

Preconception Care Diet

Emphasis should be on whole foods, close to their natural state, and unprocessed foods.

Vegetables

Eat to eat 7 plus fresh vegetables daily. A variety of colours.

Fruit

1-3 pieces/serves of fresh seasonal fruit daily.

Protein

Some source of protein should be consumed at most meal.

Animal sources

Meat, chicken (poultry), fish, eggs and dairy products.

Plant/vegetable sources

- Legume (dried beans, pulses) and grains (eg lentil and barley soup)
- Grain and nut (eg nuts spread on bread)
- Legumes and seeds (eg humus)
- Quinoa or tofu

Carbohydrates

Preferably wholegrain cereals and breads. Vary grain sources: rice, oats, barley, corn, rye, buckwheat, spelt, khorasan, wheat. Avoid gluten grains if instructed (wheat, rye, oats, barley).

Fish and Seafood

Eat fish 3 times a week. Avoid large fish high in heavy metals: rockling, flake, swordfish, marlin, broadbill, orange roughy (sea perch) catfish and fresh tuna.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) recommend pregnant women, women and their partners planning pregnancy should limit their intake of shark (flake), broadbill, marlin and swordfish to no more than one serve per fortnight with no other fish to be consumed during that fortnight. For orange roughy (also sold as sea perch) and catfish, the advice is to consume no more than one serve per week, with no other fish being consumed during that week. 1 serve = 150g. (NB Sea Perch is endangered & should be avoided for ethical reasons)

Canned fish

Eat sardines, mackerel, but limit tuna or salmon to once/week each.

Red meat

65-100 g 3-4 times per week. Avoid processed and deli meats.

Dairy foods

Low fat dairy products. If intolerant to dairy products substitute with goats, sheep's, whole bean soy products or almond milk (soy milk and almond milk should be calcium enriched).

Fats and Oils

Use cold pressed oils in dark glass bottles. Cook with cold pressed olive oil, preferably extra virgin. Macadamia nut oil can also be used for example instead of butter in baked goods. Do not eat margarine and avoid hydrogenated fats hidden in commercial biscuits, cakes and pastries. Avocado is a good source of healthy fats.

Raw seeds, e.g. linseeds, sunflower seeds, pepitas, sesame seeds. Do not buy pre-ground seeds as the oils oxidise when ground. Freshly grind the amount of seeds that would be consumed within two weeks, in an electric coffee grinder, food processor, bamix nut grinder attachment etc and store in fridge.

Nuts, raw and unsalted (eg almonds, cashews, walnuts, brazil nuts)

Drinks

1.5-2 litres of water daily

Herbal teas, green tea.

Limit caffeine to 1 coffee daily or 3 teas.

Ideally eliminate alcohol or limit 1 standard drink daily.

No smoking or recreational drugs.

Sample daily diet

Breakfast

- Porridge with raw seeds and nuts, ½ banana or stewed apple/pear and milk/milk substitute
- Muesli or bircher muesli with yoghurt
- Wholegrain toast and poached egg/ricotta cheese/sardines/nut spread
- Smoothie with yoghurt, banana/berries, freshly ground seeds

Lunch

- Salad and protein: egg/canned fish/cottage or ricotta cheese/chicken/lean meat/tofu
- Soup: eg lentil and barley/ chicken and vegetable/pumpkin and chickpea with dollop of yoghurt
- Wholegrain sandwich/wrap with salad egg/canned fish/cottage or ricotta cheese/chicken/lean meat/tofu
- Brown rice and cannellini bean salad with fresh vegetables and fresh herbs
- Leftover vegetables and protein

Dinner

- Lean meat/chicken/fish and salad or vegetables
- Soup with legumes and grain or meat and vegetable
- Legume/meat/tofu curry and brown rice

Snacks

- Small handful of raw nuts
- Fruit
- Yoghurt
- Bliss balls made with nuts and dried fruit
- Raw vegetables and humus