

# Nutrition and Exercise in Pregnancy

## Vitamin Supplements

We recommend that you take a daily prenatal vitamin, containing iron, at least 400mcg folic acid and 200mg DHA/fish. You can buy an over-the-counter brand, or we can prescribe you a prenatal vitamin. If you have Vitamin D deficiency, your provider may recommend a Vitamin D supplement. If you are too nauseated to take a regular prenatal vitamin in early pregnancy, you can take two chewable children's vitamins, such as Flintstone's with iron.

## Water

More water is often the solution to many problems and complaints in pregnancy. Pregnant women need to drink at least 10 cups (2.3 liters) of fluids daily. The best fluid to drink is water. Avoid sodas and juices. You have more blood volume in your body when you are pregnant. You need to drink enough water to keep up with this increased volume. If you do not, you will get dehydrated quickly and may experience cramping, dizziness, constipation, headaches, low amniotic fluid and many more symptoms. Water also helps flush out waste products from cells, so it aids in liver and kidney function for you and your baby. If you have trouble drinking water, try adding lemon to flavor the water or drink water in small sips throughout the day.

## Iron Supplements

Usually, your prenatal vitamin with iron is all you need to take in pregnancy. If you develop anemia, or low iron, your provider may recommend an additional iron supplement to be taken at a different time than your prenatal vitamin. It's suggested to take with orange juice or another source of Vitamin C (which helps your body absorb the iron). Some women report dark stools, constipation or stomach upset with iron supplements. Be sure to drink plenty of water, eat a diet high in fiber and walk daily to help your bowels move normally.

## Exercise and Activity

If you are already involved in a regular exercise routine, you may continue if you feel comfortable, there is no risk of falling or trauma to the abdomen, and your provider has not placed you on any specific activity restrictions. We recommend exercising for 30 minutes at least 3-4 times per week. Do not allow heart rate to exceed 140 beats per minute. Exercises may include:

- Brisk walk [fast enough to increase your heart rate]
- Elliptical or stationary bike
- Prenatal yoga [avoid hot yoga]
- Light weights

