



FOOD

THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION

By Dr. Mark Hyman

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THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION

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THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to my Pregnancy e-book! This e-book is for the many women and couples that are thinking about starting a family, actively trying to get pregnant, or who are currently pregnant. Your health and fertility are largely in your own hands. By optimizing your nutrition, lifestyle, and supplement program, you can feel confident that you are doing the best for yourself and your baby.

I have separated this e-book into individual sections of “Fertility,” “Pregnancy”, and “Postpartum.” In each of these, you will find nutrition support including the best foods to eat and ones to avoid, as well as lifestyle strategies to reduce stress and give you energy and peace of mind. At the end of the e-book, I list some of my favorite nourishing and delicious recipes.

Pregnancy is truly amazing, it connects us to our ancestors and humanity at large, giving us a deep sense of life at its essence and an experience of what the human body is capable of.

I hope this book gives you the support to feel more at ease throughout your pregnancy and enjoy the process. You and your body are indeed a miracle!

THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION: FERTILITY

The three biggest factors determining your fertility are nutrition, sleep, and stress. In this section, I will go through each of these and how you can maximize your chances for conception.

NUTRITION AND FERTILITY

We make multiple choices every day of what to feed our bodies. In my new book, *Food*, I go thoroughly into what to eat and why. The same basic outline of a high fat, moderate protein, moderate carbohydrate diet that I recommend in my book is the same that I recommend for fertility, pregnancy, and postpartum, along with some nutritional tweaks specific for mothers and mothers to be.

Before trying to conceive, I recommend you work with a Functionally-trained doctor or nutritionist to assess your specific health and nutrition needs. You can find a list of my trained nutritionists [here](#). They will help to determine where any underlying cause of dysfunction or imbalance might stem from, and use diet and supplementation to support the natural healing mechanisms of your body and bring you back into balance.

Eating clean, organic, pesticide/hormone/chemical-free foods are paramount for fertility. The womb needs to be a safe environment for life to thrive, and the best way to achieve this is to be mindful of what you put in your body every day. When possible, choose organic, locally-grown and locally-raised foods.

Preconception is a great time to locate farmers' markets, co-ops, and organic grocery stores. Starting now, the foods you eat will build the habitat for your soon-to-be-baby. Creating healthy routines prior to conceiving will set you up for greater success during gestation and postpartum.

Just as important as the foods you eat, are the foods you avoid. The following foods have been shown to negatively affect fertility. Do your best to stay away from these by making time to prepare your own meals, be conscious of the places you eat out, and read labels.

Foods to avoid:

- **Trans fats** - These are found primarily in processed foods. They have been shown to negatively impact fertility as well as increase the "bad" (LDL) cholesterol, and increase risk of heart disease. Look for the red flags of "hydrogenated" or "partially-hydrogenated" on the back of food labels.
- **Dairy** - This includes all forms of dairy, milk, cheese and yogurt. If you must have dairy, look for organic goat or sheep options before cow dairy, as they are better assimilated. Consumption of dairy has been linked with inhibiting nutrient absorption, affecting cervical mucus production, and contributing to hormonal imbalances and anovulation.
- **Wheat/Gluten** - Even if you do not have Celiac Disease (an extreme gluten allergy), gluten does cause some level of inflammation when consumed. Gluten can create malabsorption of food meaning that the nutrients from your diet might not be benefiting you or your spouse. This lack of nutrition can

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lead to negative effects on sperm production and viability. Malabsorption of nutrients also relates to the female's reproductive system and ability to create a conducive environment for the embryo to implant.

- **High-glycemic Foods (sugary foods and drinks)** - Sugar has negative effects for both men and women in disrupting sex hormones, and throwing the reproductive system out of balance.
- **Processed Soy Products (tofu, soy protein, soy milk/yogurt)** - Soy can affect the hormonal balance of men and women in that it is what is known as a "phytoestrogen," an estrogen-like substance that can interfere with hormone function in men and women.
- **Caffeine** - Caffeine affects fertility in a few ways: It stimulates your adrenal glands causing an increase in insulin sensitivity, leading to insulin resistance in the body. Insulin resistance has been linked with reduced sperm production and hindering ovulation in women (especially important for women who have PCOS or diabetes). Caffeine has also been linked to mineral loss. Because caffeine is a diuretic, you lose vital minerals each time you urinate, which if you are drinking a large amount of caffeine throughout the day, can be quite a bit.
- **Alcohol** - Alcohol depresses the function of the adrenal glands. Depressed adrenal function leads to a slowed release of sex hormones in men and women, relating to hormone balance and function in the body. Alcohol also contains sugar, which will affect you in the same way as high-glycemic foods do (listed above). Excessive alcohol consumption in men decreases sperm quality and in women, can affect ovulation.

*All of the above foods are known to create inflammation in the body. Inflammation is linked to infertility in both men and women.

SLEEP AND FERTILITY

Sleep is the body's time for healing and regeneration and is essential for fertility. Your endocrine system (hormone function) relies heavily on a quality sleep cycle.

My top tips for getting restful sleep are:

- **Be in bed by 11:00pm** - The body does most of its regeneration between 11:00 pm and 1:00 am.
- **Keep your room pitch black** - Use light blocking curtains or a sleep mask if necessary.
- **Stop screen time within an hour before bed** - This includes all screens (cell phones, computers, and televisions). These screens overstimulate the brain and make it harder to get to sleep.
- **Avoid snacks right before bed** - Try to avoid eating 2 hours before bed. When your body is digesting it has less time for regenerating. Especially avoid snacks high in sugar, carbohydrates, or any caffeine.

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STRESS AND FERTILITY

Stress directly affects cortisol levels because as cortisol levels rise, progesterone falls, which can disrupt hormones and cause irregular menstrual cycles. In men, increased cortisol levels due to stress have been shown to reduce sperm and semen quality.

My advice is to learn and implement stress management techniques prior to conception and pregnancy. Once the baby is born it will likely be harder with the added variables of less sleep, feedings, and adjusting to your new life.

Here are my top tips for stress management:

- **Cut out sugary/high-carbohydrate foods** - High glycemic foods cause your blood sugar to spike and then drop. This up and down in blood sugar affects stress hormones like cortisol, which in turn negatively impacts fertility.
- **Exercise** - Regular exercise can decrease stress hormones and increase your “feel-good” hormones, like endorphins.
- **Get quality sleep** - Lack of consistent quality sleeps leads to a disruption in your circadian rhythm which throws off your hormones and can lead to elevated stress levels, increased insulin resistance, and slower metabolic function. All of these negatively affect your ability to conceive.
- **Breathing techniques** - Try slow breathing, counting to 3-5 seconds for an inhale. Pause. Exhale for the same amount of seconds.
- **Limit long travel** - Long travel, whether by car or plane, can cause elevated stress hormones and also throw off your internal clock as the time zone changes, leading to hormone disruption.
- **Take time for daily self-care** - Even just 10 to 20 minutes of daily self-care can help you hit the reset button and increase feel good hormones to keep you balanced. Try exercise, yoga, partner massage, a bath, journaling, or whatever helps you to feel calm and centered.
- **Reach out to friends, family or a counselor for emotional support when you need it** - Trying to get pregnant can be a very stressful time for individuals and couples. When you know you want to start or add to your family, the time it takes can feel unbearable. This is a great opportunity to remind yourself that you are not alone, and reach out to friends and family for support.

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SUPPLEMENTS FOR FERTILITY

You will want to start your supplement program before conception if possible. Having a healthy reproductive system for both you and your partner will mean more ease when trying to conceive and you will be building up the reserves of vitamins and getting in the habit of taking them for pregnancy. When supplementing you want to always look for high-quality supplements with few fillers.

- **Prenatal Vitamin** - Choose an organic supplement, ideally one that offers the methylated form of folate (vitamin B9), also known as L-Methylfolate, or 5-MTHF (its most assimilable form). Folate is imperative in pregnancy because of its role in cell division and synthesis of DNA. There have been numerous studies on the benefits of folate and reducing the chances of Spina Bifida. Since you don't know you are pregnant until you are already a few weeks along, it is best to take this when trying to conceive. Studies have shown that women who take prenatal vitamins with folate reduce their risk of early miscarriage.
- **DHA/EPA** - Look for krill oil or fish oil from a reputable source that tests to assure the supplement is free of any heavy metals. Krill oil has the benefit of astaxanthin, a powerful antioxidant. DHA is an omega-3 fatty acid, that is especially important in brain development. In regards to fertility, DHA and omega-3s are important for balancing hormones in women and in the production of healthy sperm for men.
- **Probiotics** - A high-quality probiotic (over 30 billion cultures) will help keep you regular, support your immune system, and create a balanced bacterial environment in your GI tract and vagina. Just like the GI tract, the vagina is a delicate ecosystem of bacteria that can be easily thrown off by sugar, pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, stress, spermicides, and birth control pills. Probiotics will help to protect your vagina and womb from infection and also make it more of a conducive environment for fertilization and implantation.
- **Vitamin D3** - On average, people need 1,000 IUs per 25 lbs of body weight. Ideally, get your blood tested for vitamin D levels before conception so you can get your levels up if needed. The best test to run is 25-hydroxyvitamin D, or 25(OH)D blood test, for its accuracy. Vitamin D is a pro-hormone, affecting hormone balance in men and women. For women, it balances estrogen and for men, testosterone, increasing the libido for both sexes. Studies have also shown vitamin D's role in sperm quality and motility. When choosing a supplement, find one with the "cholecalciferol" form of vitamin D for highest assimilation. Make sure your multivitamin or vitamin D supplement includes vitamin K. The two work synergistically—with vitamin D moving calcium from the gut to the blood and vitamin K ensuring the calcium makes its way to bones and keeps it out of soft tissue.

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Your needs change transitioning from preconception to pregnancy. You will want to keep the same supplement protocol and be more mindful of your nutrition, including as many “super pregnancy foods” as possible and avoiding contraindicated foods and herbs. I list both of these groups below.

NUTRITIONAL NEEDS FOR PREGNANCY

The best diet for pregnancy is the same I advise for preconception: nutrient-dense foods, high in healthy fats, with moderate quality protein, and moderate low-glycemic carbohydrates. For the most part, if you work out your food program before conceiving you can enjoy the same foods throughout pregnancy and postpartum.

Choosing clean, organic, whole-foods will lower you and your baby’s exposure to toxic chemicals like pesticides, herbicides, and preservatives. Buy organic, and local when at all possible, and when not, refer to the [Clean 15](#) and [Dirty Dozen](#) lists for which foods are safe to buy non-organic, and which are not.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR PREGNANCY

When supplementing you want to always look for high-quality supplements with few fillers.

- **Prenatal Vitamin** - Choose an organic supplement, ideally one that offers the methylated form of folate (vitamin B9), also known as L-Methylfolate, or 5-MTHF (its most assimilable form). Folate is imperative in pregnancy because of its role in cell division and synthesis of DNA. There have been numerous studies on the benefits of folate and reducing the chances of Spina Bifida.
- **DHA/EPA** - Look for krill oil or fish oil from a reputable source that tests to assure the supplement is free of any heavy metals. Krill oil has the benefit of astaxanthin, a powerful antioxidant. DHA is an Omega-3 fatty acid, that is especially important in brain development. Take a minimum of 500 mg DHA and a minimum of 1,000 mg EPA during the last weeks of pregnancy to help against postpartum depression.
- **Vitamin D3** - On average, people need 1,000 IU per 25 lbs of body weight. Ideally you will want to test your levels of vitamin D to assess how much you need to supplement with. The test to run is the 25-hydroxyvitamin D, or 25(OH)D blood test, which is most accurate at showing how much vitamin D is in your system. Vitamin D is a pro-hormone, affecting hormone balance and immune regulation. It is also critical for bringing calcium and phosphorus into the bones. So, it's an important one for your growing baby. When choosing a supplement, find one with the “cholecalciferol” form of vitamin D for highest assimilation. Make sure your multivitamin or vitamin D supplement includes vitamin K. The two work synergistically—with vitamin D moving calcium from the gut to the blood and vitamin K ensuring the calcium makes its way to bones and keeps it out of soft tissue.

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- **Probiotics** - Probiotics can be helpful in increasing the number of “good bacteria” in your gut, to keep the number of “bad bacteria” down. During pregnancy, having a healthy gut flora will increase your immunity. It is also helpful for some women that experience bowel discomforts during pregnancy. Both constipation and diarrhea can be helped by taking a safe prenatal probiotic with varied strains of *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*.

SUPERFOODS FOR PREGNANCY

Aim to eat at least 2-3 servings of these per day:

- Avocados
- Leafy greens (mixed greens, lettuce, kale, spinach, collard greens, chard)
- Low-glycemic/high-antioxidant berries (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries)
- Bone broth
- Collagen protein
- Coconut
- Nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds, macadamia nuts, etc. but no peanuts)
- Seeds (hemp, chia, flax, pumpkin, sesame)
- Organic grass-fed ghee
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Fatty fish (sardines, black cod, herring, wild salmon)
- Grass-fed meat (beef, lamb, venison)
- Organic/free-range (eggs, chicken, duck, turkey)
- Healthy carbohydrates (sweet potatoes, pumpkin, squash, beets, rutabaga, parsnips, turnips)

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FOODS AND DRINKS TO AVOID DURING PREGNANCY

In conjunction with the fertility list of foods to avoid, also exclude the following:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Processed foods
- High-glycemic foods and drinks
- Foods containing hydrogenated oils or refined vegetable oils
- High-mercury fish (tuna, king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, shark, swordfish, tilefish). Refer to this [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) wallet card for which fish to eat and how often.
- Raw meat
- Deli meat/processed meat
- Sushi
- Smoked seafood
- Raw shellfish
- Raw eggs
- Soft cheese
- Raw milk
- Pate
- Unwashed produce
- Raw sprouts
- Green papaya

EXERCISE FOR PREGNANCY

Keeping your body moving during pregnancy has countless benefits for both you and your baby. Exercise during pregnancy is linked to increased energy, better mood, lessened body aches and back pain, more restful sleep, and easier delivery. If you have not exercised in the past, I recommend starting with 20-30 minute walks. Try finding fun ways to move your body, whether it's hiking, dancing, swimming, or the elliptical or treadmill. Aim for moving for 30 minutes, seven days a week. Keep in mind too, that you want your heart rate during exercise to be somewhere between 50 and 70 percent of your max heart rate. Always OK a workout with your doctor first, since each person, and each pregnancy, is different.

STRESS REDUCTION AND SELF-CARE FOR PREGNANCY

Pregnancy can be a very stressful time. Whether it is your first, or fourth, there are many things to plan for during the months leading up to your baby's birth. What makes the day-to-day harder, is that *everything* can often feel more difficult if you are feeling sick or tired all the time. There have been numerous studies showing that higher cortisol can affect brain development in the fetus, as well as making pregnancy less enjoyable for

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mom. I recommend making sure to take time each day for self-care and relaxation. Draw yourself a bath in the evening, wind down with a book, go for a walk, and make sure to schedule in massages at least once a month if you enjoy them. This is a great time, if you have a partner, to have them pitch in more around the house with dishes, laundry, pet care, and doing more with the kids (especially in the evening or early morning so you can get more rest).

HERBS CONTRAINDICATED DURING PREGNANCY

Herbs can have powerful medicinal properties. It is best to err on the side of caution and avoid these herbs or speak with your doctor if there are any that you are uncertain about. The ones listed such as rosemary, parsley, oregano, and lemongrass are usually safe in the amounts used for cooking but should be avoided in excess or in concentrated forms such as essential oils.

- Saw Palmetto
- St. John's Wart
- Tansy
- Rue
- Bitter Orange
- Kola Nut
- Senna
- Bloodroot
- Bugleweed
- Caraway
- Clary Sage
- Feverfew
- Ginseng
- Gotu Kola
- Juniper Berry
- Licorice
- Lovage
- Motherwort
- Myrrh
- Oregano essential oil
(fine to use in cooking)
- Parsley
- Nutmeg
- Pokeroott
- Rosemary essential oil
(Angelica)
- Shepard's Purse
- Mugwort
- Yarrow
- Wormwood
- Comfrey
- Oregon Grape
- Kava Kava
- Coltsfoot
- Barberry
- Borage
- Cascara Sagrada
- Buckthorn
- Castor Oil
- Aloe
- Rhubarb
- Goldenseal
- Dong Quai
- Ephedra
- Yohimbe
- Pau D'Arco
- Passion Flower
- Black Cohosh
- Blue Cohosh
- Roman Chamomile
- Pennyroyal
- Lemongrass

THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION: MORNING SICKNESS HACKS

Morning sickness, the great misnomer, making the first trimester (and sometimes longer) the least favorite part of pregnancy.

While there are several ideas about the causes of morning sickness, some of the leading theories include low blood sugar levels, hormone fluctuations, and micronutrient deficiencies, namely vitamin B6 and zinc. Often the best course of action for morning sickness is proper management.

HERE ARE MY TOP MORNING SICKNESS TIPS:

1. Stay hydrated.
2. Eat a high-fat, moderate carb, moderate protein diet to balance blood sugar.
3. Eat snacks/smaller meals (around 150 calories) every 2-3 hours to keep blood sugar levels managed.
4. Keep healthy protein- and fat-based snacks on hand, in your purse or car for that moment when you start to feel queasy.
5. Eat within 30 minutes of waking up.
6. Manage stress levels. Cortisol can negatively impact blood sugar.
7. Suck on lemon wedges, or scratch and sniff lemon peels.
8. Drink fresh ginger tea.
9. Try bland foods.
10. Make ice cubes out of “Pregnancy Tea” or ginger tea.
11. Get some fresh air.
12. Get some exercise, even if it’s just a short walk. The endorphins produced counteract tiredness and nausea.
13. Try acupuncture and acupressure points for nausea.
14. Take extra vitamin B6. Try 25 mg of vitamin B6, three times a day.

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POSTPARTUM NUTRITION

During your postpartum recovery, you will want to focus on assisting your body's healing. It has just accomplished the most amazing feat a human can do! I still recommend a high-fat, moderate protein, moderate carb diet just as with preconception and pregnancy. If you are breastfeeding, you will want to consume on average an extra 500 calories a day and make sure that you are consuming the best foods and supplements for your baby.

To assist your body in recovery, eat plenty of healthy protein which acts as building blocks for all of your cells. Some great sources of protein include grass-fed beef, venison and lamb, wild-caught fish low in mercury, and plant based proteins like lentils. Collagen protein/peptides can also help with muscle/tissue resilience.

LACTATION SUPPORT

A general rule is, “the more you have the baby on the breast, the demand will increase the supply.” There are some nutritional and lifestyle strategies, that can help you as well:

- **Herbal supplementation:** moringa, fenugreek, anise, blessed thistle, alfalfa, hops, and goat's rue are well-known galactagogues. Make sure you buy high-quality and organic herbs. There are a few different “Mother’s Milk” teas on the market which also work well to assist in milk production.
- **Drinking enough water can also really affect milk supply.** Make sure you drink at least an extra 32 oz of water a day, **plus** the minimum of 64 oz you should drink during pregnancy and before conceiving.
- **Rest**—even if you can just lay down for 5 or 10 minutes, this might be enough to give your body what it needs to replenish your supply.
- **Breast massage.** This can stimulate production. Find your milk glands by gently massaging from your breast wall, down to the areolas. This will open the ducts and allow for more milk flow.
- **Lastly, don't give up.** If you want to breastfeed and are experiencing problems, reach out to the [La Leche League](#), your doctor, or a local birthing clinic for help.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR POSTPARTUM

During postpartum, you will still need supplemental support to assist your body in healing and, if you are breastfeeding, provide your baby with what they need in their first months of life. I recommend the following supplements for a healthy transition into postpartum for you and your baby:

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- **Prenatal or Postnatal Vitamin** - Either stick with the prenatal that you were using throughout pregnancy or, switch to an organic postnatal vitamin. The benefits of a quality post-natal vitamin are that many of them have added herbs to help with breastfeeding and adjusted quantities of vitamins and minerals for this recovery period.
- **Vitamin D3** - Take in the form of cholecalciferol. If you are breastfeeding, you will want to likely increase your vitamin D intake to about 5,500–6,500 IU daily. The ideal dosage is best assessed through a blood test for 25-hydroxyvitamin D, or 25(OHD). By taking up to 6,500 IU daily, you will provide your baby with enough vitamin D through your breastmilk so he/she will not need additional supplementation. If you are not breastfeeding, you will want to speak with your pediatrician about supplementing with vitamin D drops, around 1,000 IU per day. Make sure your multivitamin or vitamin D supplement includes vitamin K. The two work synergistically, with vitamin D moving calcium from the gut to the blood and vitamin K ensuring the calcium makes its way to the bones and keeps it out of soft tissue.
- **EPA/DHA** - Look for krill oil or fish oil from a reputable source that tests to assure the supplement is free of any heavy metals. Krill oil has the benefit of astaxanthin, a powerful antioxidant. DHA is an omega-3 fatty acid, that is especially important in brain development. For postpartum, you will want to take at least 500–1,000 mg DHA and 500–750 mg EPA. This level will also reduce your risk of postpartum depression or baby blues, which affects up to 80% of women.
- **Probiotics** - During the postpartum phase, probiotics are helpful for both you and your baby. Breastfeeding is a wonderful way to help inoculate your baby's gut with healthy bacteria he/she will use to fight infection, increase digestion, and assist in a host of other health-promoting properties. If you've had to take an antibiotic at any time during pregnancy or postpartum, probiotics will also help combat any negative effects by increasing healthy bacteria in your body. Look for supplements with varied strains of both *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*.

STRESS REDUCTION AND SELF-CARE FOR POSTPARTUM

You might feel like the finish line of pregnancy is the healthy birth of your baby. The reality is, this is just the beginning in many ways. Postpartum is a critical and sweet time for bonding between parents and their newborn, and can also be one of the hardest. Your body is changing rapidly, and if you are breastfeeding, you have now turned most of your resources into a milk production facility. You will need to make sure that during this time you take care to give yourself space to acclimate to all the changes you are experiencing on a mental, emotional and physical level. Take time to yourself each day for self-care and relaxation—a bubble bath, a back or foot massage from your partner, a walk, yoga, meditation, anything that you can do to bring you back to center.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS IN FOODS FOR FERTILITY, PREGNANCY, AND POSTPARTUM

The following is a list of vitamins and minerals and the foods you can find them in to support your health pre-pregnancy, during gestation, and postpartum. Supplements are key to ensuring you are getting the minimum of what you need, but your nutrition everyday plays a much bigger role in your health and the health of your baby. Aim to include at least 4 to 6 servings of the following foods per day. If you are particularly low in a vitamin or mineral, include more foods from that category.

VITAMIN A

Vitamin A is found in two forms, retinol (from animal products) and carotenoids (found in plants). This vitamin is essential for your baby's organ development as well as immunity and skin cell production. Too much vitamin A can have negative effects, so it's best to get the proper amount from your prenatal (5,000 mcg or less) and then get the rest from your diet. Foods containing a considerable amount of vitamin A include:

- Sweet potatoes • Winter squash
- Carrots • Eggs
- Mangos • Broccoli
- Apricots • Spinach
- Red peppers • Kale

VITAMIN B9

Also known as folic acid, or folate. This is one of the most important vitamins for brain and spinal cord development and one of the best ways to prevent Spina Bifida. B9 is also vital in DNA synthesis and cell division, the foundations of building a baby.

Foods with vitamin A include:

- Spinach • Black beans
- Collard greens • Garbanzo beans
- Avocado • Asparagus
- Pinto beans • Lentils

VITAMIN B6

Vitamin B6 is involved in metabolizing carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. It also plays a large role in developing your baby's brain and nervous system. B6 is also the famed vitamin that can help with morning sickness. Try adding these foods to help with morning sickness if you have it, or ask your doctor about B6 supplements. Foods that are rich in this vitamin include:

- Avocados
- Bananas
- Spinach
- Potatoes
- Chicken
- Wild-caught fish

VITAMIN B12

Vitamin B12, or cobalamin, supports a healthy nervous system for your developing baby. B12 also helps protect against Spina Bifida and other birth defects, and assists in preventing maternal anemia. Some rich B12 foods include:

- Wild-caught salmon
- Sardines
- Cod
- Free-range organic turkey
- Grass-fed meat (beef, venison, lamb)
- Free-range eggs

VITAMINS AND MINERALS IN FOODS FOR FERTILITY, PREGNANCY, AND POSTPARTUM

VITAMIN C

A powerful antioxidant that protects your cells from damage, it is essential for collagen production, and strongly influences your immunity. Some great sources of vitamin C include:

- Strawberries
- Papaya
- Grapefruit
- Kiwi
- Spinach
- Bell pepper
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts

CALCIUM

Calcium is required for building your baby's skeletal system and teeth. It also assists in sending messages from your brain to the rest of your body and helps with blood clotting. If you are not supplying enough calcium through your diet or supplementation, the baby will take what it needs from your bone stores, leading to maternal depletion. Great sources of calcium include:

- Broccoli
- Bok choy
- Collard greens
- Kale
- Okra
- Almonds
- Oranges
- Sardines (with bones)
- Canned Salmon (with bones)

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is necessary for calcium and phosphorus absorption, leading to strong bones and teeth. It also affects many genes throughout the body, is essential for the immune system, and can even lower your risk of preeclampsia and gestational diabetes. Foods rich in vitamin D include:

- Wild-caught salmon
- Sardines
- Pasture-raised egg yolk

MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is necessary for the conversion of vitamin D to its active form within the blood. This mineral also regulates blood pressure and blood sugar in the body and is important for calcium absorption, muscle relaxation, mental calmness, and normal bowel function. Magnesium can be found in the following foods:

- Dark leafy greens
- Pumpkin seeds
- Almonds
- Dark chocolate
- Bananas
- Avocados
- Black beans

VITAMINS AND MINERALS IN FOODS FOR FERTILITY, PREGNANCY, AND POSTPARTUM

CHOLINE

Choline is not a vitamin but it is an important micronutrient that's essential during pregnancy. Choline is linked to healthy brain and spinal cord development, helping to protect against neural tube defects.

Find choline in the following foods:

- Grass-fed beef
- Wild-caught salmon
- Pasture-raised egg yolk
- Organic, free-range chicken or turkey
- Almonds
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Lentils
- Cauliflower
- Cabbage
- Bok choy
- Broccoli

IRON

Iron is essential in making hemoglobin, which is responsible for carrying oxygen to your cells. This is especially important in pregnancy when your blood volume increases around 50%. Iron deficiencies can cause preterm birth, low birth weight, and infant/maternal mortality at worst. Have your iron levels checked to make sure you are sufficient, as much as 50% of women are deficient in this mineral during pregnancy. Ideally, you can get your iron from foods. Taking iron supplements has been known to cause nausea and constipation. If you are not severely deficient, you can raise your levels being mindful to include iron at each meal. Include the following iron-rich foods in your diet daily:

- Grass-fed meat (beef, venison, lamb)
- Organic free-range (chicken, turkey, duck)
- Lentils
- Spinach
- Squash
- Pumpkin seeds
- Black sesame seeds
- Blackstrap molasses
- Dark chocolate

THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION: RECIPES

These delicious recipes are chock-full of healthy fats, quality protein, and nutritious carbohydrates. The best choices you can make for your body and your growing baby is to consume foods with essential vitamins and minerals for healthy development.

BREAKFAST

- [Ultra Shake](#)
- [Green Smoothie](#)
- [Broccoli Sausage Frittata](#)
- [Blueberry Walnut Pancakes](#)
- [Super Simple Chia Seed Pudding](#)

LUNCH

- [Taco Salad](#)
- [Roasted Salmon with Red Pepper Sauté](#)
- [Irish Stew](#)

DINNER

- [Dr. Hyman's Super Salad Bar](#)
- [Red Lentil Stew](#)
- [Spiced Beef Taco Wraps with Guacamole](#)

THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION: RECIPES

SNACKS

- [Paleo crackers](#) (almond flour, coconut flour, cassava base)
- [Bone Broth](#)
- Canned wild salmon or sardines
- Jerky (bison, grass-fed beef or turkey—try Krave or Grass-Fed Jerky Chews)
- Salmon jerky (Vital Choice)
- Nuts and seeds (almonds, walnuts, pecans, macadamia nuts, and pumpkin seeds)
- Nut butter (almond, pecan, macadamia—squeeze packs are great for on the go)
- Coconut butter packets (Artisana brand is great)
- Hard-boiled omega-3 eggs
- Cut-up carrots, cucumbers, peppers and celery in Ziploc baggies (pair with guacamole or salsa)
- ½ cup mixed berries in a small Ziploc bag
- Avocado with a sprinkle of tamari or coconut aminos (gluten-free soy sauce)

DRINKS

- [Non-Coffee Vanilla Latte](#)
- Lemon water

THE PREGNANCY SOLUTION

CONCLUSION

This e-book was designed with you in mind, knowing that you want the best for your baby. These recipes, supplements, and lifestyle suggestions are meant to support you during this beautiful time of pregnancy and postpartum, as well as give you tools you can carry on into the future. The more in-tune you are with your body, the more ready you will be to adapt to its changing needs.

I wish you the best on your pregnancy journey and beyond. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this incredible experience!