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Information and ideas suitable or relevant to vegetarian and vegan diets are noted as *V* and *V&Ve* respectively.

These points are equally as relevant to non-vegetarian/vegan diets, and details regarding non-animal products are relevant to all diets.

Healthy eating during pregnancy

Pregnancy (and post-pregnancy) is the perfect opportunity to pursue a healthier lifestyle because you are not just eating for you, you are growing and fuelling your unborn baby too! Whilst this is true and when pregnant your diet does impact on the health and wellbeing of your baby both in the short and long term, it can also be a catalyst for giving our diet and lifestyle choices morality, leading us to judge ourselves based on what or how much we eat or exercise. And of course, don't forget to add raging hormones, food cravings and aversions to complicate matters further!

The main things to remember:

Relax.

Listen to your body.

Let's look at the bigger picture here - as long as your diet includes the important nutrients the majority of the time (remember, you are pregnant for 9 months!) then a surplus of sugar, or lack of vegetables every now and again will most likely not do you or your baby any harm.



This applies after your pregnancy too!



We get energy in the form of calories from our diet. In pregnancy calories are also needed for the growth and development of your baby. Despite "eating for two" most women do not need additional calories above their normal needs until the final stage of pregnancy (the third trimester) and even then, this is only a small amount (approx. 200 calories extra per day).

Dealing with pregnancy cravings

Pregnancy cravings are often a result of hormones, an empty stomach and low blood sugar. Some ways that may help you deal with them are:

- Have breakfast before you get up. Keep digestive biscuits next to the bed, which will help raise your blood sugar before getting out of bed.
- Eat smaller meals more frequently – this stops you feeling over full and balances blood sugars.
- Chew your food more before you swallow – this increases saliva production and makes digestion easier.
- Avoid unpleasant smelling foods, whatever that means to you

- Get plenty of sleep – maintain a regular sleep schedule as much as you are able to, and prioritise it. Sleep is essential for growth and repair, and a lack of sleep can play havoc with your hunger hormones.
- Stay hydrated
- Fresh ginger and ginger tea
- Short walks
- **Listen to your body!** Cravings are often a real sign that your body is asking you for more of something that it needs, such as salt or other essential minerals.

If you are regularly craving foods which are high in sugar, salt and fat but low in nutritional quality, try finding a **healthier substitute**.

If you are craving something **sweet**, maybe some fruit would help.

If you are craving something **salty**, try to pair the salt with something packed with other nutrients, like vegetables or nuts.

Weight gain in pregnancy

A certain amount of weight gain during pregnancy is both NORMAL and HEALTHY. There are several reasons for this:

- You will have more blood in your body
- Your breasts get bigger - ready for breastfeeding
- Your uterus and placenta grow
- Your baby is growing and getting heavier
- Your body creates extra fat stores for breastfeeding – storing fat is a way to store energy in our bodies, so that if we face a situation in which we cannot access enough food, we have energy stored up ready to keep us going. Women store extra during pregnancy as a precaution, to make sure that both mum and baby have plenty of energy in reserve if necessary.

This will look slightly different for everyone, so there is no optimum amount of weight gain – it **generally ranges from about 10-12.5kg**. You should avoid gaining weight excessively if possible, as this can put you at risk of complications such as gestational diabetes.

Foods to avoid during pregnancy

There aren't as many as you may think:

- Uncooked unpastuerised milk and cheeses
- Uncooked mould-ripened soft cheeses with a white rind, or soft blue cheeses
- Cured meats (unless cooked thoroughly)
- Raw/undercooked meat, and all liver, pate and game meats
- Uncooked/partially cooked duck, goose, or quail eggs, or hens' eggs that are not British Lion
- Swordfish, marlin, shark and raw shellfish

You should limit:

- Caffeine – 200mg per day (about 2 cups of instant coffee or tea)
- Oily fish – 2 portions per week
- Tuna – 4 medium cans per week
- Herbal teas – 4 cups per day

The NHS have a full list here: [Foods to avoid in pregnancy - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

The next section will outline general eating well advice which applies **before, during and after your pregnancy**. Information on **vitamins and supplements during and after pregnancy** can be found at the end of the document.



Healthy eating for pregnancy and new mums

To help get a sustainable balance of food during and after pregnancy, simply follow the following general eating well advice.

Carbohydrates (Preferably make up about a third of our daily diet):

- Carbohydrates are a good source of energy and the main source of nutrients in our diet including fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins.
- Examples include bread, potatoes, cereals, rice, oats, noodles and pasta
- Choose wholegrain or higher fibre versions where possible

Fruit and vegetables (Preferably make up over a third of our daily diet):

- Fruit and veg are a good source of many vitamins, minerals, fibre and water. Try to focus on getting your vitamins from food before turning to supplements!
- Vitamins and minerals are essential for:
 - maintaining a **healthy immune system** (fighting infections and healing wounds)
 - your **mental health**
 - maintaining **strong bones and healthy joints**
 - healthy **bowels and digestion**
 - your **baby's growth and development**
- Examples include all types of fresh, frozen and canned fruit, stewed, dried and fruit juices, vegetables and salad vegetables, beans and pulses
- Try and eat at least 5 portions a day. If you struggle to reach this target, how could you add some extras in?
 - Adding a piece of **fruit to your breakfast** (sliced banana on toast or berries in oats/cereal)
 - **Snacking** on fruit (apple or pear)
 - Snacking on veggie sticks (carrot, cucumber, pepper, celery) – feel free to add a dip!
 - **Add salad to sandwiches/wraps** (sliced tomato, sliced cucumber, shredded lettuce or rocket, sweetcorn, grated carrot)
 - Make a **smoothie** (e.g. 1/2 a banana, handful of berries, spoonful of plain yoghurt – blended with ice and water)
 - **Grate veggies** into your meals like Bolognese, curries or chilli (carrots, squash and courgette work well for this)
 - Add peas, sweetcorn, chopped carrot and onion to your **meals like cottage pie, curries, fish pie and Bolognese**



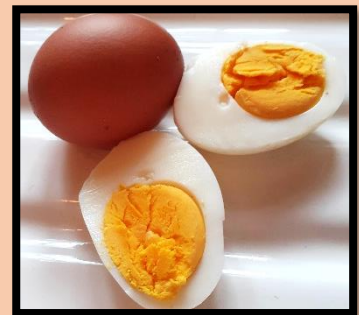
Dairy and alternatives (Preferably daily in moderate amounts) *V&Ve*:

- Dairy and dairy alternatives are a good source of calcium, protein and vitamin A
- Examples include Cows, Sheep and Goat milk, cheese, yoghurt and unsweetened fortified milk alternatives such as soya, nut, oat, coconut or hemp products
- Choose lower sugar options where possible



Proteins (Preferably daily, including more beans and pulses as well as meat, fish and eggs and 2 portions of fish every week)

- Protein is needed for the **growth and repair of tissues and muscles** throughout the body and provide good sources of nutrients including **vitamin A, D, Choline and zinc** and oil rich fish provides a good source of **omega 3** fats.
- Examples of meat include all cuts of beef, pork, lamb, poultry and game
- Examples of beans and pulses include chickpeas, lentils, kidney beans, butter beans, nuts, nut butters, seeds and soya products (tofu and Quorn) *V&Ve*
- Examples of eggs include boiled, scrambled, poached and omelettes. *V*
- Examples of fish include all fresh and frozen fish, canned fish, shellfish and crustaceans.
- Choose sustainably sourced fish and avoid cheap processed meat products and fish such as sausages, canned meat products, pies, pastries, sausage rolls and fried or coated meat and fish.



Drinks (preferably aim to have 6-8 drinks a day):

- Examples include water, milk and **sugar free drinks** including tea and coffee
- **Limit fruit juice and smoothies** as the natural sugars in these drinks can contribute to tooth decay.
- **Avoid fizzy drinks** and other sweetened soft drinks as they often contain high levels of free sugar and often caffeine

Food and drink high in fat and/or sugar (Preferably limited):

- Food and drink high in fat and/or sugar are not necessarily needed although they can taste good and therefore can be good for our emotional and social health! However, they often provide a **lot of calories and a lower proportion of other important nutrients**.
- Examples include butter/margarine, cooking oils, oil-based salad dressings, mayonnaise, cream, chocolate, sweets, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cake, puddings, ice cream and soft drinks.
- Please note that vegetarian/vegan options may be **plant-based but can still contain high levels of sugar, salt and fat**, and therefore should still be limited in your diet. ***V&Ve***



Try not to stress! Regardless of whether you are underweight or overweight all you need to do in and after pregnancy is to eat well and be active MOST OF THE TIME. Nobody is perfect and no diet is perfect!

Overall, a healthy diet during pregnancy is NO DIFFERENT to a healthy diet outside of pregnancy!

A healthy breastfeeding diet

Your diet whilst breastfeeding can pretty much **return to normal** – so everything mentioned in the lists above, focusing on getting a **variety of nutrients**, without the list of foods to avoid!

However, you should still **limit your caffeine and alcohol intake, and certain types of fish**. You can find out more about this here: [Foods to Avoid When Breastfeeding | Breastfeeding | Start4Life \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Zing Somerset: Food for Thought

If you're interested in finding out more about **healthy eating and nutrition in general**, Zing Somerset have a series of short videos called Food for Thought.

These videos are 5-6 minutes in length, and each focus on **different nutrients or aspects of healthy eating**. Watch the series here (and be sure to let us know if there's anything else you'd like to hear about!) → [Food for thought - YouTube](#)

Easy meals and top tips for new mums

With baby in tow, we know that time (and energy!) is of the essence when it comes to food. Firstly, we want you to remember a few things:

1. **Food fuels your body**, which has been through and is still doing an amazing job. Fuel your body with **quality nutrition as much as you can**, and you'll reap the benefits.
2. However, running out of time or energy to cook or prepare a healthy meal is **normal**, and it doesn't matter. Achieving this **some or most of the time is important**, but you haven't failed if you don't manage it today.
3. **Food shouldn't make you feel guilty**. Food keeps you alive, and for most of us, makes us happy. Enjoy it, and enjoy being healthy.

Onto our top tips!

Planning and prep

This doesn't have to be long and arduous. Plan some **meals which share similar bases or ingredients** so that you can **bulk up and repurpose**, for example:

- Bolognese (veggie or meaty) can be topped with mashed potato for a cottage pie, or spiced up with chilli powder and kidney beans for a chilli con carne. ***V&Ve***
- Ratatouille can be blended into soup, or spiced up with curry powder to make a curry. ***V&Ve***
- Cooked chicken (or other meats) can be shredded, and added to sandwiches/wraps, pasta, rice, stir fry or fajitas

Make a list of all the things you'll need for these meals (aside from what you already have in the cupboard/freezer) before you go shopping.

Next, **plan some time for prep**. Think about days or times where you have maybe an hour or so that you could dedicate to some time in the kitchen and commit to it – **write it in your diary, calendar or phone**. This might be first thing, during an afternoon nap or at the weekend – whenever works for you. (And remember, this is for your health, so it should be a guilt-free priority for your time).

Use that set time to cook up a big batch of your chosen meal, which can be kept in the fridge and/or freezer until needed – saving you time throughout the week, but still putting a nutritious meal on the table.

Easy to batch cook or bulk prep

As well as planning and prep explained above, there are lots of things which are easy to cook up in batches, or prep in larger amounts to see you through the week. These are generally great for lunches – get them **prepped and boxed on one day**, then lunch is sorted for 4-5 days. Some of these can be **combined** – whilst the oven is on to cook the chicken, could you pop the veg in to roast, too?

- **Boiled eggs** – hard boiled, these last for 4-5 days in the fridge (with shells on). Perfect for sandwiches, salads, pasta salads or as healthy snacks on their own. ***V***
- **Chicken** – a whole roasted or slow-cooked chicken can be stripped, sliced, and shredded, ready to pop straight into sandwiches, pasta, rice, curry, stir fry, wraps/fajitas... Also a great choice for healthy lunches – simply mix in with some salad or roasted veg, and add half a tin of drained and rinsed chickpeas or butter beans.
- **Cous cous** – takes just 5 minutes to prep in boiling water, and can be jazzed up by adding a stock cube. Mix in a large bowl with chopped cucumber, tomatoes, lettuce and feta cheese*, and divide into containers for 3-4 days of lunches. ***V&Ve*** *optional
- **Frittata** – a large frittata (crustless quiche) takes 10-15 minutes to prep, 30-40 minutes in the oven, and can serve you for 4 lunches. Check out our recipe [here](#). ***V***
- **Roasted veg** – leftover carrots, parsnips, potatoes, squash, sweet potatoes and peppers all roast well, bringing out their natural sweetness. Chop into similar sized chunks and drizzle with olive oil and seasoning of choice. Roast for 45-60 minutes (pepper for only 15-20 minutes) and leave to cool. Divide into portions and enjoy for 3-4 days! ***V&Ve***
- **Chopped veg** – whilst you're prepping, could you get some easy veggie sticks prepared for snacks? Cucumber, peppers, carrots and celery all work well, and are great for the children too. Keep them in an airtight container in the fridge for 2-3 days. **You can also get prepping other veg** (broccoli, onions, courgettes, mushrooms...) **for meals later in the week**, so that they are ready to chuck in the pan with no prep required! Store chopped veg in airtight containers in the fridge for 3-4 days. ***V&Ve***
- **Soup** – one of the easiest and healthiest meals to cook in bulk and store for later. Check out our guide [here](#). ***V&Ve***
- **Pulses** – you could cook these from dry, or just buy tinned (pre-cooked). These add carbohydrates, protein, and fibre to any meal, so are perfect for bulking up a salad or wrap! If tinned, drain and rinse them, and store leftovers in a sealed container (not the original tin). ***V&Ve***

Getting in more veg *V&Ve*

Let's face it, most of us know we could do with eating more veg! It can be even trickier if you have fussy little ones to contend with. Our tips for getting more veg (and fruit) into your day include:

- **Grate veggies into sauces** – carrots, squash and courgettes are brilliant to grate into dishes like Bolognese, curries, chilli, and pasta sauce
- **Utilise your freezer!** - Frozen veg is just as nutritious as fresh veg, and can be much more convenient! It's pre-chopped and the freezing process removes the need for lengthy cooking, so they can often just be chucked into your sauce at the end of cooking, or quickly steamed in the microwave. You can buy much more than just frozen peas – chopped peppers, broccoli and cauliflower florets, chopped green beans, chopped onions, spinach... Go wild! (Frozen berries are also very useful and much cheaper than fresh)
- **Improve your go-to sandwiches** – Completely changing your lunch routine can be very overwhelming, but there are ways to make small but important improvements. Try adding sliced cucumber, tomatoes, sweetcorn, salad leaves or grated carrot. If you don't fancy the salad inside your sandwich, try popping some cucumber or carrot sticks on the side – you could have these with a dip if you like.
- **Bulk up with veg** – veggies and pulses can be used to bulk out so many meals, which both helps them go further and increases their nutritional value. Add red lentils to Bolognese or curries, add chopped carrots and peppers to chilli, add chickpeas and sweetcorn to pasta. It **doesn't matter if you're still using jars of sauces** and can't face making them from scratch – adding more veg will always improve them!
- **Snack smart** – the easy one. Your first port of call when you fancy a snack should be a piece of fruit – banana, apple, orange, pear, plum, grapes... (and/or add fruit to your breakfast – banana is brilliant on toast or in oats!)

Don't shop hungry

It sounds so simple, but a hungry shopper is usually a less-healthy shopper. Make a list in advance, and shop on a full stomach.

Stick to your list, buy less junk, buy more real food, and eat that real food. If you don't have it, you can't eat it.

(But the emergency biscuits are ALWAYS okay – there's no shame in keeping some in "just in case")

One step at a time

Please don't think you need to immediately drop all of your current habits and take up a "textbook" healthy diet tomorrow.

Identify one or two key things you'd like to focus on first – like snacking on biscuits or not getting in enough veg – and tackle those first, leaving everything else untouched. You're already juggling enough – don't add to your burden!

Once you've nailed your first change and have stuck with it for a few weeks, you can introduce another.

Zing Somerset: Cooking with Zing

Zing Somerset have plenty of recipes and ideas for healthy meals and snacks, most of which are designed for busy families with tight schedules. You can check out our videos here (the **How To? videos include a guide for making soup, roasting veg, boiling eggs, making cous cous and slow-cooking a chicken**) - [Zing Somerset - YouTube](#)

Alternatively, you can browse a variety of our recipes here – [Zing Cooking – Healthy Somerset](#)

We are happy to support you with any ideas mentioned above (or other ideas) that we haven't listed recipes for – **just get in touch**.



Vitamins and supplements for Pregnancy

Pregnancy

There are a huge range of supplements, vitamins and minerals catered to the pregnant and postnatal population, many of which can be very expensive! Pregnancy often inspires women to adopt a healthier lifestyle, and most women are willing to pay a lot of money to keep their pregnancy and baby healthy but are they actually beneficial?

Recent research has shown that multivitamins, often containing more than 20 vitamins and minerals **DO NOT** boost the health of mother and babies and therefore are **NOT** necessary during pregnancy. In fact, unless advised by a medical professional there are only **2 supplements** that are recommended by UK clinical guidance at a fraction of the price of pregnancy multivitamins alongside eating a healthy varied diet to ensure you get the vitamins and minerals you need for a healthy pregnancy.

These are **Folic Acid** and **Vitamin D**.

Folic Acid

What is it?

Folic acid (or folate in its natural form) is a vitamin that helps form the spine and neural tube (part of the nervous system) in babies.

Why is it important in pregnancy?

Folic acid is important for pregnancy, as it can help to prevent birth defects known as neural tube defects, including spina bifida.

What foods is it found in?

Folic acid in its natural form is called folate. Some foods contain folate naturally.

Foods that have folic acid include ***V&Ve***:

- Green leafy vegetables, such as broccoli and cabbage
- Green beans
- Oranges
- Chickpeas and brown rice
- Breakfast cereals, margarine and bread have folic acid added; these are called 'fortified' foods.

How much should I take?

It's difficult to get the amount of folate recommended for pregnancy from food alone, which is why it is advised to take a folic acid supplement.

As we don't know who is at risk, it is recommended that all women take a 400 micrograms (mcg) folic acid supplement from three months before conception up to at least 12 weeks of pregnancy. If you didn't take folic acid before you conceived, you should start as soon as you find out that you are pregnant.

Some women may need to take a bigger dose of folic acid. This can be prescribed by GPs if you are planning a pregnancy or are in the early stages of pregnancy and if you:

- (or the baby's father) have had spina bifida
- have had a previous baby with spina bifida
- (or the baby's father) have a family history of neural tube defects
- have diabetes
- have a high Body Mass Index (over 30)
- taking medication for epilepsy.

Vitamin D

What is it?

Vitamin D is a vitamin that regulates the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, which are needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

Why is it important in pregnancy?

Without adequate amounts of vitamin D, there is a risk that your baby will have soft bones, which can lead to rickets (a disease that affects bone development in children).

What foods is it found in?

Our bodies make vitamin D when our skin is exposed to summer sunlight.

Vitamin D is also in some foods, including:

- oily fish (such as salmon, mackerel, herring and sardines)
- eggs
- red meat
- Vitamin D is added to all infant formula milk, as well as some breakfast cereals, fat spreads and non-dairy milk alternatives (the amounts added to these products can vary and might only be small)

How much should I take?

As vitamin D is found only in a small number of foods, whether naturally or added, it is **difficult to get enough from foods alone**. The amount of vitamin D we can make from sunlight also depends on the time of year and the intensity of the sunlight; in the UK, there is **insufficient sunlight from November to February** therefore a supplement should be taken.

All pregnant and breastfeeding women are therefore advised to take at least a **10 microgram (400IU) supplement** of vitamin D each day to give your baby enough vitamin D for the first few months of life.

Some women are more likely to need vitamin D than others. You may have an even higher risk of vitamin D deficiency if you:

- always cover your skin
- use high-factor sun block
- have dark skin
- have a BMI above 30.

Especially during the winter months, you may need to take a higher supplemental dose. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) recommend taking 25 microgram (1000IU) per day for those at risk of deficiency.

Where to get pregnancy supplements

Although a healthy diet will give you most of the vitamins and minerals you need, folic acid and vitamin D are so important for your baby that you should take supplements in pregnancy to be sure that you are getting the full amount you need.

You can get Folic Acid and Vitamin D supplements from most pharmacies and supermarkets, or your GP may be able to prescribe them for you. You may be eligible for free vitamins through the Healthy Start scheme. (See <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/> for eligibility)

** As stated above there is no advantage in taking other vitamin and mineral supplements unless your GP prescribes them. If however you want to get your folic acid or vitamin D from a multivitamin tablet make sure that the tablet does not contain vitamin A (or retinol) as high levels of this can be harmful for your baby.*

Do not take vitamin A supplements, or any supplements containing vitamin A as too much could harm your baby.

Iron in pregnancy

If you are short of iron, you'll probably get very tired and may suffer from anaemia. **Lean meat, green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, nuts, and many breakfast cereals contain iron.** If you'd like to eat **peanuts or foods that contain peanuts** (such as peanut butter) during pregnancy, **you can do so** as part of a healthy balanced diet unless you're allergic to them, or your health professional advises you not to.

Iron makes red blood cells for both you and your baby. Red blood cells carry oxygen around your body to your organs and tissues, as well as to your baby. In pregnancy, the amount of blood in your body increases by almost 50% and some women find that they are short of red blood cells. This is called anaemia and will be picked up when you have your routine antenatal blood tests.

If your blood tests show that you are anaemic in pregnancy then your doctor or midwife will prescribe an iron supplement. If they do not show this there is no need to take an iron supplement in pregnancy.

If you're anaemic, you may lack energy and feel very tired. If you are expecting twins you're more likely to be low in iron. If your blood tests show that you are anaemic, your doctor or midwife will prescribe an iron supplement. If they do not show this there is no need to take the supplement.

What foods have iron?

Foods containing iron include:

- red meat (e.g. beef and lamb)
- oily fish (e.g. mackerel)
- eggs ***V***
- pulses (peas, beans and lentils, for example) ***V&Ve***
- wholegrain or whole meal breads ***V&Ve***
- nuts and seeds (e.g. almonds and sesame seeds) ***V&Ve***
- green leafy vegetables (e.g. broccoli, cabbage and spinach) and dried fruit (e.g. figs and apricots) ***V&Ve***
- some breakfast cereals have added iron. ***V&Ve***

Skip tea with meals

Drinking tea with meals can interfere with how your body absorbs iron. If your iron levels are low, have water or diluted fruit juice with food instead.

Your body can **absorb iron more easily if you have food or drink containing vitamin C** at the same time. Many **fruits and vegetables are a good source** of vitamin C and this is another good reason to have them at every meal. **Avoiding tea and coffee at meal times** will also help your body absorb iron.

Vitamin C in pregnancy

Vitamin C protects cells and helps to keep them healthy.

Vitamin C is found in a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, and a balanced diet can provide all the vitamin C you need. Good sources include ***V&Ve***:

- oranges and orange juice
- red and green peppers
- strawberries
- blackcurrants
- broccoli
- brussels sprouts
- potatoes

Calcium in pregnancy

Calcium is vital for making your baby's bones and teeth. Sources of calcium include:

- milk, cheese and yoghurt ***V***
- green leafy vegetables such as rocket, watercress or curly kale ***V&Ve***
- tofu ***V&Ve***
- soya drinks with added calcium ***V&Ve***
- bread and anything made with fortified flour ***V&Ve***
- fish where you eat the bones – such as sardines and pilchards

Vegetarian, vegan and special diets in pregnancy ***V&Ve***

A varied and balanced vegetarian diet should give enough nutrients for you and your baby during pregnancy. However, you might find it more difficult to get enough iron and vitamin B12. Talk to your midwife or doctor about how to make sure you are getting enough of these important nutrients.

If you are vegan, or you follow a restricted diet because of food intolerance (for example, a gluten-free diet for coeliac disease) or for religious reasons, talk to your midwife or GP.

Ask to be referred to a dietitian for advice on how to make sure you are getting all the nutrients you need for you and your baby.

Post-natal – a healthy breastfeeding diet

Vitamin D is found in certain foods (including oily fish like salmon, sardines, and mackerel; red meat; and some breakfast cereals) but it's hard to get enough from food alone.

If you're breastfeeding, you should **consider taking a vitamin D supplement** (containing 10mcg).

If your baby is only having breast milk (no first infant formula top-ups), you should **give them a daily vitamin D supplement of 8.5 to 10mcg**.

It's worth checking if you're entitled to Healthy Start food and vitamin vouchers (see information below). If you're not, ask your GP or health visitor where to buy them.

Check out the Start 4 Life webpages for more info on following a healthy breastfeeding diet <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/breastfeeding/healthy-diet/vitamins-for-mum-and-baby/>

Post-natal- a healthy non-breastfeeding diet

After pregnancy and breastfeeding (if we choose/can follow that route) we are back to following the **main healthy eating advice**. Most of the time we do not need to take vitamins and can get the vitamins and minerals we need from a **healthy, balanced diet**.

However, during **autumn and winter we need to get vitamin D from our diets** because the sun is not strong enough for our bodies to make vitamin D. It can be difficult to get enough vitamin D from our diet alone so everyone could benefit from taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D during this time.

For more information about taking vitamin supplements see the NHS pages:

<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/food-and-diet/do-i-need-vitamin-supplements/>

Vitamins for babies and children

Breastfed babies should be given a daily supplement containing 8.5 to 10 micrograms of vitamin D from birth, even if the mother is taking a supplement of vitamin D herself.

Babies having 500mls (about a pint) or more of **formula** a day should not be given a vitamin D supplement because formula is fortified with vitamin D and other nutrients.

All **children aged 1-4** should be given a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D.

For more info about vitamins for babies and children see the NHS webpages:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vitamins-for-children/>

Further Support

Healthy Start Voucher Scheme

Pregnant women and those with children over 1 and under 4 can get one £3.10 voucher per week. Those with children under 1 can get two £3.10 vouchers (£6.20) per week. **This is increasing to £4.25 from April 2021.**

These vouchers are issued weekly and can be used to buy milk, infant formula, fruit and veg (fresh, frozen, tinned), and pulses, in store only.

Find out more here → [Healthy Start » About Healthy Start](#)

You can also get vouchers for Healthy Start Vitamins, which are specific to both mum and baby. Find out more here → [Healthy Start » Healthy Start vitamins](#)

Who can get them?

To be eligible for Healthy Start vouchers, you must be claiming income support or be under 18 years – see the full list of criteria and how to apply here → [Healthy Start » Do I qualify](#)

Additional Supermarket Support:

- Co-op stores are adding £1 to the value of each voucher with no end date – this will continue after the government increase in April.
- Tesco are offering extra £1 coupons for each Healthy Start voucher redeemed until February 28th 2021.
- Iceland are offering a free bag of frozen vegetables worth £1 with every healthy Voucher redeemed until March 31st 2021.

Zing Pregnancy and Early Years

Zing Somerset have a page dedicated to supporting you through pregnancy and the early years, which includes information on and further links to eating a healthy diet, staying active and stop smoking support.

Check it out here → [Zing Pregnancy and Early Years – Healthy Somerset](#)

Somerset Maternity Toolkit

The Somerset Public Health Maternity Toolkit contains a wide range of information covering your journey through pregnancy, postnatal support, breastfeeding and infant feeding.

For guidance on staying active and information on weight gain during pregnancy, start here → Somerset children & young people : Health & Wellbeing : Pregnancy Healthy Weight And Physical Activity (cypsomersethealth.org)