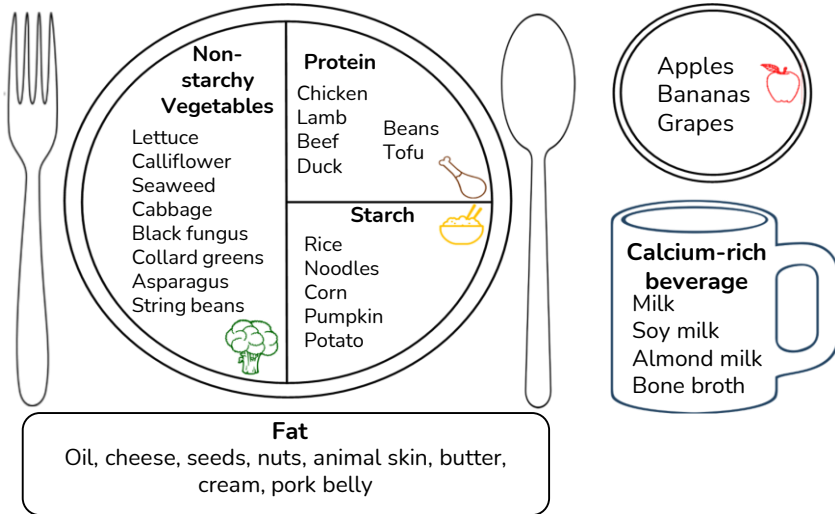


A Balanced Diet for Pregnant Women



Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables provide fiber which helps digestion and prevents constipation. They also provide essential vitamins and minerals for our bodies to develop and function normally. Fill half of your plate with different colored non-starchy vegetables, such as dark green vegetables, legumes and beans, cherries, tomatoes, celery, and carrots.



Protein

Protein includes meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, legumes, and nuts. Fill a quarter of your plate with lean protein. Remove skin from poultry and make sure eggs and meats are fully cooked. During pregnancy, you should get a minimum of 60 grams of protein daily, which will account for approximately 20-25% of your calorie intake.



Starch

Carbohydrates provide energy to our bodies. They are an important source of vitamins and fiber. Fill a quarter of your plate with starch such as rice, noodles, pastas, breads, taro, sweet potatoes, or pumpkins. To add more fiber to your diet, you can consume whole grains, such as brown rice, barley, or whole wheat pastas.



Foods and drinks that are high in fats and/or sugars

This food group includes fats, oils, salad dressings, creams, chocolates, chips, pastries, ice cream, cakes, puddings, and sweetened beverages. You should eat small amounts of these foods because they are high in calories without providing any nutrients for the body. Eating foods high in sugar can increase the risk of developing gestational diabetes, and eating foods high in fat can increase the risk of developing heart diseases.



Dairy Foods

Dairy foods such as milk, cheese, and yogurt are important because they contain calcium and other nutrients that our bodies need. Pregnant women are advised to consume two cups of milk or calcium-fortified soy milk daily. Choose low-fat options whenever you can. You should avoid high-risk food that contain *Listeria monocytogenes*, including soft cheeses, such as Feta, Brie, Camembert, or Blue Cheese.



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