

## Nutrition for Fertility and Pregnancy

Achieving good nutritional status can have many benefits with regard to our reproductive systems. If you are looking to increase your chances of conceiving, following a healthy diet is a great first step. A diet that promotes fertility for women includes:

- whole or high-fat dairy
- whole milk, yogurt made from whole milk, and full fat cheese
- salmon twice each week
- more plant based proteins compared to animal meats
- nuts, seeds, beans, and legumes
- more plant based sources of iron
- fortified breakfast cereals; pair plant foods with citrus (specifically Vitamin C) to increase absorption
- more monounsaturated fats (limit trans-fat as much as possible)
- use olive oil when possible and enjoy mashed avocados in place of vegetable-oil based dressings
- whole grains
- whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, farro, quinoa, brown rice, etc
- pre-natal multivitamins/mineral with DHA
- maintaining a healthy weight
- limit empty calories from soda and sweets. Look for foods such as granola bars with less than 10 grams of added sugar per serving.
- regular physical activity/exercise
- aim to exercise five days a week for 30 minutes rotating cardio with strength training (lifting weights) and stretching

Please note: too much physical activity can decrease fertility. Aim for the recommended amount; more is not always better.

- strictly avoid alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs

Once pregnant, you will want to continue with the recommendations above. Consult a registered dietitian or qualified health professional for further questions or concerns.

It is important to note that the male's diet can also influence their fertility. For men, following the MyPlate recommendations is best:

- fill half of all plates at meals and snacks with fruits and veggies
- choose whole grains majority of the time
- consume 3 servings of dairy each day
- consume fish twice each week
- limit high fat meats as well as consume more plant based proteins
- limit saturated and trans-fats especially from sweet treats

In addition to following MyPlate, here are a few other areas where men need to pay attention to in order to be the most fertile:

- maintain a healthy weight
- regular physical activity/exercise
- Aim to exercise five days a week for 30 minutes rotating cardio with strength training (lifting weights) and stretching. Please note: too much exercise has been shown to decrease testosterone, which can indi

- rectly lower sperm counts. Also, avoid steroid use; it can affect fertility by causing testicular shrinkage.
- limit alcohol consumption
  - no more than two drinks a day (one drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1½ ounces of spirits)
  - avoid tobacco and illegal drugs
  - tobacco use is linked with low sperm counts and slow moving sperm; smoking marijuana over a prolonged period of time can result in low sperm counts and poorly developed sperm

This medical and/or nutritional information is not intended to be a substitute for individual advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.