



Diet for Conceiving Well

Daily Checklist for reproductive health

1 Protein

You need an average sized serving (equivalent to the palm of your hand) of protein-providing food at least 2x a day before conception and 3x a day during pregnancy. Sources can include a 'complete protein' that comes from an animal product (such as fish, seafood, eggs, meat, chicken, dairy products) and contains all essential amino acids that our body needs.

An 'incomplete protein' comes from a vegetarian or plant-based sources such as nuts, seeds, lentils, legumes, beans, tofu and wholegrains. These do not contain every amino acid that we need and therefore when using plant-based proteins you will need to combine at least two of the following groups: 1: Nuts 2: Grains and seeds 3: Legumes and pulses. For example:

- Brown rice with beans or dahl
- Corn and beans
- Hummus (chick peas & tahini)
- Whole oat porridge with soy milk
- Trail mix include raw, unsalted nuts & seeds

Protein containing foods:

★ ★ ★ FISH – 3 times weekly. Low in saturated fats, high in essential fatty acids, especially deep sea/ocean/cold water fish, which are also less polluted, for example mullet, salmon, taylor, trevally & sardines. Avoid large fish e.g. tuna, shark, swordfish, king mackerel (high in mercury), crustaceans (often polluted) and raw fish (may contain bacteria). Fresh preferable to tinned/frozen. Best fish to eat in Australia: snapper, whiting, ling, herring, garfish, wild barramundi.

★ ★ POULTRY – Trim skin. Use certified organically fed ONLY (free range is not necessarily organic and may still be fed with hormones and antibiotics). Organic chickens are also fed their natural diet of insects and grass (rather than grain or corn) which means their nutritional profile is better and they contain a better balance of omega-3 to omega-6. Try other birds: duck, goose, quail, turkey (organic or grass-fed).

★ ★ EGGS – are an excellent source of protein. Limit their consumption only if they cause gastro-intestinal problems such as gas or constipation. Always choose organic eggs to avoid hormone and antibiotics (as with chickens).

★ DAIRY – Limit cows' milk/cheese as a general rule. Fermented dairy is easier to digest such as natural cultured non-flavoured full-fat yoghurt. Goats' milk/cheese preferred. Sheep's cheese, rice, almond, cashew, quinoa & oat milks are also a good way to moderate your dairy intake, but always check their sugar content. Soya milk in moderation is ok (2-3 times a week), but ensure it is organic, made from whole soybeans and non-genetically modified. Avoid soft cheeses (which may contain bacteria). Use organic quality butter or ghee in moderation. Avoid 'low-fat' dairy products – these often have gums and sugar and less nutrition. Limit serve sizes instead.

★ RED MEAT – in moderation (1-2 times/week). Unless certified organically fed, avoid organ meats/offal/sausage/mince. Organ meats contain high levels of toxins, e.g. pesticides/hormones. Avoid delicatessen meats (high in fats, offal content and toxic preservatives) and raw/undercooked meat. Trim all fat.

★ ★ ★ LEGUMES/PULSES – Split peas, lentils, chickpeas, beans, tofu, tempeh (soya). Good plant protein (also contains carbohydrate). Must combine as shown. Good detoxifiers. Studies show improved fertility with higher vegetarian protein vs animal protein intake.

★ ★ GRAINS – Wholegrains such as whole oats, brown rice, kamut, spelt, buckwheat, amaranth and quinoa have a naturally higher protein, fibre & mineral content than refined grains.

★ ★ ★ NUTS/SEEDS – raw/unsalted/fresh (store in fridge, away from light. Nuts should not taste bitter). Use in stir-fries, salads, pasta dishes, as a snack. Limit dried fruit (try to buy preservative free).

2 Fat

You need to minimise saturated fats (animal and processed fats). No fried foods, except when stir-frying. Fry with a little olive oil, coconut oil or sesame oil ensuring the temperature is kept below 180C to avoid the oil smoking. Try adding water or stock to the pan first to prevent food from sticking rather than using oil. Bake with olive oil, a mono-unsaturated fat that will not saturate on heating. NEVER eat margarine – it is a chemical, not a food. Include organic butter in moderation. A little coconut oil is acceptable.

Try avocado, banana, hummus, tahini and nut spreads to replace margarine or butter. Use COLD PRESSED OILS ON SALADS (extra virgin olive or flaxseed). These oils are high in beneficial essential fatty acids if never heated. They can be poured over food **after** cooking, and used on bread as a butter substitute. They should be kept out of light (in dark containers) & in the fridge (except olive). Add lemon/pepper/garlic/herbs to dressing.

3 Carbohydrates

Keep consumption to moderate levels and choose low glycaemic (GI) carbohydrates where possible.

The best choices of low GI grains include whole grains such as oats, brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat, barley, rye, spelt, kamut, amaranth or wholegrain wheat products. Always vary your grain intake and avoid having all grains in the form of wheat. Avoid high glycaemic foods (eg. White bread, white pasta). Refined carbohydrates are very high in sugar and leach nutrients from your body's stores, which in turn increases your desire for these foods.

Avoid obviously sugary foods - fruit juices, cakes/biscuits, soft drinks, chocolate, sugar added tea and coffee. Avoid artificial sweeteners. Small amounts of honey, coconut sugar, maple syrup or stevia are suitable if needed for sweetening.

4 Antioxidant Foods

★ ★ ★ VEGETABLES - LOTS EVERY DAY. Should make up minimum 40% of total food intake. Aim for 3 cups (raw) with both lunch and dinner. Organic whenever possible. Eat a wide variety – all the colours of the rainbow. Eat both raw and cooked.

★ ★ FRUIT - 2 - 3 pieces daily max (because of high sugar content). This includes fruit that is juiced so better eaten whole. Limit dried fruit. Organic and low GI whenever possible. Wash all fruit and vegetables in a little mild, environmentally friendly detergent and white vinegar, using a scrubbing brush where needed.

High antioxidant foods

Fruits - Cherry, blackberry, strawberry, raspberry, blueberry, cranberries, black currant, pomegranate, goji berries, apples, grapes, orange, lime, plum, pineapple, kiwi fruit, grapefruit, peaches and apricots, lemon

Vegetables - Kale, red cabbage, capsicum, artichoke, Brussels sprouts, spinach, beetroot, broccoli, sweet potato, tomatoes, corn

Teas - Green, White, Rooibos, Rosehip, Hibiscus

Herbs - Rosemary, Sage, Thyme, Marjoram, Parsley, Watercress, Basil, Oregano, Turmeric, Parsley, Ginger, Garlic, Onion

A serving size: **1 piece of fruit or half a cup of chopped fruit or berries or 1 cup of salad vegetables or half a cup of cook vegetables. The government recommendation is a minimum of 5 serves of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit. For optimum health eat more!**

5 Hydration

Aim for 8 - 12 glasses daily of filtered/purified water daily. Mineral water OK. Do not store in plastic.

6 Avoid alcohol and caffeine

Foetal alcohol syndrome is traced to PRE-conception, with BOTH parents. Alcohol leaches nutrients, affects women's hormones, semen parameters in men and is toxic to the foetus. Coffee is related to fertility/pregnancy/foetal health problems, including miscarriage. Decaffeinated coffee is not recommended. Tea should be limited to 2 cups weak, naturally low caffeine (not decaffeinated) max daily. Green and herb teas preferred and unlimited.

7 Eat organic

While this might not be practical for every meal, aim to eat the bulk of your intake as organic food. Organic plant produce are non-genetically modified and do not contain the harsh pesticides, fungicides and chemicals added to conventional produce. Local farmers markets are the best place to search for seasonal, fresh organic produce at a cost effective price. TRY to eat organic dairy, eggs, chicken and animal products.

EWG's 2018 Dirty 12™

1. STRAWBERRIES
2. SPINACH
3. NECTARINES
4. APPLES
5. GRAPES
6. PEACHES
7. CHERRIES
8. PEARS
9. TOMATOES
10. CELERY
11. POTATOES
12. SWEET BELL PEPPERS

EWG's 2018 Clean 15™

1. AVOCADOS
2. SWEET CORN
3. PINEAPPLES
4. CABBAGES
5. ONIONS
6. SWEET PEAS
7. PAPAYAS
8. ASPARAGUS
9. MANGOES
10. EGGPLANTS
11. HONEYDEWS
12. KIWIS
13. CANTALOUPE
14. CAULIFLOWER
15. BROCCOLI

Please ask if you would like a list of suitable meal suggestions and ideas

Notes:
