egg and gradually beat in the milk to form a smooth batter.
3. Add the sweetcorn and paprika to the batter and mix well.
4. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Once the oil is hot, fry spoonfuls of the mixture for 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Serve immediately.

Tip: Try adding some chopped onion or spring onion for extra flavour.

Tomato salsa

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 50g.

- 1 small (200g) can chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 small tomato, diced
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

1. Mix all the ingredients together. Chill before serving.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

French toast

£



French toast 110g

French toast

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 110g.

- 4 eggs
- 120ml semi-skimmed milk
- 4 large slices (120g) wholemeal bread
- 20g butter
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Break the eggs into a bowl and beat together with the milk.
2. Dip the slices of bread in the milk mixture until fully coated.
3. Heat a pan and melt the butter. Don't let the butter go brown.
4. Fry the bread until the egg mixture is cooked on both sides, turning the bread to ensure even cooking.
5. Sprinkle with cinnamon powder before serving.

Sardines on toast

£



Sardines 45g
Wholemeal toast 30g
Cherry tomatoes 30g

Sardines on toast

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

- 4 large slices (120g) wholemeal bread
- 2 cans (120g) sardines in brine, drained (180g drained weight)
- 120g cherry tomatoes

1. Toast the bread.
2. Serve with the sardines and tomatoes.

LIGHT MEALS AND SNACKS

Weet bisks with milk and raisins

£



Weet bisks 40g (2 weet bisks)
Semi-skimmed milk 150ml
Raisins 20g

Baked beans and French stick

££



Baked beans 200g
French stick 40g

Baked beans and French stick

This makes 4 portions of about 240g.

- 2 large (400g) cans reduced-sugar and reduced-salt baked beans
- 1/2 large French stick

Chick pea dahl with chapatti

£



Wholemeal chapatti 50g
Chick pea dahl 100g

Chick pea dahl

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon mild chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 large can (400g) chick peas, drained
- 100ml water

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pan and fry the cumin seeds for about a minute, until they 'pop'.
2. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, chilli powder and turmeric and fry for several minutes until the onions soften.
3. Add the drained chick peas to the pan, along with the water, and cook for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

'PREGNANCY EXTRAS'

Milk

£



Semi-skimmed milk 200ml

Lassi

£



Lassi 200ml

Lassi

This recipe makes 1 portion of about 200ml.

- 60g plain yoghurt
- 140ml milk
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar

1. Mix the ingredients together in a jug or in a large jar and serve at room temperature.

Soya milkshake

£



Soya milkshake 300ml

Soya milkshake

This recipe makes 1 portion of about 300ml.

- 200ml unsweetened calcium-fortified soya milk
- 80g drained canned peaches (canned in juice)
(= 2/3 of a small 200g can of peaches)

1. Place all the ingredients into a blender or jug and blend until smooth.

Yoghurt and fresh fruit smoothie

£££



Yoghurt and fresh fruit smoothie 200ml

Yoghurt and fresh fruit smoothie

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 200ml.

- 400g natural yoghurt
- 100ml milk
- 320g berries (blueberries, strawberries, blackberries)

Each portion uses 100g yoghurt, 25ml milk and 80g berries.

1. Place all the ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth. Or, place in a jug and blend using a hand-held blender. Serve immediately.

'PREGNANCY EXTRAS'

Chocolate milkshake

£



Chocolate milkshake
(made with semi-skimmed milk) 150g

Chocolate milkshake

This recipe makes 1 portion of about 150ml.

3 teaspoons chocolate milkshake mix powder
150ml semi-skimmed milk

1. Mix the milk and chocolate milkshake mix powder and stir well, or put it in a large jar, screw on the lid and then shake it up.

Soya milk with apple

£



Unsweetened calcium-fortified soya milk 200ml
Apple 80g

Milky tea with digestive biscuit

£



Milky tea 100ml tea, 100ml milk
Digestive biscuit 16g

Soya yoghurt with mango

££



Plain soya yoghurt 100g
Mango 100g

Soya yoghurt with mango

This recipe makes 4 portions of 200g.

400g yoghurt
1 large mango, peeled and de-stoned

'PREGNANCY EXTRAS'

Soft cheese and banana platter £



Soft cheese 30g
Banana 80g

Mozzarella and pear platter ££



Mozzarella cheese 35g
Pear 80g

Custard with apricots £



Custard with apricots 110g

Custard with apricots

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 110g.

280g custard (home-made or ready-prepared)
160g dried apricots, chopped

Each portion uses 70g of custard and 40g of chopped dried apricots.

Frozen yoghurt with grapes ££



Frozen yoghurt 60g
Grapes 80g

Frozen yoghurt

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

240g yoghurt

1. Put the yoghurt in a freezable tub and place in the freezer.
2. Mix the yoghurt every hour or so for about 2-3 hours to avoid ice crystals forming.
3. Freeze overnight.

EXTRA ENERGY

Mashed avocado on melba toast with cherry tomatoes and red pepper sticks, with milk

£



Mashed avocado 30g
Melba toast 15g
Cherry tomatoes 40g
Red pepper sticks 40g
Milk (semi-skimmed) 150ml

Oatcakes, celery sticks and houmous, with milk

££



Oatcakes 30g
Celery sticks 40g
Houmous 40g
Milk (semi-skimmed) 150ml

Popcorn with apple slices, with milk

£



Popcorn 15g
Apple 80g
Milk (semi-skimmed) 150ml

Pitta bread, houmous, pepper and cucumber sticks, and soya milk

££



Pitta bread 30g
Houmous 40g
Red pepper sticks 40g
Cucumber sticks 40g
Soya milk 150ml

Spicy potato wedges with tomato salsa, with milk

££



Spicy potato wedges	70g
Tomato salsa	40g
Milk (semi-skimmed)	150ml

Spicy potato wedges

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 70g.

2 medium potatoes
 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
 2 teaspoons lemon juice
 2 teaspoons mustard powder
 2 teaspoons paprika

1. Heat the oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6.
2. Scrub the potatoes and cut each one into 8 wedges.
3. Place the remaining ingredients in a jug and whisk together.
4. Put the wedges in a roasting tin (in a single layer), pour the dressing over and mix well.
5. Cook on the top shelf for about 30 minutes, turning once after 15 minutes.

Wholemeal toast with honey and apple slices, with milk

£



Wholemeal toast	35g
Honey	10g
Apple	80g
Milk (semi-skimmed)	150ml

Boiled egg and wholemeal toast

£



Egg	60g
Wholemeal toast	40g

Boiled egg and wholemeal toast

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

4 eggs
 4 slices wholemeal bread

1. Place the eggs in a pan of cold water and bring to the boil.
2. Boil the eggs for about 4-5 minutes and then remove from the heat.
3. Toast the bread and cut it into slices.

EXTRA ENERGY

Poached egg on toast with tomatoes £



Egg 60g
Wholemeal toast 40g
Tomatoes 20g

Poached egg on toast with tomatoes

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 120g.

4 slices wholemeal bread
4 eggs
8 small tomatoes, cut in half

1. Boil some water in a saucepan.
2. Break each egg separately into a cup or mug and then gently add it to the boiling water.
3. Poach the eggs for about 3 minutes.
4. Toast the bread.
5. Serve the eggs on the toast. Garnish with the tomatoes.

Tomato soup and crispbread £



Tomato soup 200g
Crispbread 15g

Tomato soup and crispbread

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 215g.

2 large cans (400g) tomato soup*
4 crispbreads

* Check the label and choose soup that has a high tomato content (for example over 90% tomatoes) and a lower salt content.

1. Heat the soup, following the instructions on the can.
2. Serve each bowl of soup with a crispbread.

Pear and almonds ££



Pear 150g
Almonds (shelled) 30g

Malt loaf with a satsuma £



Malt loaf 60g
Satsuma 100g

EXTRA ENERGY

Jacket potato

£



Jacket potato 200g

Mashed potato

£



Mashed potato 200g

Rice

£



Rice 150g

Wholemeal roll

£



Wholemeal roll 70g

Chapatti

£



Chapatti 110g

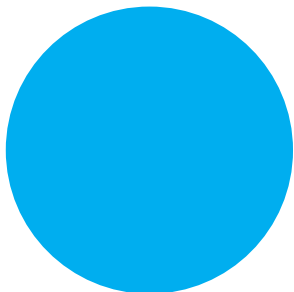
Mashed sweet potato

£



Sweet potato 200g

Resources



Resources

Useful organisations

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers

www.abm.me.uk

Helpline: 0300 330 5453

E: info@abm.me.uk

For breastfeeding information, a list of local support groups, and current breastfeeding news.

The Baby Café

www.nct.org.uk

An NCT-supported charity that coordinates a network of breastfeeding drop-in centres and other services to support breastfeeding mothers.

Best Beginnings

www.bestbeginnings.org.uk

T: 020 7443 7895

E: info@bestbeginnings.org.uk

For simple, practical visual guidance on breastfeeding, aimed at parents.

BLISS (The Premature Baby Charity)

www.bliss.org.uk

T: 020 7378 1122

E: ask@bliss.org.uk

Provides support and care to premature and sick babies across the UK.

The Breastfeeding Network

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Helpline: 0300 100 0212

Support and information for breastfeeding women.

Family Nurse Partnership

www.fnp.nhs.uk

E: FNPnationalunit@phe.gov.uk

A voluntary home-visiting programme for first-time young mums and their families.

Institute of Health Visiting

www.ihv.org.uk

Provides fact sheets and training for health professionals, and fact sheets for families.

La Leche League

www.laleche.org.uk

Helpline: 0345 120 2918

Mother-to-mother breastfeeding support and advice.

Lactation Consultants of Great Britain (LCGB)

www.lcgb.org

The professional association for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) in the UK. The website includes a 'Find an IBCLC' webpage.

The Multiple Births Foundation

www.multiplebirths.org.uk

T: 020 3313 3519

E: imperialmbf@nhs.net

Offers support to multiple-birth families, and education and advice to professionals about their special needs.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

www.nice.org.uk

T: 0300 323 0140

E: nice@nice.org.uk

For public health guidance on antenatal and postnatal care and nutrition.

NICE guidelines and Quality Standards

Antenatal care. NICE guideline NG201. 2021

Antenatal care (QS22). 2021

Diabetes in pregnancy: Management from preconception to the postnatal period. NICE guideline 3. 2020

Diabetes in pregnancy (QS109). 2016

Maternal and child nutrition. NICE guideline PH11. 2014

Maternal and child nutrition (QS98). 2015

Multiple pregnancy: twin and triplet pregnancies (QS46). 2014

Postnatal care. NICE guideline NG194. 2021

Postnatal care (QS37). 2021

Weight management before, during and after pregnancy. NICE guideline PH27. 2010

National Teenage Pregnancy Midwifery Network

www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/ntpmn

Aims to improve outcomes for teenage parents and their children by developing maternity services to meet their needs.

NCT

www.nct.org.uk

T: 0300 33 00 700

For information to support parents on all aspects of antenatal and postnatal care.

NHS

www.nhs.uk

A Government-sponsored information site on all aspects of health.

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-health-improvement-and-disparities>

Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland)
www.publichealth.hscni.net
T: 0300 555 0114

Public Health Scotland
www.publichealthscotland.scot
T: 0345 646 0238

Public Health Wales
www.phw.nhs.wales/
T: 029 2022 7744

Royal College of Midwives
www.rcm.org.uk
T: 0300 303 0444

Royal College of Nursing
www.rcn.org.uk
T: 0345 772 6100

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
www.rcpch.ac.uk
T: 020 7092 6000

Tommy's
www.tommys.org
Pregnancy Line: 0800 0147 800
Provides information for parents-to-be, and funds research into pregnancy problems.

Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative
www.babyfriendly.org.uk
T: 020 7375 6144
E: bf@unicef.org.uk

Healthy eating advice for pregnant women

First Steps Nutrition Trust

See page 92 for information on healthy eating for pregnant women produced by First Steps Nutrition Trust.

Healthy Start

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

This website provides information about the Healthy Start scheme in the UK. It also provides food and health tips for pregnant women and families with young children, and information about vitamin use in pregnancy.

NHS

www.nhs.uk

The NHS website offers a range of advice and information about healthy diets during pregnancy:

Have a healthy diet in pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/have-a-healthy-diet/>

For information about fruits and vegetables, starchy foods, protein, dairy products, foods that are high in sugar or fat, healthy snacks, preparing food safely, and how to access Healthy Start food payments.

Foods to avoid in pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/foods-to-avoid/>

For information on foods to avoid during pregnancy.

Exercise in pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pregnancy-exercise/>

Provides diet and exercise tips

Start4Life

www.nhs.uk/start4life/

Tips and advice for mums-to-be on having a healthy pregnancy.

Change4Life

www.nhs.uk/Change4Life

The Department of Health and Social Care's Change4Life campaign provides advice and information about a healthy diet during pregnancy.

Best Beginnings

www.bestbeginnings.org.uk

Best Beginnings aims to improve the health of children across the UK, making the most of the time between preconception and 2 years of age, when the foundations for a healthy childhood can be laid.

They provide a free-to-download app called *Baby Buddy*, which is suitable for young women and offers lots of information, films and local information to support pregnant women and young families.



Tommy's

www.tommys.org

Tommy's provides general information for women in pregnancy. See their web pages:

<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/health-professionals/free-pregnancy-resources/your-guide-healthy-diet-pregnancy>
and <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/eating-well-pregnancy>

Alcohol and drugs in pregnancy

The **NHS website** www.nhs.uk provides information about drinking alcohol and taking illegal and other drugs during pregnancy, including information about alcohol units. See their web pages *Drinking alcohol while pregnant*, and *Illegal drugs and pregnancy* at www.nhs.uk

The Government's **Start4Life** website www.nhs.uk/start4life/ provides advice and information about drinking alcohol during pregnancy. See their web page *Can I drink alcohol during pregnancy?*, at <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/alcohol/>

Drinkaware provides information on alcohol and pregnancy. See their web pages: *Alcohol and pregnancy* at <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/alcohol-fertility-and-pregnancy>
How to reduce your drinking at www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/how-to-reduce-your-drinking/

The **Talk to Frank** website www.talktofrank.com offers information and support for young people around the use and abuse of drugs.

Counselling service for unplanned pregnancies

Pregnancy Choices Directory

www.pregnancychoicesdirectory.com

For information about free, confidential counselling, support, help and advice for anyone facing an unplanned pregnancy.

Diabetes

Diabetes UK

www.diabetes.org.uk

T: 0345 123 2399

See their website page *Planning for a pregnancy when you have diabetes*, at <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/pregnancy>

Exercise

Tommy's

See the web page *Exercise in pregnancy*, at <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/being-healthy/exercise>

Food safety and hygiene

Food Standards Agency

www.food.gov.uk

The Food Standards Agency provides a range of resources about food safety and hygiene. These are available to download at www.food.gov.uk/about-us/publications#toc-2

Mental wellbeing in pregnancy

PANDAS

Helpline 0843 2898401 (open 9am to 8pm)

Email support: info@pandasfoundation.org.uk

Pre- and postnatal depression advice and support.

Tommy's

www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing

Web-based information on mental wellbeing before, during and after pregnancy.

Smoking

NHS

Offers help and support to people who want to stop smoking. See their web page *Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do for your baby*, at <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/stop-smoking/>

Parenting support for pregnant teenagers and their partners

Family Lives

Helpline: 0808 800 2222 (available 24 hours a day)
Family Lives has a free confidential helpline, and offers support to young parents on financial, practical and emotional issues.

Vegetarians and vegans

NHS

www.nhs.uk

The NHS website contains information for vegetarians and vegans. See their web page *Vegetarian or vegan and pregnant*, at <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vegetarian-or-vegan-and-pregnant/>

Vegetarian Society

www.vegsoc.org

T: 0161 925 2000

The Vegetarian Society is a UK educational and campaigning charity. They provide information for vegetarians.

The Vegan Society

www.vegansociety.com

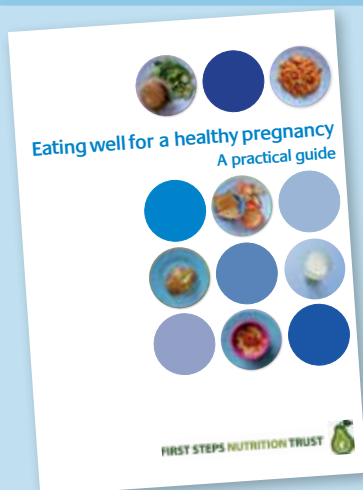
T: 0121 523 1730

Provides information for vegans.

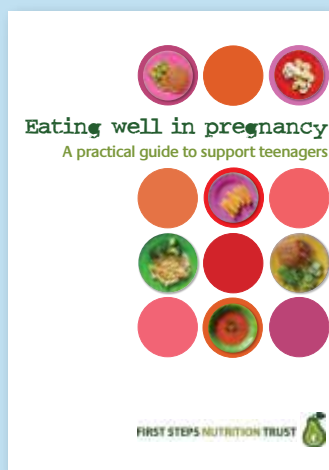
First Steps Nutrition Trust – Useful resources

The information in all our resources is in line with current policy and has been reviewed by experts in the field. All our resources are available as free pdfs to download at www.firststepsnutrition.org

Supporting women in pregnancy and new mums



This guide enables health professionals to support pregnant women to understand their food and nutrition needs in pregnancy. It includes recipes and meal ideas and can sit alongside other local public health guidance to provide a practical explanation of what 'eating well' looks like.

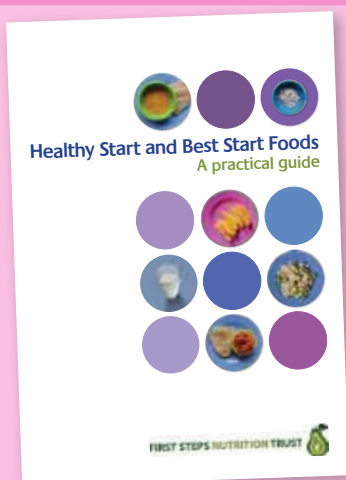


This practical guide illustrates what a good diet looks like for young women in pregnancy. The advice is tailored to women aged 15-19 years and provides practical ideas on how to eat well cost-effectively. It includes photos and recipes, all of which have been tested and costed.



This resource encourages all new mums to eat well and summarises current thinking on food, nutrition and breastfeeding. It provides photos and recipes for a range of simple, nutritious light meals and snacks perfect for busy mums on the go.

Supporting low-income families



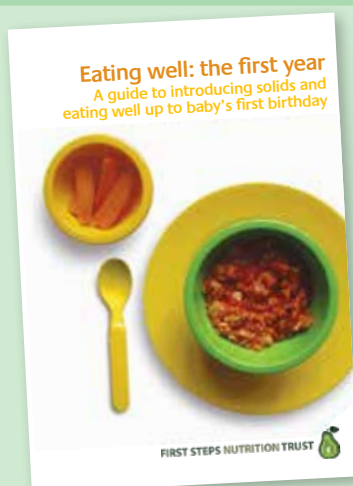
This resource explains the Healthy Start scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Best Start Foods scheme in Scotland, and how families eligible for these schemes can be supported. The resource gives examples of how the food payments can be spent, with recipes and advice for health professionals who support families in their areas.



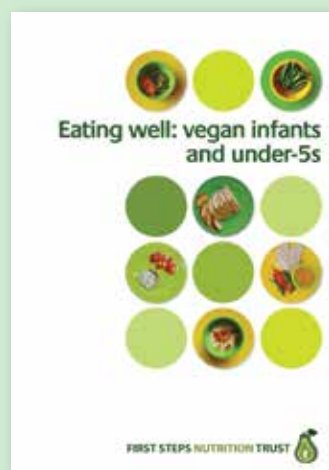
Simple cost effective recipes for the whole family and tips on how to eat well on a budget and with limited equipment. Recipes show how adults, teenagers, school-aged children, under-5s and infants can all eat well from the same recipes.

Printed copies of our resources for supporting new families are available to purchase on a not-for-profit basis from <https://firststepsnutrition.company.site/>

Supporting new families



This resource explains how to safely introduce solids and how to encourage eating well in the second six months of life. The resource provides recipes, suggested portion sizes and lots of practical tips.

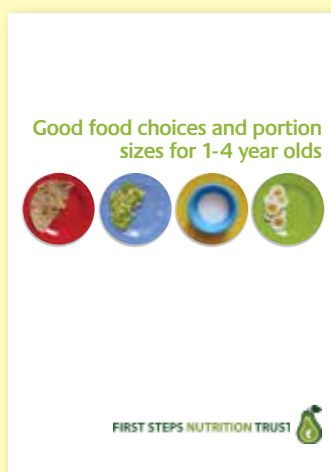


This resource summarises how vegan infants (and their mums) and children under 5 can be supported to eat well. It provides simple, cost-effective and tested recipes that can be used in early years settings or in the home, and clear information on how to support vegan dietary choices.

Supporting 1-4 year olds and early years settings



This guide outlines how families and settings can prepare packed lunches which meet the energy and nutrient needs of young children, using cost-effective choices that meet a wide range of needs.



This pictorial guide shows the sorts of foods, and amounts of foods that can be offered to 1-4 year olds to encourage eating well as part of a healthy meal plan.



This resource gives information on healthy snacks to give to 1-4 year olds.

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