

# 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:

- avoid many kinds of 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, vomiting, and more, go to [healthyparentshealthychildren.ca](http://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.

## Recommended amount of weight gain for twins

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

Pre-Pregnancy BMI	Total range of weight gain
<18.5	Talk with your healthcare team
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 team about how much weight you need to gain for triplets or more.

## Do I need more energy (calories)?

You have higher energy (calorie) needs. Your own calorie needs depend on your [pre-pregnancy weight or BMI](#), how active you are, and the number of babies you're carrying. Work with your healthcare team to see what your calorie needs are.

## Examples of total calories needed for twin pregnancy

Pre-Pregnancy BMI	Total calories per day
17	about 4000
22	about 3500
27	about 3250
33	about 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.

## How often should I eat?

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



Latte made  
with fortified  
soy beverage  
1 ½ cup  
(325 mL)

For 450 calories eat the foods below:



1 hardboiled egg and  
cheese 1½ 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:

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

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 of your multivitamin supplement each day during your pregnancy.










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

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

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

### My notes:

[illegible]

## For more support



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811.
- Visit [ahs.ca/nutrition](#).