

An introduction to healthy eating

Nutrition plays an important role in your fertility and eating a healthy diet is one of the ways you can help to proactively improve your chances of a successful pregnancy. Together with Sims IVF, we have provided four weeks of meal plans to help you make better choices and include essential nutrients for fertility.

The main elements of a healthy fertility diet are as follows:

1. **Increase your antioxidants:** aim for 2 pieces of fruit and 5 vegetables daily. Remember to 'eat a rainbow' as different plants have a different array of antioxidants
2. **Snack on nuts and seeds daily:** nuts and seeds are high in beneficial fats and critical minerals for healthy sperm and eggs such as zinc and selenium
3. **Eat more fish:** Including oily fish up to four times per week will provide you with omega 3 which is very beneficial in supporting fertility, especially in cases of immune issues or thyroid conditions
4. **Eat less meat:** if you eat a lot of meat, consider cutting down to one to two portions per week. Try to eat vegetarian dinners at least twice per week; the leftovers make a great lunch
5. **Switch to wholegrains:** wholegrain pasta, 100% wholemeal bread and wholegrain rice contain many more nutrients than the refined versions and are much higher in fibre

Cutting down on or avoiding alcohol, caffeine and other toxins before your cycle is also important. See our 'Nutritional Support for Fertility' information sheet for more detailed information on this and on essential nutrients for a healthy conception and pregnancy.

Your four week plan...

The meal plans will help you to optimise your diet for fertility. It takes three months to make new sperm and for eggs to mature so ideally maintain this pattern of eating before and throughout your fertility treatment.

Our plan suggests eating three small meals per day with two healthy snacks. This provides you with a steady source of energy, avoiding energy dips which can increase levels of stress hormones and contribute to weight gain and hormonal imbalance. Eating regularly also decreases cravings for carbohydrates and sweet treats, making it easier to make healthy choices.

All recipes are designed to be easy (and usually quick) to make. We suggest trying one or two new dishes per week. Once you have made them a couple of times, they are more likely to become part of your routine. Adapt them to suit your own tastes, for example fish, chickpeas or other beans can be used instead of chicken in most recipes. Just remember to change your cooking times accordingly.

You can use these meal plans as a guide and adapt them to your own personal preferences. We know that everyone is different and if you need more specific guidance or additional support please just let us know how we can help you to achieve your goals.

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