

Eating well for twins or triplets

Babies need lots of energy (calories) and protein for their growth and development. When you are expecting twins you require about 40% more energy each day compared to women expecting a single baby. Your requirements for protein and many vitamins and minerals are also higher. The tips below can help you to achieve these extra requirements.

Tips to increase your energy intake:

1. Have a regular meal plan

Make sure to include breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.

2. Include high energy snacks

Include high energy snacks between your meals. Aim for **at least 2-3** of these each day. Be sure to carry extra non-perishable snacks in your handbag to make sure you do not miss your snacks.

- Full fat yogurt with fruit & seeds
- Nuts/trail mix
- Crackers & cheese
- Oat crackers with banana & peanut butter
- Pita bread with hummus
- Granola with yogurt
- Slice of brown bread with avocado & tomato/boiled egg/ hummus / tuna,
- sweet corn & mayonnaise / chicken & cheese
- Apple slices & peanut butter
- Wholemeal scone
- Oat biscuits & glass of milk
- Custard or rice pudding
- Hot chocolate & cereal bar
- Flapjack/granola bar
- High energy smoothie (see below)

3. Try to include a supper before bed

Have an earlier dinner and then before bed have a supper style meal e.g. cereal & full fat milk, a cheese toastie or hot chocolate and a cereal bar.

4. Drink your energy and protein

Drink plenty of fluids between meals instead of at meals so that you have space for more calorific foods. Drink fluids that contain energy for example milk, milkshakes and hot chocolate, yogurt drinks, smoothies and juices.

5. Add extra energy to your normal foods:

- Add cream or full fat yogurt to porridge
- Sprinkle nuts and seeds on cereal, porridge, yogurts, stir-fries and curries
- Add mayonnaise, avocado, hummus or cream cheese to sandwiches and wraps
- Top porridge, toast and cereal with nut butter
- Sautee meats and vegetables in vegetable or olive oil
- Add creamy sauces or gravy to your dishes. Choose cream-based soups rather than broth-based ones
- Enrich your milk - add 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full fat milk and mix well

Protein

Women carrying twins need at least 4 servings per day of protein rich foods for babies' growth and development. Try to include a protein rich food at each meal. Many women will include two servings in their main meal e.g. 100-150g cooked chicken/meat.

Protein at breakfast time	Protein at lunch and dinner
2 Eggs ¾ cup beans 40g nut butter/nuts and seeds Milk, yogurt & cheese	50-75g Cooked meat or chicken, 100g fish, ¾ cup beans, lentils, chickpeas or falafel 2 eggs 100g tofu/tempeh or quorn

Calcium

Not only are dairy products packed with calcium for strong bones and teeth, they are an excellent source of energy & protein. Use full fat milk, cheese and yogurt. When you are expecting twins you need up to 5 portions every day to meet your requirements.

- Milk on cereal or porridge
- Add a glass of milk to meals
- Add cheese to your crackers, omelette, salad or to your wrap or toastie
- Try some natural yoghurt on homemade curries
- Treat yourself with a hot chocolate or a latte
- Snack on yogurt – add fruit, granola or nuts and seeds
- Make a calcium rich smoothie with yogurt
- Add custard to desserts

Make sure you are also taking your 10 microgram vitamin D supplement to absorb your calcium.

If you are following a vegan/vegetarian diet, choose dairy alternatives which are fortified/calcium enriched.

Other calcium sources include: tofu, kale, fortified juices, beans, seeds, tinned salmon/sardines but it can be difficult to achieve your requirements without dairy or calcium fortified alternatives. Discuss with your dietitian if you are finding it difficult to include calcium rich foods as you may also require a calcium supplement.

Iron

Women with twins require almost twice as much iron. Meat, fish and chicken are excellent sources of iron, especially red meat e.g. beef, lamb or pork. Eggs, dark green leafy vegetables, pulses and beans and fortified cereals are also good sources. Taking these foods with some vitamin C can help you to absorb the iron from those foods e.g. eggs with a glass of orange juice. You may need an iron supplement to help to reach your iron requirements.

Oily fish

Oily fish (e.g. salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines) contain omega 3 fatty acids which are essential in your babies' eye and brain development. Try to include these foods twice each week. If you do not eat oily fish you should consider taking an omega 3 supplement.

Supplements:

Vitamin and mineral supplements can help you to achieve your nutritional requirements. If you are taking any supplements that aren't specifically for pregnant women, make sure that the label says that they are safe to take in pregnancy. Ask your pharmacist or other healthcare provided if you are unsure.

Supplement	
Antenatal multivitamin	Contains folic acid, vitamin D as well as many other vitamins and minerals.
400mcg Folic acid	All women (some women need a higher dose for the first 12 weeks)
10mcg Vitamin D	All women
Omega 3	If you do not eat oily fish
Calcium	If you are struggling to eat 5 servings per day
High dose iron e.g. Ferrograd C or Galfer	If you have been advised by the hospital to take these. Some women expecting twins choose to take an extra iron supplement.

High Energy Recipes

High Energy Smoothie recipe:

- 1 frozen banana
- Handful of berries (or your favourite fruit!)
- 125g full fat yogurt
- 2 tablespoons oats
- Handful of nuts / nut butter
- ~100mls Orange juice/milk to blend
- Optional: Avocado

Method:

1. Place all ingredients into a blender and whizz up!

Peanut butter energy balls:

- 400g dates (pitted)
- 100g oats
- 100g nuts
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil

Method:

1. Blend nuts into a chunky flour.
2. Add the dates, coconut oil & peanut butter. Blend.
3. Roll the mixture into balls and leave in the fridge to set.

