



# *Optimising your lifestyle during pregnancy*

**By Kate Marsh**

**PhD, M Nutr Diet, BSc, Grad Cert Diab Edn & Mgt**

Last month we discussed the lifestyle changes that are most important while you are trying to conceive. Once you fall pregnant, continuing these habits is vital but there are a few additional things worth considering, to ensure a healthy pregnancy and to give your baby the best start in life. »



## Optimise your weight gain

Once you are pregnant it is no longer the time to be losing weight. However, we now know that if you started pregnancy above your healthy weight range, it is quite safe to gain less weight than a woman who is a healthy weight at the time of conception. In fact we now have specific guidelines as to the right amount of weight to gain, depending on your weight before pregnancy, to optimize outcomes for you and your baby. You can download a free chart to track your pregnancy weight gain here <http://bumptobabydiet.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Bump-to-Baby-Diet-Optimum-Weight-Gain-Chart.jpg>

## Eating for two?

While being pregnant increases your nutritional needs, the amount of extra food needed is much less than you might expect. In fact your energy needs during the first trimester remain the same as they were before you fell pregnant and in the second and third trimester you only need around 10% more energy. However, your need for certain nutrients (such as iron) increases significantly. This means that **choosing nutrient-dense foods – those that are packed with important vitamins and minerals - without overloading on kilojoules is particularly crucial in pregnancy.**



The key nutrients during pregnancy include iron, folate, iodine, omega-3, calcium and vitamin D and it is important to ensure you have an adequate intake of all of these throughout your pregnancy. For a basic guide to how much you should be eating from the main food groups to ensure good nutrition in pregnancy visit <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/how-much-do-we-need-each-day/recommended-number-serves-adults> »



## ***Be aware of food safety***

There are a number of foods which should be avoided during pregnancy as they may contain harmful bacteria, such as listeria and salmonella, which can cause food poisoning and harm your unborn baby or cause miscarriage or stillbirth. These include soft cheeses, cold meats, raw seafood, salad sprouts, pre-prepared salads and fruit salads, uncooked eggs and unpasteurised dairy products. Some types of fish should also be avoided in pregnancy due to high levels of mercury and fish should be limited to 2-3 serves/week. Of course you should practice good food hygiene at all times, including washing your hands before preparing food or eating.

## ***Keep active***

Pregnancy is not the time to hang up your walking shoes! Keeping fit will help your body cope with the extra demands of pregnancy, can help with preventing excess weight gain and will reduce your risk of developing gestational diabetes. Of course, depending on the type of exercise you are doing, you may need to make some modifications once pregnant – high impact activities (eg running, jumping or skipping) are associated with miscarriage in early pregnancy. Switch to lower impact exercise, such as swimming or walking. Exercises that carry any risk of injury (eg horse riding or contact sports) are not recommended and you may need to modify the intensity of exercise as your pregnancy progresses. It is always best to check with your healthcare team. >>





## *To supplement or not to supplement?*

The only supplements that are routinely recommended in pregnancy are iodine and folate. However there are others that may be needed – for example, vitamin D or iron if your levels are low, vitamin B12 if you follow a vegan diet and omega-3 if you don't regularly eat fish. If you choose to take other supplements it is best to choose a pregnancy multivitamin & mineral, as other supplements, including herbal preparations, may not be safe in pregnancy. It is best to check with your doctor, midwife or dietitian as to which supplements are best for your needs.

## *Avoid alcohol*

Alcohol intake during pregnancy can harm your unborn baby and increase the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. While no amount of alcohol is safe in pregnancy, it is particularly important to avoid binge drinking. Due to the risks associated with alcohol during pregnancy, DrinkWise Australia has launched a new campaign, backed by the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which advises women that the safest choice for their baby is not to drink alcohol if they are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding. You can find out more at <http://www.drinkwise.org.au/alcohol-pregnancy/parents-to-be/>



## *Limit caffeine*

Too much caffeine during pregnancy may increase your chances of having a miscarriage, premature birth or a low birthweight baby. It is recommended that you limit your intake to 200mg/day. This is the equivalent of 2-3 cups of instant coffee or 4 cups of tea, but percolated coffee contains more caffeine and can vary widely. Remember that coffee isn't the only source of caffeine – it is also found in tea, cola drinks, energy drinks and chocolate. »

## *If you smoke, quit*



Pregnant women who smoke have a **higher risk of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, premature birth and stillbirth**. Babies born to smoking mothers also have a greater risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). **It is important that fathers-to-be quit too**. One study found that children of non-smoking women whose partners smoked prior to their conception had a higher risk of childhood cancer. Exposure to second-hand smoke from your partner can also increase the risk of SIDS and having a low birthweight baby.

If you are a smoker and pregnant or planning a pregnancy, there is a new free quit smoking app available which provides support and encouragement to help you give up smoking. You can Download the 'Quit for you – Quit for Two' app free on your iPhone or iPad from the [Apple iTunes online store](#) »



Want to know more? The *Bump to Baby Diet* covers all of these areas in detail, from working out your target weight gain and exactly what to eat to obtain all of the key nutrients in pregnancy, to the amount and types of exercise recommended in pregnancy and the things you should avoid to protect your developing baby. Visit [www.bumptobabydiet.com](http://www.bumptobabydiet.com) for details.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### **Kate Marsh, PhD, M Nutr Diet, BSc, Grad Cert Diab Edn & Mgt**

Kate Marsh is an Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian and Credentialed Diabetes Educator working in private practice in Sydney. She has a particular interest and expertise in the dietary management of PCOS, diabetes, insulin resistance and vegetarian nutrition.

Kate graduated with a Master of Nutrition and Dietetics from the University of Sydney in 1995 and completed a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Education and Management in 1997. She has more recently completed her PhD looking at the effects of Glycemic Index (GI) in the diets of women with PCOS and is co-author of *The Low GI Guide to Managing PCOS*, *The Low GI Vegetarian Cookbook*, *Low GI Gluten-Free Living* and *The Bump to Baby Diet*.

Kate works with clients with type 1 and gestational diabetes, PCOS, and those following a vegetarian diet. As a diabetes educator, she can also offer diabetes education to people with newly diagnosed diabetes, or those needing review of their diabetes education and management.

# Oven-toasted Muesli

Preparation time: 10 minutes, Cooking time: 25-30 minutes, Serves 8



## Ingredients:

2 cups rolled oats  
½ cup sunflower seeds  
¼ cup pumpkin seeds (pepitas)  
¼ cup linseeds  
¼ cup sesame seeds  
½ cup shredded coconut  
½ cup raw peanuts  
½ cup processed bran cereal  
¼ cup walnuts  
½ cup sultanas  
¼ cup chopped apricots

## Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 160.
2. Place oats in a large baking dish and bake 5 minutes.
3. Add sunflower, pumpkin and linseeds and bake a further 10 minutes.
4. Add sesame seeds, coconut, nuts and bran cereal and cook a further 10 - 15 minutes until muesli is nicely brown and toasty. Do not overcook.
5. Add fruit once the muesli is completely cool and store in an airtight jar.
6. Lightly shake container before serving the muesli.
7. Serve low fat milk, soy milk or yoghurt.

**Source:** *The Bump to Baby Diet*, published by Hachette Australia (\$32.99),

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# Roasted Vegetables with Quinoa & Chickpeas

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes, **Cooking time:** 45 minutes, **Serves** 4

## Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220 C (425 F).
2. Crush garlic and add to oil in a small bowl. Use this to lightly brush two roasting pans.
3. Divide vegetables among 2 roasting pans, brush with remaining garlic oil and roast for 30 minutes, swapping pans around halfway through cooking.
4. Roast for a further 15 minutes or until vegetables are golden and tender.
5. While vegetables are roasting, prepare quinoa. Rinse well and place in saucepan with vegetable stock. Bring to boil then reduce heat and simmer with lid on for 10-15 minutes until water is absorbed and quinoa is soft. Drain and rinse chickpeas and add these a few minutes before the end of the quinoa cooking to heat through.
6. Transfer the quinoa and chickpeas to a large serving platter. Layer the roasted vegetables on top and season with pepper.



## Ingredients:

- 2 small zucchini, cut lengthwise
- 2 medium carrots, peeled & cut lengthwise
- 1 medium red capsicum, cut into long, wide strips
- 300 g sweet potato, peeled and cut into long wedges
- 1 red (Spanish) onions, cut into quarters and threaded onto a skewer
- 4 large flat mushrooms
- 1 bunch asparagus (woody ends snapped off)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large (400g) tin chickpeas or butter beans
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 cups good quality vegetable stock
- 1 cup quinoa

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