Viva!

My Friendly Food Reminder for Healthy Veggie Baby and Me!

Fabulous Foods for Female Fertility & Pregnancy

Nutrients	Why They're Vital for Making a Healthy Baby & Pregnancy	Rich Sources
Vitamins		
Beta Carotene (forms Vitamin A)	Crucial for enzymes for implantation of your fertilised egg. Essential for growth and development of foetus including his or her heart, lungs, kidneys, bones and for hearing and vision. Also needed for infection resistance, fat metabolism and red blood cell production. Helps keep DNA (genetic blueprint) healthy. Vitamin A is crucial for women about to give birth, as it helps with postpartum tissue repair.	Mangoes, Apricots, Peaches, Cantaloupe Melons, Watermelon, Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Red/Yellow Peppers, Tomatoes, Green Leafy Vegetables (eg Broccoli, Cabbage, Spinach, Brussel Sprouts, Bok choy), Watercress, Pumpkins, Romaine Lettuce, Chestnuts, Pistachio nuts
B Vitamins	Vital for making your sex hormones. Needed for converting food into energy. For creating new blood cells for growing baby and aiding growth, healthy tissue and skin in your baby. Essential for your baby's nerve, brain, bone and muscle development. Vitamin B6 can help reduce morning sickness (beans, nuts, avocados and bananas are good sources).	Wholegrains (Wheat, Rice, Oats, Rye, Buckwheat, Barley etc); Beansprouts, Pulses (Lentils, Beans and Peas of all types inc Soya Beans and French Beans), Avocados, Bananas, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Mushrooms, Red Peppers, Carrots, Cabbage, Nuts (eg Peanuts, Almonds, Brazil Nuts), Quinoa Different B vitamins are in different foods so variety is the key
Vitamin B9 (folic acid)	Vital for prevention of Spina Bifida and other neural tube defects and needed in first 28 days of pregnancy – so you need to take from preconception. If you are pregnant or thinking of having a baby, consider taking a daily 0.4mg (400 micrograms) folic acid supplement from the time you stop using contraception until the 12th week of pregnancy. Also supports the placenta.	Berries, Mangoes, Pineapples, Avocados, Green Leafy Vegetables, Cauliflower, Asparagus, Parsnips, Pulses (eg Peas, Chickpeas, Kidney Beans, Black Eye Peas, Edamame & Soya products such as Tofu, Lentils), Brown Rice, Seeds (eg SunFlower Seeds), check if breakfast cereal is fortified
Vitamin C	Essential for formation of collagen (in pregnancy keeps protective membrane around baby strong). Collagen is also a component of skin, cartilage, tendons and bones. Also helps fight infections and cell damage. Helps you absorb iron. Mum and baby need a daily supply of this vitamin.	Blackcurrants, Kiwis, Mangoes, Oranges, Papayas, Grapefruits, Passion Fruits, Pineapples, Strawberries, Lychees, Chestnuts, Avocados, Butternut Squash, Broccoli, Spinach, Cabbage, Swiss Chard, Brussel Sprouts, Bell Peppers (any colour), Parsley, Potatoes, Peas and many other fresh fruit & green vegetables
Vitamin D	Essential for tooth enamel and bone development in your developing baby. A deficiency during pregnancy can slow growth and cause skeletal deformities, putting baby at risk of rickets after birth.	Sunlight on Skin; Fortified Margarine, Fortified Breakfast Cereals
Vitamin E	Protects vital genetic blueprint (DNA and DNA) reducing risk of congenital defects.	Apples, Berries (all types), Kiwis, Mangoes, Nectarines, Peaches, Vegetable Oils, Wheatgerm, Wholegrains, Tomatoes, Nuts (esp. Almonds, Hazelnuts), SunFlower Seeds, Pine Nuts, Avocados, Asparagus, Butternut Squash, Parsnips, Potatoes, Spinach, Carrots, Celery
Vitamin K	Supplied by food but main source is from gut bacteria. Baby is born sterile so must rely on mum's supply from breast milk or formula milk for several weeks. Eat plenty of dark green veg.	Avocados, Berries, Pears, Kiwis, Mangoes, Pomegranates, Broccoli, Lettuces, Cucumbers, Celery, Carrots, Asparagus, Spinach, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Bok Choy, Leeks, Edamame, Kidney Beans, Molasses, Peas, Basil, Thyme, Nuts (eg Cashews, Chestnuts, Hazelnuts, Pistachios)
Minerals & Trace Elements		
Calcium	For development of baby's bones, heart, muscles and nervous system, also heart rhythm and blood clotting. If you don't get enough calcium when you're pregnant, your baby will draw it from your bones, which may weaken your health later on. Also important to reduce the risk of osteoporosis in mum later on in life.	Non-oxalate dark green leafy vegetables (such as Broccoli, Kale, Spring Greens, Cabbage, Bok Choy, Parsley and Watercress), Dried Fruits (such as Figs and Dates), Nuts (particularly Almonds and Brazil Nuts), Coconuts, Seeds including Sesame Seeds and Tahini (sesame seed paste) used to make Hummus, Quinoa, Pulses (any Peas, Beans and Lentils) and calcium-set Tofu (Soya Bean Curd), Root Veg (eg Parsnips, Swedes, Turnips), Olives, Calcium-enriched Soya Milk (check the ingredients label for calcium – most soya milks contain the same amount of calcium as cows' milk)
Chromium	Essential in controlling blood sugar levels and helps make DNA (genetic building blocks in every cell). Promotes the building of proteins in your developing baby's growing tissues.	Onions, Tomatoes, Romaine Lettuce, Potatoes, Lentils, Wholegrains (Wholegrain Bread, Oats, Rye, Barley, Brown Rice), Spices (such as Black Pepper and Thyme)
Iron	One-third of pregnant women in Britain show mild anaemia. Iron is needed to make haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen to every cell in your body for energy and growth. The amount of blood in your body increases during pregnancy until you have almost 50 per cent more than usual (even more if twins!), so you need more iron to make more haemoglobin. Mum supplies oxygen to baby via her placenta. Iron also helps build bones and teeth. If mum doesn't have enough iron then baby may be in short supply.	Dried Apricots, Prunes, Raisins, Figs, Dates, Cherries, Grapes, Blackcurrants, Blackberries, Raspberries, Strawberries, Lychees, Watermelons, Avocados, Broccoli, Bok Choy, Spinach, Cabbage, Pumpkins, Pulses (all types of Beans, Peas and Lentils), French Beans, Wholegrains (esp. Oats, Rye, Wholewheat and Spelt), Pumpkin Seeds, Quinoa, Coconut Flesh, Black Treacle, Cocoa, Turmeric, Thyme
Magnesium	For energy production, healthy bones and liver, to help balance blood sugars, relax muscles, for nerve function, and for many hormones including stress hormones. Proper levels of magnesium during pregnancy can help keep the womb from contracting prematurely.	Apricots, Apples, Bananas, Prunes, Berries (eg Blackberries, Raspberries), Watermelons, Green Leafy Veg (eg Broccoli, Bok Choy, Spinach, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts), Nuts (eg Almonds, Brazil Nuts, Cashews), Pulses (esp. all types of beans), Avocados, Artichokes, French Beans, Butternut Squash, Wholegrains, Quinoa
Phosphorus	Needed for building baby's bones and teeth; normal heart rhythm and developing blood clotting. Also for healthy kidneys, nervous system, repairing cells and creating and using energy.	Avocados, Blackcurrants, Passion Fruits, Pomegranates, Dried Fruit (eg Dates), Artichokes, Potatoes, Celeriac, French Beans, Parsnips, Nuts, Pulses (all types of Peas, Beans, Lentils), Wholegrains, Garlic, Quinoa
Potassium	Important for muscle activity and contractions, heart muscle and nerve functions and making energy. In mum, protects against high blood pressure and osteoporosis as it lowers the loss of calcium from the bones.	Bananas, Cantaloupe Melons, Apricots, Strawberries, Fennel, Brussel Sprouts, Broccoli, Aubergines, Tomatoes, Parsley, Cucumbers, Turmeric, Ginger Root, Avocados, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Nuts (eg Almonds), Coconuts
Selenium	Protective against free radical damage to cells and risk of congenital defects. Helps fight heavy metal poisoning.	Brazil Nuts (very high), Bananas, Mangoes, Watermelons, Asparagus, French Beans, Parsnips, Wholegrains, Garlic, Brewer's Yeast, Sweetcorn, Spinach, Broccoli, Pulses (Peas, Beans and Lentils), Brewer's Yeast, Mushrooms
Zinc	Probably plays biggest role in reproduction. Deficiency increases miscarriage rate, low birth weight, labour and delivery problems. Needed for hormone balance, development of egg, successful fertilisation and enzymes of egg implantation. Zinc is important for enzymes to work and helps make insulin. It is needed to create and repair DNA (genetic blueprint) so getting enough zinc is important for the rapid cell growth that occurs during pregnancy. Also helps form nerves, skeleton, organs and circulatory system. Needed for a healthy immune system and sense of taste and smell.	Avocados, Blackberries, Raspberries, Asparagus, French Beans, Brussel Sprouts, Pulses (Peas, Beans and Lentils of all types inc cocoa beans in dark chocolate and cocoa powder), Wholegrains (eg Brown Rice, Wholegrain Bread, Oats, Rye), Green Leafy Veg, Nuts (eg Peanuts), Seeds (esp. Pumpkin Seeds, Sesame Seeds used to make Hummus), Brewer's Yeast, Basil, Thyme
Carbohydrates	Your (and so your baby's) main source of energy! Eats lots of complex carbs.	Wholegrains (Oats, Wholegrain Bread, Brown Rice, Pasta eg Wholegrain Spaghetti, Rye), Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Pulses (all Beans, Peas & Lentils)
Fats	Good fats are vital for your baby's brain and eye development before and after birth. They also help the placenta and other tissues grow and may help stop premature birth and low birth weight.	Seeds esp. Ground Flaxseed (aka Linseed), Hempseed and their Oils, Nuts & Nut Oils (esp. Walnuts), Virgin Olive Oil, Dark Green Leafy Vegetables, Soya Beans (eg as Tofu), Avocados. Olive oil is best for cooking. Flaxseed and hempseed oil shouldn't be heated. Ideal for salad dressing though and high in omega-3!
Fibre	During pregnancy, the body produces more female hormones than normal and this can cause constipation. Fibre is vital for healthy bowels and bowel movement.	All Fresh Fruit & Vegetables, Dried Fruits (eg Prunes, Apricots) Wholegrains (Pasta, Rice, Oats, Bread, Barley, Rye), All Nuts, All Pulses (Beans, Peas, Lentils – baked beans are high)
Protein	Protein is vital to build and repair your and your baby's cells. It's particularly important to get enough protein throughout your second and third trimesters, when your baby is growing the fastest and your breasts and organs are getting bigger to fulfil the needs of your growing baby.	Pulses (Peas, Beans, Lentils), Soya (eg Tofu, Soya Milk, Soya Mince), Wholegrains (eg Brown Rice, Wholegrain Bread and Pasta, Oats, Rye), Seeds (all types) & Seed Paste (eg Tahini used in Hummus), Beansprouts, Nuts (all types)

By Juliet Gellatley BSc, Dip CNM, NTCC, founder & director, Viva! & VVF and nutritional therapist.
The VVF is the chief vegetarian and vegan nutrition and health charity in the UK. For free info on any aspect of diet, contact us!
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For free healthy and delicious recipes using the above foods see www.vegetarianrecipeclub.org.uk

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