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Good nutrition is an essential during pregnancy as your baby's health is dependent on it. Thus a healthy pregnancy diet is the key to a healthy pregnancy. The food consumed during pregnancy is directly related to the health and growth of baby. This is so because all the nutrients required for baby's growth is derived from the food supplements taken by the mother. Research has proven that nutrition in early pregnancy has a direct impact on the susceptibility to chronic degenerative disease in later life. The Indian Council of Medical Research advises a prenatal nutrition that aids in contributing to the essential nutrients for you and fetal development.

There is tremendous change in the nutritional needs of the body during pregnancy as a result of change in body and fetus development. In the first three months the main nutrients of importance are folic acid, vitamin B12 and zinc. While during the second and third month the key nutrients are protein, iron, calcium, magnesium, B group vitamins and a fatty acid docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

There is need for an extra 300kcal per day during pregnancy to meet the growing needs of the body and to provide sufficient nutrition for the growing baby. It is not advisable to control calories and carbohydrate. This could be detrimental to the growth of baby. Curbing your diet can also result in low birth weight and babies having health and growth problems.

Protein is an important nutrient contributing to muscle strength, breasts, uterus and bay tissues. It also enhances blood supply. During pregnancy an average of 65 g of protein is needed. Both lower and higher protein levels are detrimental during pregnancy. Food having a good protein composition is egg, pulses, meat products fish and cereals.

Fat requirement in the daily diet during pregnancy is 40g which is equivalent to 5 teaspoonfuls of oil. One needs 300 mg/day of DHA during pregnancy. Omega-3 fatty acid is an important category of fat during pregnancy contributing to the brain development and vision of the growing baby.

Vitamins and minerals like folic acid is essential to build tissues and for overall development of red blood cells. Green leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, bread, beans and nuts are significant sources of folic acid. Vitamin B12 helps in the healthy development of brain and nervous system of the baby. Iron is another essential nutrient which regulates blood flow between the baby and mother.

Calcium is needed for strengthening the bones of the baby. A daily intake of 1000 mg per day during pregnancy should suffice. Rich source of calcium are milk, cottage cheese, cheese, green leafy vegetables and fish.

Fiber and fluids are significant to stay away from common pregnancy problems like constipation and piles. Eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetable, whole meal bread and cereals and brown rice improves your fiber intake. There are situations when the body does not get sufficient nutrition due problems like nausea and vomiting, heart burn, constipation, food aversion and some others. Doctors recommend intake of nutrient supplements to cope up with the lack of them. Thus a balanced pregnancy diet comprising all the important nutrients is essential for a healthy mother and baby.

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