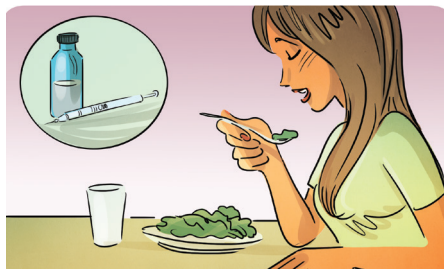


9 - Gestational diabetes and food

Proper food is vital for both mother and child, to keep blood glucose levels under control. During pregnancy, the need for calories, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and liquids rises. It is a good thing to drink at least two litres of water a day, to ensure the proper formation of tissues by both mother and baby. Do not use too much salt, and use aromatic herbs (spices, lemon, and vinegar) to flavour food. Drink less coffee, tea, cocoa, and alcohol. Women with gestational diabetes should listen to their diabetes specialist's advice and follow a personalised diet prepared by a nutrition expert or dietician.

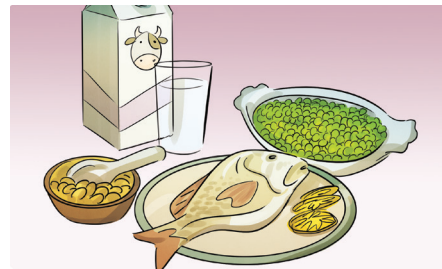
When do I eat, and how much, and what?



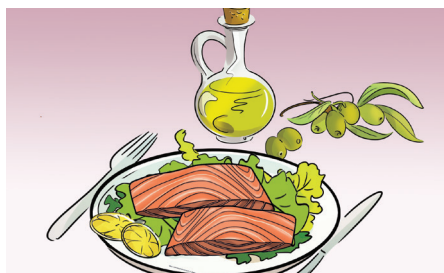
During pregnancy, food must be spread out into six meals: three main meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and three snacks (mid-morning, mid-afternoon, and just before going to bed) to ensure baby is being fed properly and to avoid low blood glucose.



During the first three months, no extra energy is needed. During the second trimester, this need rises. The mother does not have to "eat for two," but her diet must change.



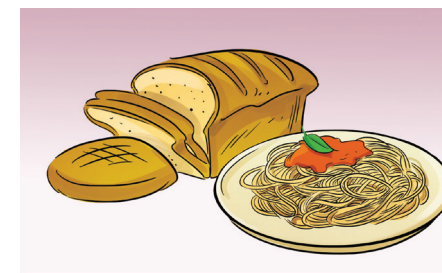
During pregnancy, more proteins are needed because they are vital for the formation and growth of the mother's and baby's tissues. Proteins can be found in meat, fish, eggs, milk, dairy products, legumes, and cereals.



Fats are a source of energy, and allow fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) to be absorbed. They are vital for the formation of the baby's nervous system.



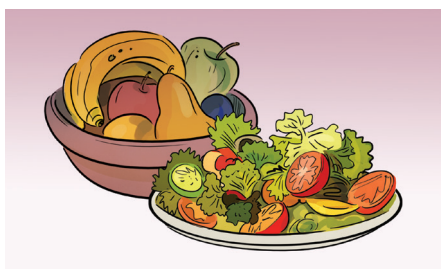
Oily fruit contains many fats, and is a source of vitamins (A, E, C, and folic acid) and minerals (potassium, calcium, and phosphorus). A small portion (10-15 grammes) may be eaten with the afternoon snack.



Carbohydrates: bread and pasta need not be eliminated, but must be eaten regularly at lunch and dinner (even better if they are whole foods, because they also supply fibre). It is best to reduce the amount of simple sugars (desserts, cakes, sweets, chocolates, and snacks).



Dietary fibre is important in keeping the intestines working properly. To consume the right amount of fibre, it is a good idea to eat 5-6 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.



During pregnancy, eating three portions of vegetables and two portions of fruit a day will provide almost all the vitamins and minerals needed.



Taking extra folic acid should ideally begin several months before pregnancy. Additional iron will be necessary, because what we receive through our diet is rarely enough. Two extra portions a day of dairy products are recommended, and it is better to drink mineral water rich in calcium.