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Inova BabyNET **Inova BackNET**
Inova TobaccoNET **Inova WeightNET**



**Essential Building
Blocks for Healthy
Eating During
Pregnancy**



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There are four essential building blocks to healthy eating during pregnancy.





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These four building blocks are:

Calcium



Iron



Folic Acid




Water





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Calcium

- The most important benefit of calcium is that it builds strong bones & teeth and helps to prevent osteoporosis.
- During pregnancy & while breastfeeding your baby needs to absorb calcium from you, in order to build strong bones and teeth. 
- Your baby receives its nutrients through you. If you aren't getting enough calcium through your diet, the calcium your baby needs will be taken from *your bones*.



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How much do I need?

- Women between the ages of 19 & 50 need about 1,000 mg of calcium daily.
- This is true for pregnant women too. It becomes more important to make sure you get the entire 1,000 mg because the calcium is not only for you, it is for your baby too.
- By the 3rd trimester your baby is absorbing almost 1/3 of the calcium you are getting.
- Click the link to visit a great website that will provide you with useful tools and resources about calcium: <http://www.calciuminfo.com/index.aspx>



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What foods are rich in calcium?

It is easier to get calcium through foods than you would think. You can get it from dairy products, meats, fruits & vegetables, and grains!





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Each of these food will get you $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of your daily calcium needs:

Plain, fat-free fruit yogurt



Glass of low fat/fat free milk

One slice of American, Cheddar, or Mozzarella cheese



Glass of orange juice



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This sample menu will get you your entire recommended amount of calcium:



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Breakfast

Yogurt



Orange Juice



Fresh Fruit



Quick Tip:

Put it all together in a blender, add some ice and make a fresh fruit smoothie for breakfast on the go!



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Lunch

Turkey Sandwich
with Cheddar
Cheese



Dinner

Salmon filet



Broccoli





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Iron

There are several reasons to get enough iron daily:

- Iron produces Hemoglobin (a component of blood). Hemoglobin carries oxygen in your blood to you and your baby.
- During pregnancy your body makes 3-4 more pounds of blood.
- During pregnancy your baby is storing enough iron to last 3-6 months after birth because iron is not passed through breast milk.



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- If you aren't getting enough iron during your pregnancy it can cause anemia which can lead to:
 - Weakness & Fatigue
 - Pre-term births and low birth weight
 - Increased risk of infection



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How much do I need?

During pregnancy you should get 25-30 mg daily of iron.

Iron is found in small amounts in meats and green leafy vegetables. The best way to make sure that you get enough iron, is to take prenatal vitamins with iron. Most prenatal vitamins will have your daily requirement of iron.





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Foods you can find iron in

You need 25-30 mg of iron daily. Here are a few examples of iron rich foods:

Beef 5 oz (palm of hand, small filet) = 5 mg

Chicken breast (palm of hand) = 1.5 mg

Shrimp 3 oz (3-4 large shrimp) = 2.6 mg

Spinach, cooked, 1/2 cup = 2.0mg



- As you can see even these iron rich foods have small amounts of iron in them. It is very important to talk with your doctor about taking prenatal vitamins with iron



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- It is best to take prenatal vitamins with iron.
- If you experience uncomfortable side effects, talk to your doctor.
- Building up your dosage is often a good way to start and if you are experiencing constipation you should drink lots of water and consume foods rich in fiber.



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Folic Acid



- Folic acid may also be called folate, folacin, or Vitamin B-9.
- Folic acid decreases your risk of birth defects that effect the brain and spinal cord. Some studies suggest that folic acid may also protect women and men from stroke, colon cancer and breast cancer.
- Folic acid also helps form red & white blood cells, which can help to prevent anemia.
- You should take 600 micrograms of folic acid daily during pregnancy.



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Where Can I Find Folate?

- To make sure you get enough folate, most providers will prescribe a prenatal vitamin which will have 600-800 micrograms of folate.
- It can also be found in many common foods such as:
 - Leafy dark green vegetables (spinach & romaine lettuce)
 - Legumes
 - Citrus fruits & juice, cantaloupe and strawberries
 - Whole Grains
 - Peanuts
 - Asparagus & broccoli
- Many cereals & pasta are now fortified with folate





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This sample menu will get you your entire recommended amount of Folic Acid:





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Breakfast



Orange Juice

Cereal fortified
with Folic acid



Fresh Fruit

Notice that many foods contain Calcium & Folic Acid. Pay special attention to those foods and be sure to include them in your diet!





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Lunch

Salad with Romaine & Spinach lettuce, Avocado, & Broccoli



Dinner

Rice or pasta fortified with Folic Acid

Asparagus, Peas, or Beans





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Tips To Get Folic Acid Through Your Diet

- Eat a variety of grains that are whole grains and fortified with folic acid.
- Always include something **green** in with your meals
 - Eat these vegetables raw or lightly steamed to retain all of the essential nutrients.
 - Save the water you steamed your veggies in to make a soup with!
- Have a glass of **orange juice** with breakfast.
 - Try adding seltzer to your favorite citrus juice!
- Make a smoothing using **orange juice**, **strawberries**, and other **fruits**



NOTE: Even though you can get folic acid through your diet you should still take a prenatal vitamin to ensure you have gotten your daily requirements



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Water

- Drink lots and lots of water! Your body is made up of about 60-70 % water, so it is important to stay hydrated!
- Large amounts of fluids are lost while nursing. So be sure to stay hydrated by drinking water throughout the day.
- Thirst is not the only indicator to determine if you are drinking enough water. You can tell by the color of your urine if you are drinking enough water. In the morning your urine should be a dark yellow color and as the day goes on it should be very pale yellow to clear in color. If it remains a darker yellow you need to drink more water!



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- Water can also help to alleviate some common discomforts during pregnancy, such as:
 - Headache
 - Constipation
 - Uterine pains/cramping
 - Heartburn & nausea





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- Water plays a role in many important functions of the body, such as:
 - Acts as a coolant & aids in regulating your body temperature (this is especially important during exercise)
 - Helps to remove toxins & waste products from your body
 - It is a major component in your blood
 - Lubricates your joints and internal organs
 - Carries nutrients throughout your body

