JOLIE

A CLIENT NUTRITION GUIDE

Nourishing Your First Trimester

A gentle food guide for the early weeks — the nutrients that matter most, easy-on-the-stomach ideas for nausea and food aversions, and a sample day of eating that works even when appetite is unpredictable.

Vegetarian · Pescatarian · Omnivore

THE ESSENTIALS

Key Nutrients to Prioritize

Energy needs don't actually go up yet this trimester — the priority is a handful of nutrients that matter enormously for early development, especially folate, while working around whatever nausea and aversions show up. The best food right now is the food you can keep down; a prenatal vitamin is your safety net. Sources below start with vegetarian staples, with easy fish and meat swaps noted for pescatarian and omnivore clients.

Folate

600mcg / day

Why it matters: Your baby's neural tube develops in these very first weeks, often before a pregnancy is even confirmed — making this the single most important nutrient right now.

Reach for: Fortified cereal, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, spinach, avocado, orange juice, prenatal vitamin.

All diets: folate is a plant nutrient, so these sources are the same no matter how you eat.

Vitamin B6

1.9mg / day

Why it matters: May help take the edge off nausea, and supports your baby's earliest brain development.

Reach for: Fortified cereal, bananas, avocado, potatoes, chickpeas, fortified nutritional yeast.

+ Pescatarian/Omnivore: salmon, chicken breast, turkey.

Protein

~71g / day

Why it matters: Lays the groundwork for the placenta and your baby's earliest cells — go with whatever sits well right now.

Reach for: Yogurt, cheese, eggs (if tolerated), smooth nut butters, tofu, cottage cheese.

+ Pescatarian/Omnivore: mild fish like cod or tilapia; broth-based soup with shredded chicken.

Iron

27mg / day

Why it matters: Blood volume is just beginning to expand to support your growing baby.

Reach for: Fortified cereal, lentils, spinach, pumpkin seeds, with vitamin C to boost absorption.

+ Pescatarian/Omnivore: sardines, shrimp; red meat & dark poultry meat.

Choline

450mg / day

Why it matters: Supports your baby's earliest brain and spinal cord development.

Reach for: Eggs (especially yolks), soy milk, tofu, wheat germ.

+ Pescatarian/Omnivore: salmon, shrimp; chicken.

Vitamin B12

2.6mcg / day

Why it matters: Essential for your baby's developing nervous system from the very start.

Reach for: Eggs, dairy, fortified nutritional yeast, fortified plant milk, or a prenatal supplement.

+ Pescatarian/Omnivore: naturally abundant in fish, poultry & meat.

Calcium

1,000mg / day

Why it matters: Keeps your own bone stores protected as baby starts drawing on your supply.

Reach for: Milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified plant milk, calcium-set tofu.

+ Pescatarian: canned salmon or sardines with bones.

Vitamin D

600 IU / day

Why it matters: Works with calcium and supports your own immune health during this early window.

Reach for: Fortified milk, egg yolks, mushrooms, sensible sun exposure, prenatal vitamin.

+ Pescatarian: salmon, sardines.

ON YOUR PLATE

Eating Through the Early Weeks

Appetite and tolerance swing wildly in the first trimester, and that's normal. Lean on whatever is gentle and appealing right now — "balanced" can wait until the nausea eases, usually by week 12–14.

GENTLE ON THE STOMACH

as tolerated

- Crackers, pretzels, plain toast
- Rice, plain pasta, oatmeal
- Bananas, applesauce

PROTEIN, HOWEVER IT SITS

all diets

- Eggs, yogurt, cheese
- Smooth nut butter
- Tofu, cottage cheese

GINGER & CITRUS

for nausea

- Ginger tea, ginger chews
- Lemon water
- Citrus fruit

HEALTHY FATS

as tolerated

- Avocado, olive oil
- Nuts & nut butter

FOLATE-RICH FOODS

priority this trimester

- Lentils, chickpeas, leafy greens
- Fortified cereal
- Avocado, orange juice

GENTLE FISH & POULTRY

pescatarian & omnivore

- Mild fish — cod, tilapia
- Chicken or turkey broth-based soup
- Plain shredded chicken

HYDRATION & ELECTROLYTES

sip often

- Water, herbal tea
- Coconut water or electrolyte drinks
- Broth, fruit popsicles

DAIRY & ALTERNATIVES

unsweetened

- Milk, plain yogurt
- Cheese (pasteurized)
- Fortified plant milk

If nothing sounds good: that's normal, and it doesn't last. Try eating before you're hungry rather than waiting, keep something bland within reach at all times, and let go of "balanced" for now — a few crackers and a prenatal vitamin are a perfectly good day when nausea is running the show.

PUT IT TOGETHER

A Sample Day of Eating

MEAL	WHAT'S ON THE PLATE
On Waking	A few plain crackers or dry cereal, eaten before getting out of bed — all diets
Breakfast	Toast with a thin layer of nut butter, or oatmeal with banana — whatever sits well (all diets)
Snack	String cheese or yogurt, with sipped ginger tea — all diets
Lunch	Simple pasta with olive oil and parmesan, a fruit-and-yogurt smoothie, or crackers with hummus. **Pescatarian/omnivore:** a bowl of chicken noodle or miso soup with shrimp can be easy to tolerate too.
Snack	Fruit and a small handful of nuts, or a popsicle if nothing else appeals — all diets
Dinner	A familiar, gentle meal — grilled cheese, or a baked potato with beans. **Pescatarian/omnivore:** plain baked fish or a simple chicken and rice bowl often sits well too.
Evening	Herbal tea and a few pretzels if hunger strikes — all diets

FIRST TRIMESTER NOTES

A Few Extra Habits

Small & frequent wins
Eating every 2–3 hours keeps your stomach from going empty, which tends to make nausea worse.

Keep a snack by the bed
A few crackers before you even sit up can help blunt morning queasiness.

Cold beats hot
Strong cooking smells can trigger nausea — cold sandwiches, smoothies, or yogurt are often easier than hot meals.

Sip, don't guzzle
Separate fluids from meals and sip steadily through the day rather than drinking a lot all at once.

GOOD TO KNOW

Safety Notes

GENERAL PREGNANCY FOOD SAFETY

- Unpasteurized milk, cheese, or juice
- Soft-ripened cheeses unless labeled pasteurized
- Raw or undercooked eggs
- Raw sprouts (alfalfa, clover, radish)
- Deli salads left unrefrigerated
- Alcohol
- Caffeine — keep under 200mg/day
- Highly processed, ultra-refined snacks

FOR PESCATARIAN & OMNIVORE CLIENTS

Fish: stick to 2–3 servings (about 8–12oz) a week of low-mercury choices — salmon, shrimp, tilapia, cod, sardines, canned light tuna. Avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish, and skip raw fish (sushi, sashimi, oysters) and refrigerated smoked seafood. **Meat & poultry:** cook thoroughly, heat deli meats and hot dogs until steaming, and skip unpasteurized patés and meat spreads.

WHEN TO CHECK IN WITH YOUR PROVIDER

Occasional nausea is normal, but reach out if you can't keep any food or fluids down for 24 hours, you're losing weight, you feel dizzy or notice very infrequent urination (signs of dehydration), or nothing has let up by week 14. These can be signs of hyperemesis gravidarum, and there are treatments that help.

This guide offers general, gentle eating ideas for vegetarian, pescatarian, and omnivore clients and is not a substitute for medical advice. Appetite and nausea vary enormously in the first trimester — do what you can, be patient with yourself, and lean on your OB, midwife, or a registered dietitian if you're struggling to keep food down.

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