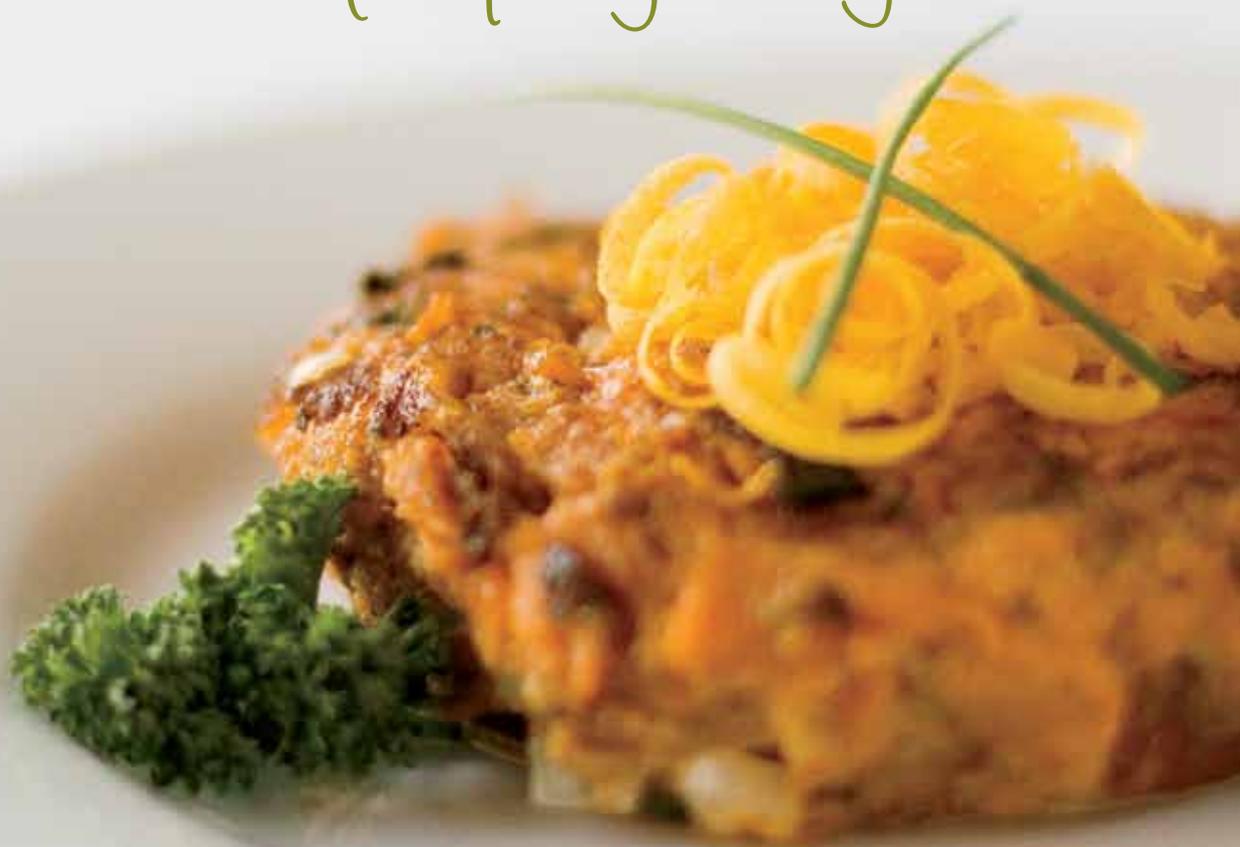


protein power

for pregnancy



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Bursting with blueberries, flax-seed, almond butter, and other goodies, this **Nourishing Smoothie** makes a perfect snack for mom-to-be.

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Keep your prenatal body and mind in balance with these recipes for nutrient-packed, slow-burning meals.

It's serendipitous that I'm writing this article on prenatal nutrition when I'm seven months pregnant. As a counselor and educator in health and wellness, I of course have an abundance of educational information to convey. But as a pregnant woman, my insights about this very important topic—food—run deeper and are more personal. For the past seven months, most of my waking moments have been consumed by thoughts of food. In fact, as I write this, I've just eaten—and am already thinking about my next meal.

Even knowing everything I do about healthy eating during pregnancy, there have been times when what I *know* will be nourishing for me and my baby is no match for my craving for sugar. Through this journey, I have discovered that my lusts for muffins, pancakes, and chocolate-chip cookies are strong indicators that I have not had enough protein. When I eat more protein, my cravings for sugar and simple carbohydrates subside, and my level of energy increases.

During pregnancy, extra protein is an essential component of the mother's diet. In fact, experts recommend that pregnant women eat 60 grams of protein a day. My cravings for sweets are strongest on days when I'm busy and stressed and not tuned in to my body. In those moments, rather than listen to my body's protein needs and nourish myself in healthier ways, I seek quick-burning fuel.

I am now keenly aware of how my food choices are intertwined with my emotional state, and affect not only my sense of well-being but also my baby. When I consciously choose a nutritious diet that includes an abundance of whole grains, vegetables, protein, and water, and minimize my intake of processed and refined foods, especially sugar, I feel more grounded and nourished.

Here I've put together some recipes that reflect these conscious choices, and that have gotten approval from my discerning family. By increasing your awareness of how the foods you eat affect you, and by then making more positive

dietary choices, you can help build a strong foundation for your baby that can be maintained throughout his or her lifetime—and yours. Good prenatal nutrition and self-care during pregnancy are two of the best ways you can start your baby off with a healthy beginning in life.

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❖ **For more tasty recipes**, go to www.mothering.com/links and sign up for our Peggy's Kitchen newsletter—or check out the “Benefits of a Probiotic Diet” article, as well as the past article “Sensuous Food for the Mother-to-be,” by Cynthia Lair.



Francie Healey is a Certified Health Counselor and Licensed Mental Health Counselor, and is featured in Mothering.com's online forum "Ask the Experts." For other

resources, visit www.franciehealey.com. Francie is the mother of two daughters, Madeleine (5) and newborn Gracie.



Salmon and Sweet Potato Cakes

This recipe contains an abundance of protein, and salmon and flax seeds are great sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Parsley is rich in antioxidant nutrients and folate, and is high in vitamin C. The shallots add a dimension of sweetness; during this pregnancy, I have been able to tolerate them well in contrast to stronger onions. And this recipe is kid-tested: My five-year-old daughter, Madeleine, ate three cakes and thought them a delicious dinner!

- 2 large sweet potatoes with skins, cubed
- 2 6-oz. cans wild Alaskan salmon (boneless, skinless)
- ½ cup cornmeal
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 shallot, finely chopped (optional, depending on level of tolerance to onions)
- ⅓ cup parsley, finely chopped
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary or 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, chopped
- 1 scallion, chopped (optional, depending on tolerance level)
- 3 tablespoons ground flaxseed
- 3 eggs
- 3 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter) or extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 lemons, cut in wedges

Boil sweet potatoes for 15 minutes or until tender. Drain and mash in large bowl. Add drained salmon and remaining ingredients, except lemon wedges and ghee or oil. Mix well. Shape mixture into palm-sized patties (about 2 inches in diameter).

In large skillet, preferably iron, heat ghee or oil over medium-low heat. Add patties and cook until undersides are slightly golden (about 3 minutes per side). Use wide spatula to flip patties twice. Serve salmon cakes over bed of greens with lemon wedges.

Preparation: 30 minutes

Serves 4 (approximately 16 patties)

Spinach Mushroom Frittata

I like eggs and the protein they provide, but during this pregnancy I've gotten a bit tired of them. I find this dish more interesting and enjoyable, and I like the added dimension of red potatoes. Spinach is high in antioxidants and a rich source of folate, which is needed in pregnancy to reduce the risk of birth defects.

- 8 eggs
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- pinch turmeric
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 large shallot, chopped (optional)
- 1½ cups shiitake or other mushrooms
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1 tablespoon cilantro or parsley, finely chopped
- 3–4 medium red potatoes, thinly sliced

Beat together eggs, cheese, turmeric, and salt. Set aside.

In large skillet, heat 3 tablespoons olive oil and broth over medium-low heat. Add shallot, and stir often until soft (3–5 minutes). Add mushrooms and sauté until tender (3–5 minutes). Stir in spinach and cilantro and sauté 2 minutes, then add mixture to egg mixture.

In large skillet, heat remaining oil over medium heat, fully coating bottom of skillet. Spread red potatoes over bottom of skillet in one or two thin layers and cook 5 minutes over medium heat. Pour egg-and-vegetable mixture over potatoes, turn heat down to low-medium, and cover. Cook about 20 minutes, periodically checking to see if eggs are firm. When done, run rubber spatula around edge of frittata, cut in wedges, and serve.

Preparation: 45 minutes

Serves 4

Nourishing Smoothie



This smoothie makes a nourishing and energizing snack rich in vitamins, antioxidants, and fiber—and my family likes it. Blueberries, one of the richest sources of antioxidants around, are also a good source of fiber, which has been shown to improve digestive health and prevent constipation. Blueberries also have useful amounts of vitamin C, potassium, calcium, and magnesium, and raspberries contain calcium, fiber, and folate.

- 2 ripe bananas
- ½ can (7 oz.) coconut milk or milk of choice
- 1 cup plain kefir (easily digestible) or plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons almond butter
- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
- 1 cup fresh or frozen berries (blueberries and/or raspberries recommended)

Combine all ingredients in blender and blend until smooth. For a little extra flavor, add a few drops of vanilla extract. Add honey to sweeten.

Preparation: 10 minutes

Serves 4

Vegetable Pancakes

This creative adaptation of the traditional pancake recipe is fairly simple to make, and it's a delicious and healthy snack that kids like! These satisfy my own desire for pancakes while providing protein and an abundance of vitamins and minerals. (Source: Deborah Keller, ND, LM)

- 2 cups vegetables (zucchini, yellow squash, carrots), grated or finely diced (you can also add kale and broccoli florets)
- ½ cup red onion or shallot, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 egg
- ½ cup wheat flour
- salt to taste
- ½ cup pasteurized goat or feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil

In large bowl, mix vegetables and shallot. Stir in egg. Mix in flour and salt, then add cheese. Let sit 10 minutes.

Coat frying pan with coconut oil over medium to low heat. Using ladle to measure out each pancake, pour batter into frying pan and cook 3–5 minutes on each side.

Preparation: 30 minutes

Serves 4

What our taste buds told us

The delectable eats pictured in this “Peggy’s Kitchen” were prepared by Fulfillment Manager Sarah Patamia, Features Editor Candace Walsh, and Managing Editor Melissa Chianta. We feasted on their fare and recorded our opinions at www.mothersing.com/links. Look for “Staff Taste Test.”

Coconut Carrot Soup

Coconut is quite nutritious; it contains lauric acid, which is found in mother's milk and has been shown to strengthen the immune system. Sweet potatoes are a good source of vitamins A and C and antioxidants. I add ginger to aid with pregnancy-related digestive discomfort and nausea. As for the taste, my daughter and husband both like this soup very much, and have found that adding lime juice greatly enhances the flavor. I agree.

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil or extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 large shallot, chopped (optional)
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger, sliced
- 1½ teaspoons curry powder
- 5 medium carrots, peeled, sliced into rounds
- 2 cups sweet potatoes, cubed
- 1 can (13.5 oz.) unsweetened coconut milk

- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 2 limes, cut in wedges

In medium-size pot, heat oil and 2 tablespoons broth over medium heat. Add shallot and sauté about 5 minutes. Add ginger, sauté another 2 minutes. Add curry powder and mix well.

Add remaining broth, carrots, and sweet potatoes, and simmer on medium-high heat until vegetables are tender (about 15 minutes). Add coconut milk, and salt and pepper to taste.

Blend in batches, making sure blender is not more than half full. Return to soup pot and reheat.

Serve in bowls, garnished with cilantro and fresh-squeezed lime juice to taste.

Preparation: 30 minutes

Serves 4





Quinoa Pilaf

Quinoa is a versatile grain and easy to prepare. Recently rediscovered, this ancient cereal is thought to have been the “gold of the Incas,” and is one of the least allergenic of all grains. Quinoa is high in protein, includes all the essential amino acids, is an excellent source of fiber, and a very good source of iron and magnesium. (I’ve noticed that when I increase my magnesium intake, I’m less prone to cramps in my limbs.) This quinoa pilaf can be a side or a main dish. You can add chicken to this recipe, and/or substitute for the zucchini a variety of different vegetables, such as spinach, chard, artichokes, or carrots.

- 1½ cups quinoa, rinsed, drained
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth or water
- ¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large shallot, chopped (optional)
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 1½ cups zucchini, chopped
- ½ cup pasteurized goat cheese, crumbled
- salt to taste

Preheat oven to 350° F.

In fine sieve, rinse quinoa under cold running water 1–2 minutes to remove this grain’s coating of saponin, a bitter, resin-like glucoside. Add quinoa and broth or water to saucepan, bring to boil, then reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer. Cover and cook until quinoa is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed (20–25 minutes).

On ungreased baking sheet, arrange pumpkin seeds in single layer. Bake 3–5 minutes, or until slightly darkened in color. Set aside. (You can also buy pre-roasted pumpkin seeds.)

Meanwhile, in saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add shallot and ginger and sauté, stirring often, until softened (3–5 minutes). Add zucchini and stir until tender (5–7 minutes).

When quinoa is cooked, add shallot-and-zucchini mixture and mix in goat cheese. Stir to fluff, then add salt to taste. Serve hot, topped with toasted pumpkin seeds.

Preparation: 30 minutes

Serves 4

Stuffed Acorn Squash with Black Beans

In addition to antioxidants, each cup of black beans provides fiber and about 15 grams of protein. I’ve found that the mildly sweet flavor of squash satisfies some of my craving for sweets, while providing vitamin C, beta-carotene, folate, and more fiber. This dish is visually appealing and very nourishing.

- 4 acorn squash
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 shallot, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup water or low-sodium vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 15-oz. cans black beans, drained and rinsed, or 3 cups cooked black beans
- 1½ cups cooked whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, etc.; optional)
- 2 cups chopped fresh spinach
- ½ cup pasteurized goat or Parmesan cheese, crumbled
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- ⅓ cup pumpkin seeds, toasted

Preheat oven to 375° F.

Lightly coat large baking sheet with oil or cooking spray. Cut squash in half horizontally. Scoop out and discard seeds. Place squash cut-side down on baking sheet. Bake until tender (about 45 minutes).

Heat olive oil in heavy medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallot and seasonings. Sauté, stirring often until shallot softens (about 5 minutes). Stir in water, beans, cooked grains (optional), and spinach. Simmer about 10 minutes, mashing and stirring mixture with back of fork. If beans seem too dry, add small amounts of water until desired consistency is reached. Adjust seasonings.

Remove pan from heat. With back of fork, continue to break up bean mixture to desired consistency.

When squash are tender, remove and reduce oven temperature to 325°. Fill squash halves with bean mixture and top with cheese. Place on baking sheet, return to oven, and bake until filling is heated through and cheese is melted (8–10 minutes). Garnish squash with cilantro and pumpkin seeds.

Preparation: 60 minutes (most of which is baking time)

Serves 4



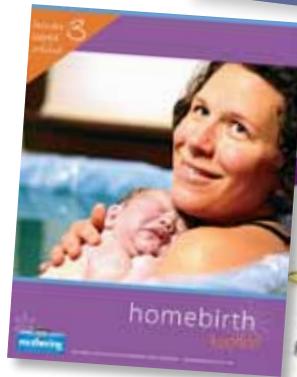
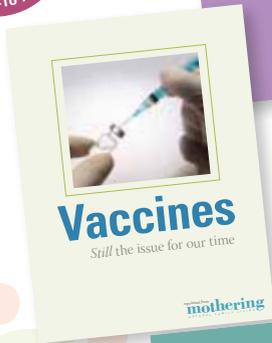
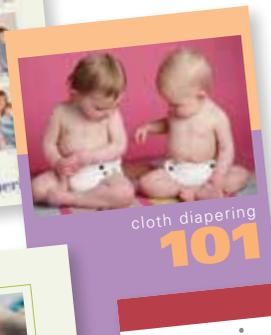
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