Diet and Pregnancy

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Good nutrition is important for the healthy development of your baby. The focus on a healthy diet should start even before the pregnancy since overweight mothers have more pregnancy complications. Furthermore, the pregnancy weight gain recommendations will vary according to your prepregnancy body mass index (BMI). The recommended weight gains are as follows:

BMI <18.5: 28-40lbs

BMI 18.5-24.9: 25-35lbs

BMI 25-29.9: 15-25lbs

BMI >30: 11-20lbs

It is true that during your pregnancy you are eating for two. That said, this has commonly led to the misconception that a mother needs many more calories during pregnancy. This is far from the truth, since the actual increase needed is only 300 calories. This can easily accomplished by adding a healthy snack to your diet.

The following general principles should serve as a guide to choose a healthy diet:

- Choose foods high in fiber such as whole-grain breads, cereals, rice, fruits, and vegetables.

- Choose at least one good source of vitamin C every day (oranges, grapefruit, broccoli, tomatoes, and strawberries).

- Decrease the amount of fat consumed to no more than 30% of your total calories (65 grams of fat or less a day).

- Take the recommended prenatal vitamins.

Fish intake recommendations

Fish and shellfish are an important part of a healthy and balanced diet. However, nearly all fish and shellfish contain traces of mercury. Because of this the FDA recommends pregnant women and nursing mothers to avoid types of fish with high mercury content and to eat those with lower amount of mercury with moderation.

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This can be summarized as follows:

1. Do not eat Shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel, or Tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.

2. Eat up to 12 ounces (2 average meal) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. (shrimp, canned light tuna, pollock, catfish.)

3. Check local advisories about safety of fish caught in your local area.

Click here for a printable "[Florida Commercial Fish Wallet Card For Women of Child-Bearing Age](#)"