

Nutrition when Pregnant with Twins, Triplets or More

Eating well during your pregnancy will help you have the healthiest babies possible. Healthy eating may help protect you from nutrient deficiencies and help you recover from your delivery.

Where can I get information on healthy eating?

A Registered Dietitian can help you understand how much food you may need. Ask for a referral as early in your pregnancy as possible. This is even more important if you:

- are on a restricted diet (avoiding many foods)
- are vegetarian or vegan
- drink plant-based beverages (almond, rice, coconut) instead of milk or fortified soy beverages
- are having problems gaining enough weight or are losing weight
- are having extreme nausea and vomiting
- are under 18 years old
- have other medical conditions that could affect your nutrition

For general pregnancy information about food safety, constipation, nausea and vomiting and more, go to healthyparentshealthychildren.ca

Why is weight gain important when expecting more than one baby?

Early weight gain is important to lower the risk of preterm birth and to increase the chance for your babies to be born at a healthy weight. Try to gain weight in the first and second trimesters because the length of your pregnancy may be shorter than if you were having one baby.

How much weight you need to gain depends on your pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI).

Recommended amount of weight gain for twins

Pre-Pregnancy BMI	Total range of weight gain
<18.5	Talk with your healthcare provider
18.5-24.9	17-25 kg (37-54 lbs)
25-29.9	14-23 kg (31-50 lbs)
30 and over	11-19 kg (25-42 lbs)

Talk with your healthcare provider about how much weight you need to gain for triplets or more.

Do I need more energy (calories)?

You have higher energy (calorie) needs. Everyone has different needs based on their [pre-pregnancy weight or BMI](#), level of activity and number of babies they are carrying. Work with your healthcare provider to see what your calorie needs are.

Examples of total calories needed for twin pregnancy

Pre-Pregnancy BMI	Total calories per day
17	~4000
22	~3500
27	~3250
33	~3000

How much food and fluid should I eat?

Start eating extra food in the first trimester. Choose higher protein and higher fat foods from Canada's Food Guide at each meal and snack to get the extra energy (calories) you need. Foods with healthy fats are listed on the nutrient chart on pages 3 and 4. Aim to drink about 10 cups (2.5 L) of fluid each day.

Eating and drinking every 2–4 hours gives you and your babies a constant supply of energy and nutrients. It may also help manage nausea, heartburn and constipation. To help meet your nutrition needs plan to eat 3 meals and 3 snacks each day.

Try these ideas...

For 340 calories eat the foods below:



peanut butter
2 tsp (10 mL)



1 whole grain
English muffin



fortified soy
beverage
1 ½ cup
(325 mL)

For 450 calories eat the foods below:



1 hardboiled egg plus
cheese 1 ½ oz (43 g)



1 (43 g)
piece
bannock



2% milk
½ cup
(125 mL)

For 600 calories eat the foods below:



almonds
¼ cup (60 mL)



mixed berries
½ cup (125 mL)



8% greek yogurt
¾ cup (175 mL)

What about multivitamins?

Your healthcare provider can help you choose a multivitamin supplement that contains:

- 1 mg (1000 mcg) folate (folic acid)
- at least 27 mg of iron
- 400 IU vitamin D
- 2.6 mcg vitamin B12

Many common supplements labeled as “prenatal multivitamins” contain these amounts. Some brands of multivitamins have more than one pill to make a dose. Take one dose per day of your multivitamin supplement during your pregnancy.










Your healthcare provider or Registered Dietitian may tell you to take more of certain vitamins or minerals if you don't get enough from food.

Do I need nutrition supplement drinks or shakes?



Smoothies, shakes and nutrition supplement drinks can also help you get extra nutrients but not everyone needs them. If you need them, your healthcare provider or dietitian can help you to choose the type and the amount that is right for you.

Are there important nutrients and foods I should eat?

In addition to taking your multivitamin supplement, eating healthy food will help you and your babies get the nutrients you all need. Choose foods from the chart below.

Nutrient and what it does	Foods to choose
<p>Protein builds muscles, blood, and body</p> <p>Vitamin B12 helps your blood to be healthy, and your brain to work well</p>	<p>These foods have protein:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beans, lentils, peas • nuts and seeds • fortified plant-based beverage (soy) • wheat germ • egg noodles, whole grains, quinoa  <p>These foods have protein and vitamin B12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meat, fish, chicken, turkey • eggs • milk (2% M.F or more), • Greek yogurt (more than 2 % M.F.) • cheese (more than 28% M.F.), cottage cheese 
<p>Iron delivers oxygen to the babies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meat, fish, chicken, turkey • shrimp, oysters, mussels, sardines, clams • eggs • beans, lentils, peas, nuts, seeds • fortified cereals (hot or cold), granola, muesli • dried fruit  
<p>Calcium builds bones and teeth, and keeps blood pressure healthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk, fortified plant-based beverage (soy) • kefir, yogurt, cheese (more than 28% M.F.) • tofu made with calcium • salmon with bones • broccoli, kale • almonds  
<p>Vitamin D helps build healthy bones and teeth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk, fortified plant-based beverage (soy) • eggs • salmon, trout, herring, mackerel, sardines, canned light tuna 

Are there important nutrients and foods I should eat? (Continued)

<p>Essential fatty acids build nerves, eyes, and brains</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fatty fish, shellfish, anchovy, capelin, hake, herring, salmon, Atlantic mackerel, pollock, smelt, rainbow trout, shrimp, clams, mussels, oysters • vegetable oil • nuts, nut butters, seeds, avocado • omega-3 enriched foods like eggs 	
<p>Folic acid makes red blood cells to build healthy babies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dark green vegetables • fortified cereals, breads and grain products • lentils, beans, soybeans • hummus • peanuts, sunflower seeds • citrus fruits 	

My notes:
