

Food in Pregnancy

A healthy diet is an important part of a healthy lifestyle at any time, but is especially vital if you're pregnant. Eating healthily during pregnancy will help your baby to develop and grow. You will probably find that you are hungrier than usual, but you don't need to "eat for two" – even if you are expecting twins or triplets as this can cause weight gain which might be difficult to shed later. Having healthy snacks like fruit and vegetable sticks with you will make it easier to keep hunger at bay.

There are some foods to avoid or take care with when you're pregnant, because they might make you ill or harm your baby. Make sure you know the important facts about which foods you should avoid or take precautions with when you're pregnant.....

Fish

Fish to avoid:

When you're pregnant or planning to get pregnant, you shouldn't eat shark, swordfish or marlin.

Fish to restrict:

You should also limit the amount of tuna you eat to: no more than two tuna steaks or four medium-sized cans of tuna a week

This is because tuna contains more mercury than other types of fish. The amount of mercury we get from food isn't harmful for most people, but if you take in high levels of mercury when you're pregnant, this could affect your baby's developing nervous system. When you're pregnant, you should also avoid having more than two portions of oily fish a week, such as salmon, trout, mackerel, herring and fresh tuna, because it can contain pollutants.

Shellfish

Always eat cooked rather than raw shellfish (including mussels, lobster, crab, prawns, scallops and clams) when you're pregnant, as they can contain harmful bacteria and viruses that can cause food poisoning. Cold pre-cooked prawns are fine.

Sushi

It's fine to eat raw or lightly cooked fish in dishes such as sushi when you're pregnant, as long as any raw wild fish used to make it has been frozen first. This is because, occasionally, wild fish contains small parasitic worms that could make you ill. Freezing kills the worms and makes raw fish safe to eat. Cooking will also kill them.

Cheese Meat & Eggs

Cheese

Don't eat mould-ripened soft cheese (cheeses with a white rind) such as brie and camembert. This includes mould-ripened soft goats' cheese, such as chevre. These cheeses are only safe to eat in pregnancy if they've been cooked.

You should also avoid soft blue-veined cheeses such as Danish blue, gorgonzola and roquefort. Soft blue cheeses are only safe to eat in pregnancy if they've been cooked.

The advice to avoid some soft cheeses is because they are less acidic than hard cheeses and contain more moisture, which means they can be an ideal environment for harmful bacteria, such as listeria, to grow in.

Pâté

Avoid all types of pâté, including vegetable pâtés, as they can contain listeria.

Eggs

When eating raw or lightly cooked eggs it is advisable to:

- Store safely in a cool dry place
- Follow good hygiene practices
- Observe best before dates



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Raw or undercooked meat

Do not eat raw or undercooked meat, including meat joints and steaks cooked rare, because of the potential risk of toxoplasmosis. Cook all meat and poultry thoroughly so it's steaming hot and there's no trace of pink or blood – especially with poultry, pork, sausages and minced meat, including burgers.

Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a parasite that can be found in raw and undercooked meat, unpasteurised goats' milk, soil, cat faeces and untreated water. If you are pregnant, the infection can damage your baby, but it's important to remember that toxoplasmosis in pregnancy is very rare.

Be cautious with cold cured meats

Many cold meats, such as salami, Parma ham, chorizo and pepperoni, are not cooked, they are just cured and fermented. This means that there's a risk they contain toxoplasmosis-causing parasites. It's best to check the instructions on the pack to see whether the product is ready to eat or needs cooking first.

If you're planning to cook the meat (for instance, pepperoni on pizza), then you don't need to freeze it first.

Liver can harm your unborn baby

Don't eat liver or liver-containing products such as liver pâté, liver sausage or haggis, as they may contain a lot of vitamin A. Too much vitamin A can harm your baby and cause birth defects.

Vitamins ~ Eating a healthy, varied diet in pregnancy will help you get most of the vitamins and minerals you need but it is advised that you take 400 micrograms of folic acid and a Vitamin D supplement daily throughout pregnancy.

Smoking & Pregnancy: Protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is one of the best things you can do to give your child a healthy start in life. Every cigarette you smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, so smoking when you are pregnant harms your unborn baby. Cigarettes can restrict the essential oxygen supply to your baby. As a result, their heart has to beat harder every time you smoke.

It's never too late to stop smoking. If your partner or anyone else who lives with you smokes, their smoke can affect you and the baby both before and after birth.

Alcohol: Experts are still unsure exactly how much, if any, alcohol is completely safe for you to have while you're pregnant, **so the safest approach is not to drink at all while you're expecting.**

Caffeine

High levels of caffeine can result in babies having a low birth weight, which can increase the risk of health problems in later life. Too much caffeine can also cause miscarriage.

Caffeine is naturally found in lots of foods, such as coffee, tea (including green tea) and chocolate, and is added to some soft drinks and energy drinks. Some cold and flu remedies also contain caffeine. Talk to your midwife, doctor or pharmacist before taking these remedies.

You don't need to cut out caffeine completely, but don't have more than 200mg a day. The approximate amount of caffeine found in food and drinks is:

- one mug of instant coffee: 100mg
- one mug of filter coffee: 140mg
- one mug of tea: 75mg
- one can of cola: 40mg
- one can of energy drink: 80mg
- one 50g bar of plain (dark) chocolate: most UK brands contain less than 25mg
- one 50g bar of milk chocolate: most UK brands contain less than 10mg

Herbal and green teas in pregnancy

There's little information on the safety of herbal and green teas in pregnancy, so it's best to drink them in moderation.

The FSA recommends drinking no more than around four cups of herbal or green tea a day during pregnancy

Mums on
the
move



Pre & Post Natal Activities

Exercising during pregnancy has many benefits for mother and baby. It increases blood flow to the placenta helping your baby's growth and development. Staying active or becoming active in pregnancy is safe and healthy, helping to prevent common ailments experienced such as headaches, backache, constipation, cramps, swollen feet, pelvic pain and tiredness. Once you have passed 14 weeks in your pregnancy you are welcome to join us.

Pilates exercise helps improve posture, focuses your breathing, and strengthens deep core, abdominal and pelvic floor muscles that are under strain throughout your pregnancy.

Aquanatal is water based exercise which helps alleviate pressure felt through joints and can give a sense of weightlessness.

Once your baby has arrived exercise may be the last thing on your mind but being physically active can help boost energy levels, increase your rate of recovery, improve muscle tone, circulation, digestion, mood, sleep patterns, and helps to increase range of movement, strength, flexibility and energy levels. As soon as you have had your post natal check up you are welcome to join in any of our Post Natal exercise classes.

Buggy fitness class has varied exercises on a weekly basis such as circuits, toning and interval training. These classes are pressure free enabling women to exercise at their own pace and intensity level. We promote positive body image and support women while they work towards improving their posture, muscle tone and overall recovery.

MUMBA is a gentle, low impact exercise to music class with babies in a sling or other babywearing choice. Take the time to bond and reap the benefits of being physically active.

All post natal classes are a time for Mums to take for themselves to improve health and wellbeing while bonding with their little one. Babies are welcome to attend the classes but will not take part in any form of the exercises. These are great opportunities to meet other new Mums. These classes are suitable for all ages and abilities.



FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about all pre and postal natal activity contact your midwife or the Sport and Physical Activity Team 01429 284050 or email SPAT@hartlepool.gov.uk