

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. Eat regular meals throughout the day

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
- Apple slices & peanut butter
- Wholemeal scone
- Slice of brown bread with avocado & tomato/boiled egg/hummus/ tuna, sweet corn & mayonnaise /chicken & cheese
- 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, 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 nourishing fluids between meals instead of at meals so that you have space for more calorific foods. Eating food & drinking fluid at the same time can cause you to become full quicker. Drink fluids that contain energy for example milk, milkshakes, 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, pesto or cream cheese to sandwiches and wraps
- Add nut butter to porridge, toast and cereal
- Cook 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.

Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts & pulses	1 serving equals:
Meat & poultry	50-75g cooked lean meat (~1/2 palm)
Fish	100g cooked fish
Beans, peas & lentils	¾ cup or 6 dessertspoons
Eggs	2 eggs
Nuts and seeds or nut butter	40g
Tofu/tempeh or quorn	100g

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 to eat up to 5 portions of calcium-rich foods per day to meet your requirements.

A portion is: 1 glass (200ml) milk, 1 pot (125g) yoghurt or 30g cheese.

- Milk on cereal or porridge
- Add a glass of milk to meals
- Add cheese to your crackers, omelette, potatoes, salad or to your wrap/toasted sandwich
- 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 and/or milk
- Add custard to desserts
- 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.

Make sure you are also taking your 15 microgram (µg/mcg) vitamin D supplement to help absorb your calcium (10 micrograms will usually be in standard pregnancy multivitamins).

Iron

Women with twins require almost twice as much iron as women who are expecting a single baby.

- 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.
- It's recommended to take a pregnancy multivitamin containing 16-20mg iron to help maintain your levels
- You will have a blood test at your booking visit & your 28 week visit. If your blood test shows anaemia or iron deficiency, you will be advised to take a high dose iron supplement. Speak to your antenatal team if you would like further information on this

Oily fish

Oily fish (e.g. salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, herring) contain omega 3 fatty acids which are essential for 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 safe for pregnancy.

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 provider if you are unsure.

Supplement	Who should take it?
Antenatal multivitamin <i>Contains folic acid, vitamin D as well as many other vitamins and minerals needed for pregnancy.</i>	All women
400mcg/μg Folic acid <i>This amount will already be contained in a pregnancy multivitamin, therefore you do not need to take it separately if taking a multivitamin</i>	All women (some women need a higher dose which is prescribed for the first 12 weeks)
15mcg/μg Vitamin D <i>10mcg/μg will usually be contained in a pregnancy multivitamin</i>	All women
Omega 3	If you do not eat oily fish twice per week
Calcium	If you are struggling to eat 5 servings per day
High dose iron e.g. Ferrograd C or Galfer	You will have a blood test (haemoglobin and ferritin) to check for anaemia and iron deficiency. If your blood test shows you have anaemia or iron deficiency, you will be advised by the hospital to take a high dose iron supplement. If your blood test shows normal levels, it's recommended to take a pregnancy multivitamin containing iron to maintain these levels.

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.

