



Nutrition *for* You & Baby

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PERSATUAN PEDIATRIK
MALAYSIA

Ensuring A Healthy Pregnancy

Being pregnant is an exciting and important time in your life. During pregnancy, nutrition becomes even more important to your overall health.

As such, it is of paramount importance that you provide your body with the best possible nutrients to ensure a healthy pregnancy & enhanced development of your baby within you. Remember: your baby's source of nutrition comes solely from you.

Essential nutrients for mummy & baby

During pregnancy, your requirement for energy and most nutrients will increase. Fulfill these nutritional needs by eating a varied and balanced diet. Here is a list of key essential nutrients.





Nutrients	Food source
Calcium	Milk & dairy products, fish with edible bones (e.g. canned sardine, <i>ikan bilis</i>), beans & bean products including yellow dhal, <i>tauhu</i> & <i>tempeh</i> (fermented soybeans), vegetables like spinach, watercress, mustard leaves, <i>cekur manis</i> , tapioca leaves, <i>kai-lan</i> & broccoli, calcium-fortified products such as high-calcium milk, yogurt, breakfast cereals, biscuits and rice
Iron	Fresh cockles, anchovies (whole), liver, lean meat, chicken, eggs, chickpeas, fried soya bean curd, fern shoots (<i>pucuk paku</i>), bitter gourd, spinach & <i>kangkung</i>
Iodine	Seafood such as cockles, mussels, marine fish, seaweed, eggs, meat, milk & milk products, cereal grains, dried legumes, dried vegetables & dried fruits
Zinc	Meat, fish, shellfish, nuts, seeds, legumes and whole grain cereals (esp. bran & germ)
Folate	Green leafy vegetables, lady's fingers, asparagus, lentils and legumes, fortified grain products and liver
Vitamin A	Liver, milk, eggs, yellow & red coloured fruits (mangoes, papaya), yellow & red vegetables (carrot, pumpkin) & green leafy vegetables
Vitamin B1, B2 & B3	Legumes, meat, fish, eggs, nuts & fortified products such as bread, cereal & biscuits, whole grains & wholemeal wheat flour
Vitamin E	Vegetable oils, seeds, nuts & cereal grains

Balance, Moderation & Variety

Balance, moderation and variety are the key to eating right during pregnancy. You can put into practice these basic principles.

Balanced: Consume a sensible amount of food from all food groups during every main meal.

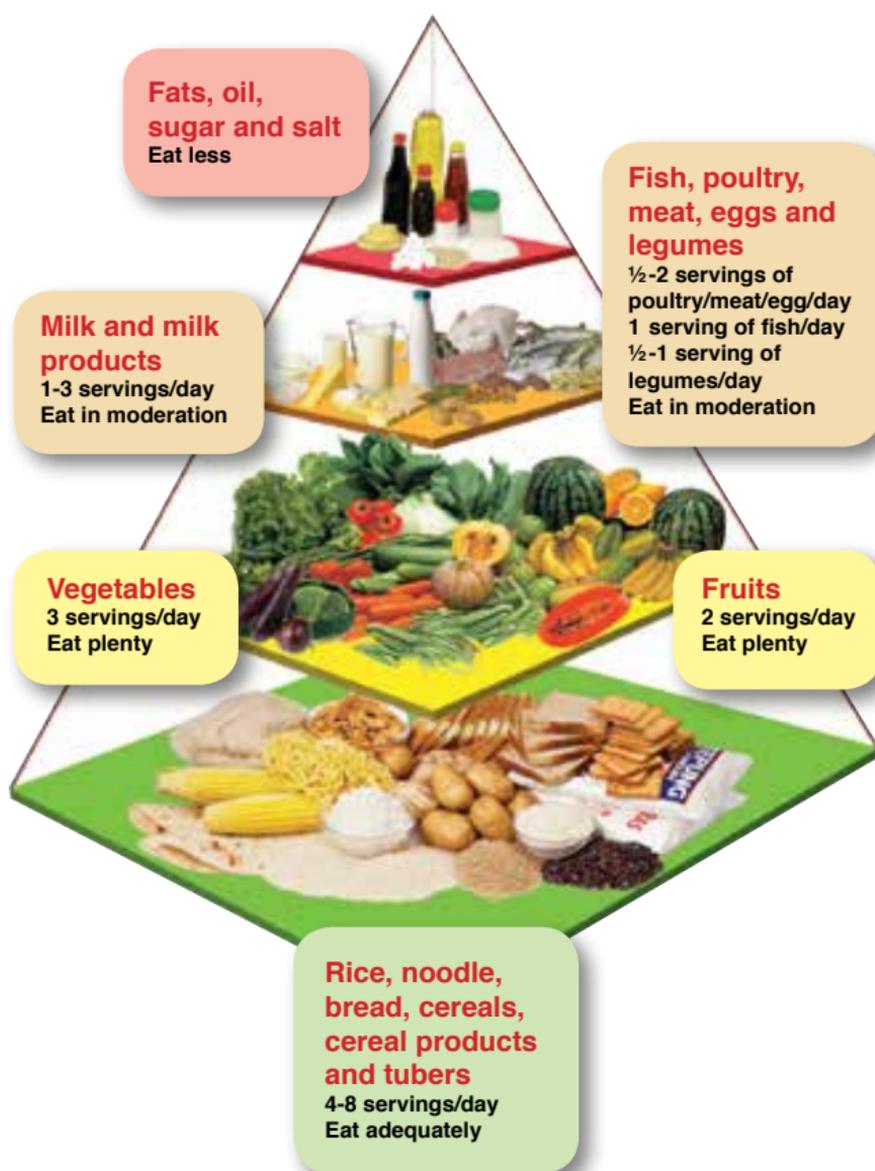
Moderation: Practice moderation even as you eat! You may experience particular cravings for a certain food, but the key is to avoid over-indulging. Maintain an adequate calorie intake to support the recommended growth & development of you and your baby.

Variety: There is no such thing as a miracle food; no ONE food can provide ALL the nutrients you need during your pregnancy. Eat a variety of foods from the five different food groups to gain the maximum nutritional benefits from these different types of food.



Malaysian Food Pyramid

You can practise the basic principles of Balance, Moderation and Variety by following the recommendations from the Malaysian Food Pyramid.



Tips

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, i.e. 6-8 glasses of plain water, even if you are not thirsty.
- Do not consume any supplements unless advised by your doctor.

Choosing to Breast-feed Your Baby

Congratulations on making the right choice to breastfeed your little one! Breast milk is the best gift you can give your baby especially during his or her first 6 months of life, as it offers a variety of health benefits and nutrients that will last a lifetime. There are several nutritional considerations that you will now have to take into account, not only for your baby but for you as well.

Eating well while breastfeeding

After the process of birth, a great amount of energy and reserve is drained from your body. A healthy diet while lactating is crucial to help you heal, recover from the exertion of labour and produce breast milk. You will need to consume an additional 300 - 500 calories each day while breastfeeding to maintain adequate milk supply. The nutrients gained from your diet will be passed on to your baby through breastfeeding.

Expert says:

“A proper diet enhances the quality and quantity of milk a mother produces while keeping her in good health and providing her with the energy to care for baby.”



What are some of the food that can boost your milk supply?

Now that you are breastfeeding, you may experience the problem of having insufficient milk supply to keep up with your infant's insatiable appetite! You can refer to the table in page 2 for a list of nutrients together with its sources which can help tremendously in ensuring that you have a steady supply of breast milk!

Increased energy needs during lactation

Your energy needs will be increased by 25% throughout your lactation period. You can consume an additional 3½ servings of cereal and grains such as rice and oats or bread and noodles every day for the first six months. Spread the additional foods over 3 main meals and 2 snacks.



Expert says:

- Drink at least 8 glasses of plain water daily. If you exercise, always drink two glasses of water before and after your workout, as well as one glass for every 15 minutes of the workout.
- Reduce intake of caffeinated beverages such as coffee and tea, as well as soda, sports drinks and fruit juices, which tend to be high in sugar and calories.
- Don't go on a crash diet to lose the weight you gained during pregnancy. Avoid fad diets that claim to help you lose weight fast. Regardless of what special confinement diet you adhere to, stick to the principles of 'Balance, Moderation & Variety' to help your body recover from labour and for breastfeeding.

Importance of Complementary Feeding

As your baby grows, so does his nutritional needs! There will come a stage where breast milk alone will no longer be sufficient to fulfil your baby's increased requirements for additional nutrients. This may be the time to introduce him to nutritious supplementary foods or also known as complementary feeding!

How do I know if my baby is ready for complementary feeding?

Generally, the age of 6 months is a good time to introduce complementary feeding as your baby's digestive system is then ready to handle semi-solid foods.

However, there are a few universal signs to indicate that your baby is now ready to receive complementary foods. You may notice that your baby:



- has started to develop teeth
- starts to make chewing motions or up-down “munching” movements
- can control his or her tongue better
- likes putting things into his mouth
- feels hungry soon after breastfeeding



What should I feed my baby?

Here are some suggestions of complementary foods that you can feed your baby.



Food / Baby's Age	6-8 months	8-10 months	10-12 months
Grain Group	Rice, barley, oat	Rice, barley, oat, multigrain crackers	Rice, barley, oat, multigrain crackers, wheat cereals
Fruits	Apple, banana, pear, prune	Apple, banana, pear, prune, papaya, grapes	Apple, banana, pear, prune, papaya, grapes, citrus, berries
Vegetables	Green beans, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, tomato, carrots, peas 	Green beans, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, tomato, carrots, peas, cauliflower, broccoli, asparagus, French beans, long beans	Green beans, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, tomato, carrots, peas, cauliflower, broccoli, asparagus, corn, spinach, French beans, long beans
Meat & alternatives group	Chicken, <i>tauhu</i> , fish	Chicken, <i>tauhu</i> , egg yolk, legumes, beef, pork, fish (e.g. <i>tenggiri</i> , <i>kurau</i>)	Chicken, <i>tauhu</i> , whole egg (at 12 months), legumes, beef, pork, fish (e.g. salmon, red snapper)
Food texture	Liquid, pureed, blended, mashed	Minced, diced, finely chopped soft food	Bite-sized pieces, small cubes/chunks of soft food

How frequent should I feed my baby?

- 6-8 months: 2-3 main meals a day & make sure breast milk is provided 5-6 times a day. Snacks are generally not required, but may be given if tolerated by baby.
- 9-11 months: 3-4 main meals a day + 1-2 nutritious snacks
- 1-2 years: 4-5 main meals a day + 1-2 nutritious snacks.

Expert says:

“The type of food texture to introduce to your baby also depends on his teeth development. For example, when your baby’s teeth start to grow, you can introduce finely chopped foods that your baby can chew.”

The Do's & Don'ts for complementary feeding

Do's

- ✓ Introduce one new food at a time. Wait for 4 days after introducing another new type of food
- ✓ Start with a small amount. Increase the amount gradually as baby gets older
- ✓ Once baby has been introduced to a variety of foods, start serving a combination of foods in a single meal
- ✓ Make sure the food flavour and texture are right according to baby's stage of development
- ✓ Feed as soon as baby gets hungry
- ✓ Depending on baby's ability, give foods that baby can pick up, and give water in a cup that he can hold
- ✓ Avoid having distractions such as TV and toys, so that baby can fully focus and enjoy his meal
- ✓ Have meals together with baby

Don'ts

- ✗ Add salt or other salty seasonings before the age of 1 year
- ✗ Add sugar or oil unnecessarily
- ✗ Give foods that baby can choke on, such as nuts, seeds, or whole grapes
- ✗ Mix different types of food in one meal when first initiating complementary feeding
- ✗ Force-feed or overfeed. Stop feeding when baby turns away or shows disinterest, he may be feeling full already

Prebiotics and probiotics

Everyone has bacteria living in their digestive tract; some of it can make you sick, but there are many strains of live microorganisms (mostly good bacteria) that exist in your gut to help your body's digestive tract work efficiently.

Probiotics are 'good' or 'friendly' bacteria that live in your gut to help your body better digest food and improve its ability to absorb nutrients. Probiotics can be found in live yogurt and milk powder or specially formulated probiotic drinks which contain one or more of the strains of these 'good' bacteria.

Prebiotics are non-digestible carbohydrates that can serve as food for good bacteria and helps them to grow. Prebiotics pass through our guts largely intact and ferment in the colon, stimulating the growth of good bacteria. Breast milk also naturally contains prebiotics (oligosaccharides) that help the growth of beneficial bacteria to boost the development of a healthy immune system.

Benefits of prebiotics and probiotics

Much research has been done by scientists on the potential of prebiotics and probiotics to help improve diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, and bring about a healthier balance of good bacteria. This in turn can improve the gastrointestinal environment in infants and adults.

Prebiotics and probiotics also improves your general health and well being, improves digestion and absorption of nutrients.

Are probiotics and prebiotics safe in pregnancy?

Probiotics and prebiotics from both natural food sources are considered safe for healthy pregnant women to use. However, do consult with your gynaecologist as there is currently no guidance on the quantities of prebiotics and probiotics that are safe.





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The Mi-CARE programme, a wholly Experts' based initiative, is spearheaded by the following Professional Bodies: Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia (OGSM), Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM), National Midwives' Society Malaysia (NMSM) and Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA). This programme is a training and education programme for nurses, nurse aides and midwives from private and government O&G, paediatric clinics and maternity centres, empowering them with relevant information on pregnancy, labour, birth and post-partum care so that they can provide accurate information and advice to expectant or new mothers.

Have any questions or concerns on your pregnancy?
Need professional advice on your
health whilst pregnant?

Fret not, the Mi-CARE Advisory Centre is here to help!

CALL OUR TOLL-FREE

1-800-88-9033

(Mon – Fri: 10.00am to 5.00pm)

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