



MINISTERO  
DELL'INTERNO

## NUTRITION DURING PREGNANCY

SOS Technical Assistance Activities  
Professional Dietetics

**Nutrition plays an essential role** throughout a woman's life, pregnancy included.

Maintaining or achieving a **good nutritional status**, starting from the pre-conception period, has a positive impact on the progress of pregnancy and the child's development long after birth. The first 1000 days of life (from conception to the age of two) represent a key period for the prevention of diseases in adult life through an adequate contribution of energy and nutrients.

During pregnancy, nutritional choices should be varied as much as possible, as this is an essential prerequisite for a balanced nutrition.

In fact, no food can be considered complete in an absolute sense or contain all the nutritional principles (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, mineral salts and fibres) in quantities necessary to cover the requirements of mother and newborn.

However, a woman's needs during pregnancy are slightly higher than those of an adult person and can be covered by introducing simple qualitative and quantitative changes to the Mediterranean dietary model.



What is recommended, therefore, is  
"eating twice as good" rather  
than "eating for two".



### **VEGETABLES AND FRUIT: VARY THE COLOURS AND ACCOMMODATE SEASONALITY**

Eat **5 portions** a day between fruit and vegetables. Choose an abundance of vegetables of different colours, paying regard to **seasonality**. Vegetables and fruit are not a mere side dish, but can feature as main ingredients in all dishes.

Give preference to seasonal fruit and try varying the type. **BETTER A FRESH FRUIT THAN A FRUIT JUICE.**

**Dry fruit** (walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, etc.) cannot replace fresh fruit but can be a valid snack.

### **MAIN CONDIMENT: EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**

For seasoning and cooking, give preference to extra virgin olive oil. If you use seed oils, choose cold-pressed ones.

To reduce the consumption of salt, use seeds, spices and aromatic herbs

### **DRINKS: GIVE PREFERENCE TO WATER**

Drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day, avoid sugary drinks and fruit juices.

Limit beverages that contain caffeine (maximum 2 coffee cups a day).

Do not drink alcohol during pregnancy or pregnancy

### **VARY THE SOURCES OF PROTEINS**

For second course, alternate one of the following protein sources with each meal:

- **fish** (preferably blue) at least 3 times a week;
- **legumes** (chickpeas, beans, lentils and peas) at least 3 times a week. Together with a portion of cereals, they represent an excellent single dish;
- **white meat** (chicken, turkey, rabbit);
- **cheeses** (better fresh than seasoned ones);
- well cooked **eggs**
- **red meat and cured meats** (limit the frequency of their consumption)

### **CEREALS AND DERIVATIVES WITH EVERY MEAL: WHOLEMEAL BETTER**

Pasta, bread and rice, preferably unprocessed, lie at the root of Mediterranean diet.

Give preference to cereal grains, such as barley, spelt, oats, rye, buckwheat, quinoa and brown rice.

When you buy unprocessed products, make sure that the first ingredient on the list is **whole wheat flour**. Potatoes are a source of carbohydrates to alternate with pasta or bread.