

FOOD GUIDE FOR PREGNANT PASIFIKA





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As soon as I found out I was pregnant, I ate more traditional Pacific foods from nature and I felt a connection back to my ancestors. I knew it would nourish my baby, to sustain them throughout their lifetime, and continue to benefit healthy future generations.





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WHAT TO EAT WHILE PREGNANT

During pregnancy, it is important to nourish your body with health and protective foods, building foods and energy foods.

Health and protective foods include fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit. They have fibre, minerals and vitamins which:

- Help your baby grow
- Support immunity
- Prevent constipation
- Support wellbeing



Building foods are meat, fish, and dairy foods. They have:

- **Protein** to grow baby, keep your body strong during pregnancy and for recovery from birth
- **Iron** to pump extra blood to help baby grow
- **Calcium** for strong bones and teeth



Energy foods give your body carbohydrates so you have energy to do everything that you need and love to do. Energy foods include bread, rice and Pacific starchy vegetables like kumara, green banana and taro. Wholemeal and wholegrain varieties can prevent constipation.



TIP

Eating lots of vegetables while pregnant will help your baby learn to like the taste of vegetables.

EAT FOR YOU, NOT FOR TWO

It is natural to feel hungrier when you are pregnant. But you don't need to eat for two.



In the 2nd and 3rd trimesters you may need some extra food to provide nourishment for the growth of your baby. For example, soup and wholegrain bread or tuna and crackers.



Some women will have food cravings while pregnant but we are still not sure why.

The best way to manage cravings is to listen to your body and eat a variety of food (as long as it is a safe food for pregnancy - see page 10).



Eating regularly throughout the day will help you feel energised and manage pregnancy symptoms like heartburn and morning sickness.

TIP

Unless you have a food allergy yourself, you can still eat common allergy foods while pregnant. These are milk, cooked eggs, heated fish and seafood, peanuts, nuts, sesame, soy, and wheat.

EAT IRON-RICH FOODS

When you are pregnant, you need to eat foods that are **rich in iron**. This is because your body needs iron to pump extra blood to help baby grow their muscles, bones and skin. The iron you give your baby during pregnancy will also need to last them until they start solid foods at around 6 months old.

Iron-rich foods include:



Beans

(Such as kidney beans, baked beans, chickpeas, & lentils)



Eggs



Chicken



Shellfish

(heated until piping hot)



Dark leafy greens



Lean beef

(remove fat)

TIP

Eating plenty of vegetables and fruits provides vitamin C which helps your body absorb iron.

Your doctor may also prescribe an iron supplement if your iron is too low.

WHAT TO DRINK WHILE PREGNANT

Plain water and low fat milk are the best choices of drink because in most cases they are exactly what you and your baby need.

Aim to drink nine cups of water each day.

Some drinks are not safe for baby, including alcohol, high amounts of caffeine, and some herbal teas.

They can cause miscarriage, premature birth, and other serious conditions.



Do not drink alcohol



Limit caffeine

For example, drink no more than two cups of coffee, or four cups of black tea each day.

Do not drink energy drinks



Do not drink herbal teas like chamomile and aloe

Check any tea for a warning label saying “not recommended for pregnant women” or ask your midwife which herbal teas are safe.

Ginger, citrus, and peppermint herbal teas are safe to drink when pregnant.

Ask your midwife if you are unsure about which drinks are safe.



YOUR CHANGING BODY

Your body is growing a baby, so it will naturally change and increase in weight. Many women find that their bodies don't look the same as they were before they were pregnant. **This is normal.**

Remember our Pasifika values - a beautiful body has enough energy and strength to do the things you love. Eating nourishing food and moving your body in ways you enjoy will help keep your body healthy during and after your pregnancy.



MEAL IDEAS

Dinner Ideas



Cooked fish with palusami, sweetcorn and green banana



Pork mince chow mein with egg noodles and vegetables



Chicken, corn and vegetable soup with cassava



Egg fried rice with mixed vegetables



Chicken drumsticks, oven chips and salad



Beef chop suey with colourful vegetables

Snack Ideas



Cheese and tomato on toast



Tuna lettuce sandwich with yoghurt



Sua Fa'i / Banana and sago pudding



Cheese on grainy crackers



Peanut butter and celery sticks



Small handful of nuts

FOOD SAFETY

When you are pregnant there are certain foods that you should avoid as they may make you and your baby sick.

Use the below information to guide your food choices. If others in your home help with the cooking and shopping, ask them to familiarise themselves with this information too.

Do not eat

The below foods sometimes have harmful bacteria.



Any raw fish or shellfish (including marinated fish or shellfish)



Store-bought sushi, salads or coleslaw



Foods containing tahini, like hummus



Soft serve ice cream



Unpasteurised (raw) milk



Unpasteurised (raw) juices



Raw eggs

Heat to eat

Heat these foods until they are piping hot (over 70°C) to destroy any harmful bacteria. Make sure to eat them while they are still hot.



Heat ham, salami, luncheon, pâté, pastrami, biltong, or jerky (dried meat)



Cook beef, pork, chicken, mince, sausages until juices run clear



Heat all pre-cooked fish, mussels, oysters, scallops, salmon, crayfish, prawns



Heat pre-cooked poultry like chicken, turkey



Cook eggs until their yolk is firm



Heat soft cheeses, like brie, blue cheese, ricotta, feta, halloumi, mozzarella



Heat frozen berries



Heat home-made custard



Cook sprouts and enoki mushrooms

Homemade is safest

Make these foods at home and eat straight away.



Salads



Sandwiches



Sushi (no raw fish)

**Remember
“clean, cook and
chill” so you don’t
get ill.**

Fresh is best

Eat these foods fresh or within 2 days.



Canned foods - remove leftovers from tin and store in fridge



Foods with cream, custard or cream cheese

Safe to eat

You can eat these foods during pregnancy.



All fresh fruit and vegetables washed with water and dried well before eating



Hard cheeses (store in fridge and eat before 'best before' date)



Breads and pasta



Butter (store in fridge)



Packaged ice cream

Clean



Wash hands, fruit and vegetables and kitchen equipment before preparing foods. Don't wash meat.

Cook



Cook meat and eggs until cooked through. Reheat leftovers until piping hot. Don't reheat leftovers more than once.

Chill



Keep food cold in the fridge and eat leftovers within two days.

TAKE FOLIC ACID AND IODINE

Your baby needs folic acid and iodine for a strong brain and spine. Food alone does not provide enough, so your doctor or midwife will prescribe you folic acid and iodine tablets.

Baby's brain and spine develop first. If you are trying to become pregnant, start taking a folic acid tablet at least 4 weeks before you become pregnant and continue taking it for the first 12 weeks (first trimester of pregnancy).

If you find out that you are pregnant and you are still in the first trimester, start taking a folic acid tablet straight away and continue until the end of the first trimester.

Take an iodine tablet daily from the start of pregnancy until you stop breastfeeding.





SOAK UP VITAMIN D FROM THE SUN

Vitamin D helps our body to build and maintain strong bones and muscles. Our body mainly gets vitamin D from the sun so make sure to spend time outside each day. For example, a walk in the late afternoon in summer or the middle of the day in winter.

Ask your doctor and midwife whether you need a vitamin D tablet.



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Drinking fresh ginger tea really helped soothe my nausea and coconut water helped to keep me hydrated.



MORNING SICKNESS

At the start of your pregnancy, your hormone levels increase and this can cause nausea and vomiting.

To help you feel better, try:

Eating regularly, choosing smaller meals or snacks.

This is because an empty stomach often makes morning sickness feel worse.



Boiling fresh ginger with water and sipping throughout the day.



Eating a dry cracker or a plain biscuit before getting up in the morning.



Keep drinking water or try sucking on ice.



Eating kūmara, potato, crackers, and bread. Spicy or fatty foods can make nausea worse.

If you are finding it hard to eat and drink, talk to your doctor or midwife.

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is common in pregnancy because hormones slow down your digestion so that your baby gets more goodness.

To help you feel better, try:



Eating high-fibre vegetables and fruits like kiwifruit, mango, and prunes. These are natural laxatives.



Eating wholegrain breads, cereals, and beans.



Going for a daily walk to help digestion.



Drinking plenty of water.

Talk to your doctor about a natural laxative like psyllium husk.

INDIGESTION OR HEARTBURN

Indigestion is a very full, bloated feeling you feel soon after eating.

Heartburn describes a burning feeling rising from your stomach into your chest. These feelings are common in the later months of pregnancy as your growing baby presses on your stomach.

To help you feel better, try:

- Eating smaller meals every 2-3 hours.
- Eating less fatty or spicy foods. These foods can make symptoms worse.
- Avoiding drinking with meals.
- Avoiding lying down straight after a meal.
- Going for a daily walk to help digestion.





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Mum always told me if I don't do any fitness, at least walk. This will help me when it's time to push and when my joints feel sore.



MOVEMENT

Regular movement will help you prepare for labour and can help to support your mood and energy levels too. Listen to your body and move in ways you enjoy!



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Deep breathing exercises help me relax



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Walking with my family strengthened my family bond



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Chores kept me in a routine and helped me with my wellbeing

It is not advisable to engage in contact sports (for example, rugby, cricket) while pregnant due to increased risk of injury to baby. Talk to your midwife and doctor about ways to keep baby safe while being active.

If you did not do much exercise before you were pregnant, start slowly and ease yourself into a routine. **If something hurts or you feel unwell while doing movement, it's OK to rest.**

Listen to your body and try a different type of movement if it feels better.

Your body changes during pregnancy in ways that you might not expect! Check with your midwife or doctor if you want to do something new or you are unsure if you can keep doing an activity while pregnant. For example, your muscles become more stretchy and you might become injured if you stretch far more than you usually can.

PREPARING FOR BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk is the ideal food for your baby and breastfeeding is healthy for you too. It helps to learn as much as possible about breastfeeding before your baby is born.

- Ask older women in your family or community about their experiences and what to expect.
- Ask your midwife or doctor about Pacific breastfeeding support in your area. Lactation consultants are available to support you.



HEALTH STARTS IN THE HOME

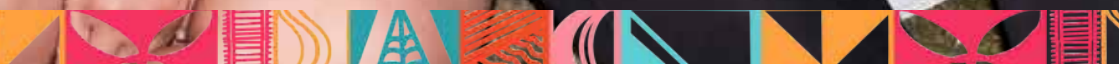
- Support from your community has a positive impact on your mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- Pregnancy can be a difficult time, so call on your community when you need to.
- You can also talk to a trained counsellor at any time by free calling or texting 1737.





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I asked my mum, aunties, and friends about their experiences with breastfeeding. It helped to learn as much as possible about breastfeeding before my baby was born.



SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU



Smart Start

Helps you access services for support during pregnancy and after your baby is born – visit: smartstart.services.govt.nz



Healthify He Puna Waiora

Has lots of free health information for pregnancy – visit: healthify.nz



Healthy Babies Healthy Futures

A free nutrition course for those living in the Auckland and Waitematā region – visit: healthybabies.org.nz



Plunketline

This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week – [0800 933 922](tel:0800933922)



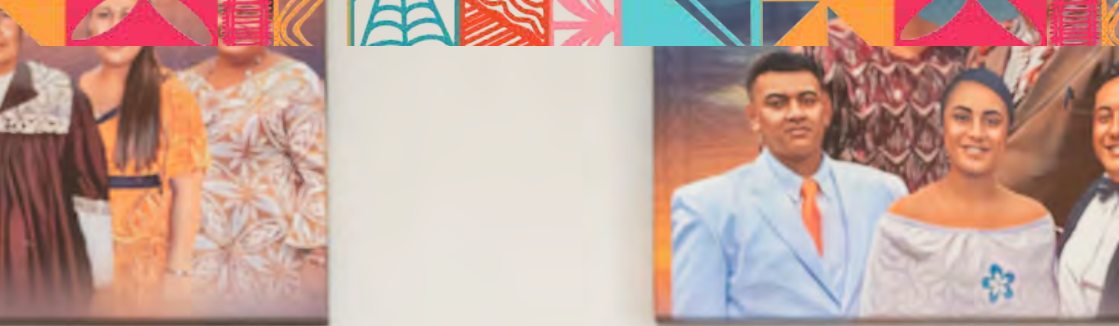
Search for “[mama aroha](#)” and “[BreastFedNZ](#)”

in the Google Play or iPhone App Store for apps with lots of useful information on breastfeeding



La Leche League

Helps you find a local breastfeeding group – visit: lalecheleague.org.nz





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Te Whatu Ora

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
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