



# FOOD FOR FERTILITY

Please note, this is not medical advice — just recommendations from a fertility coach who is also on the journey.

Here's an overview of suggestions for food/eating for fertility. I hope it's not too overwhelming! I am super happy to walk through which of these are most important for you based on your case and what is accessible to you, so it feels more manageable. Also, not all changes are necessary to have a successful pregnancy. These are just evidence based things that are proven to strengthen fertility!

Note: All of these things are for males and females unless otherwise specified

## What to Eat

### The Fertility Plate

- **The Golden Ratio:** At every meal, aim for 30g of protein, healthy fats, fiber, and a rainbow of colorful veggies. Think Mediterranean diet and whole foods.
- **The Daily Goal:** Target 90g of protein total.
- **Warmth for the Womb:** Prioritize warm, cooked whole foods like stews and soups to support reproductive circulation. Try to only eat cold foods/drinks on occasion.

### Proteins & Fats

- **Clean Proteins:** Choose grass-fed, hormone-free meats and low-mercury fish (salmon, cod, oysters) as much as possible, plus eggs, lentils, beans, quinoa.
- **The "Good" Fats:** Don't be afraid of fats! Use single-origin olive oil, ghee, butter, coconut oil, and avocados. They help with hormone production, egg and sperm quality, blood sugar and insulin stability.
- **The Nut & Seed Boost:** 2 [Brazil nuts](#) daily for thyroid health. [Chia](#), [flax](#) for Omega-3s. Sunflower seeds.
  - **Men:** Focus on [walnuts](#) and [pumpkin seeds](#) for sperm vitality.
  - **Women:** Look into seed cycling.

### Organic vs Not

- **Organic:** The things that are most important to eat organic are:
- **The "Clean 15":** Eat organic, but save money by buying these non-organic: Avocados, sweet corn, pineapple, onions, papaya, sweet peas (frozen), asparagus, honeydew melon, kiwi, cabbage, mushrooms, mangoes, sweet potatoes, watermelon, carrots.
- If organic is not available soak in baking soda or vinegar for 15-20 mins to reduce pesticides.



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## What to Eat Continued

### Gut Health & Defense

- **Microbiome Support:**
  - **Eat Prebiotics** (garlic, leeks, asparagus, onions, garlic, artichokes, chicory root, dandelion root, bran, oat bran, beans, apples, tomatoes, psyllium husk, burdock root, yacon root, jicama, lentils, tofu, cashews, pistachios, red kidney beans, chickpeas, baked beans, split peas, lima beans.c) to feed good bacteria.
  - **Eat Probiotics** (kimchi, kefir (if doing dairy), sauerkraut etc) to keep the gut balanced.
- **Antioxidant Armor:** Think acai, berries, pomegranate, goji berries, cranberries, green leafy veggies, [dark chocolate](#), and [decaf green tea](#) to lower oxidative stress.
- **Spice it Up:** Use turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, [black sesame](#), garlic, cinnamon, fenugreek, cumin, dill, peppermint, oregano, thyme, sage, rosemary, allspice, cinnamon, clove to fight inflammation.

## What Not to Eat

### The "Inflammation" Filter

- **Reduce the Load:** Cut out processed foods, fried items, white starches (bread, pasta, whole potatoes), refined sugar as much as possible. Plus synthetic food dyes, artificial preservatives, and "natural flavors."
- **Watch Seed Oils:** Seed oils are rich in linoleic acid, an Omega-6 fatty acid. While the body needs some Omega-6, the modern diet often has a ratio of 20:1 (Omega-6 to Omega-3), whereas a ratio closer to 2:1 is ideal for fertility. This imbalance can lead to chronic systemic inflammation which can affect hormones, egg quality, sperm quality, implantation etc.
- **Cook With:** Aim to cook with Avocado oil, and drizzle with Olive Oil (single sourced) on your food before serving.
- **Canned food:** Make sure it has BPA free lining.

### Men

- **Men:** Limit whole dairy, sugary drinks/sweets, processed meat, and soy which can impact sperm health.





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## When to Eat

### Timing Matters

- **The First Hour:** Eat breakfast within 30–60 minutes of waking up to jumpstart your hormones. This helps with ovulation!
- **Women Especially:** Eat protein every 4 hours to keep blood sugar and insulin stable (for everyone), and to support egg quality for women.
- **Consistency is Key:** Aim to eat all three meals of the day at as close to the same time as possible. This assists with balancing our circadian rhythm, which helps support hormone levels and overall fertility. Watch glucose spikes, as they cause inflammation.
- **12 Hour Rule:** Try to give your body 12 hours at night without food to rest and repair. People have mixed opinions on intermittent fasting while TTC, but we know for sure 12 hours is helpful.
- **No Late Night Snacking:**
  - This can cause higher-than-normal insulin spikes, cortisol spikes, and can suppress melatonin production. If you are feeling hungry before bed, try eating a spoonful of butter, ghee, or pumpkin seeds as they provide the stable fats and minerals your body needs to maintain a state of safety and repair all night long.

## Quantity of Food

### More is Better!

- **Women:** You need to eat enough food! Your body needs to know it has enough nutrients to procreate and sustain a pregnancy.
  - Studies and real life experiences show that once proper calories and nutrition has been restored, ovulation can return or be stronger, and your body feels safe enough to get pregnant. If your body is in survival mode, it will protect itself. This is not where reproduction comes in.
  - Rather than focusing on calorie counting, women trying to conceive should emphasize **diet quality**.
- **BMI:** The focus should be on achieving and maintaining a healthy weight (BMI 18.5-25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) through a balanced diet rather than specific caloric targets.
- If you have or do struggle with disordered eating make sure to get support with treatment, a therapist, a fertility nutritionist, a fertility coach, a naturopathic or functional medicine doctor, or whatever is needed for your specific case, and tell your doctors.



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## Considerations

### Triggers and Sensitivities

- **Identify Triggers:** Consider a break from gluten and dairy. Not everyone needs to cut these out, but they can lead to overall inflammation in the body, and dairy can activate Leaky gut, which can affect how our body absorbs nutrients along with overall inflammation. If you are having any symptoms such as skin rashes, acne, joint pain, try cutting them out and seeing if these symptoms subside. You can also test for Celiac with the Celiac Disease Comp Panel W/Gliadin Ab (Igg).
- **Top allergens:** Dairy, Gluten/Wheat, Soy, Eggs, Corn, Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Shellfish, Fish, Nightshades (Tomatoes, Potatoes, Peppers, Eggplant), Legumes (Beans, Lentils, Peanuts), Sesame are common triggers for low-grade, systemic inflammation. Gluten (Wheat, Barley, Rye). Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt, Butter), Refined Sugar, Artificial Sweeteners, Processed Meats, Alcohol, Seed Oils (Canola, Soybean, Vegetable, Safflower), Caffeine, Grains (Oats, Rice, Corn), Nuts and Seeds are other common allergens.
  - **Cutting Them Out:** Cut out the top 10 allergens for 21-30 days helps quiet "invisible" systemic inflammation that can otherwise interfere with ovulation hormones and create a hostile environment for implantation. To find your specific triggers, you reintroduce one food at a time over a three-day period while carefully tracking delayed symptoms like brain fog, skin flares, or mood shifts.
- **Food Sensitivities:** Have differing thought processes between different paradigms.
  - Can be tested through a blood test by US BioTek Laboratories. Has to be ordered by a practitioner.
  - **Eastern Medicine Believes:** Don't test for food sensitivities. Should only test for actual allergies. These tests are not always valid, and you could show up having a food sensitivity to something because you eat a lot of it. These also change over time.
  - **Western Medicine Believes:** Test for food sensitivities and then eliminate those that are moderate or high, at eat in moderation what's low. Elimination diet. Can potentially add back in later.

### Diets etc

- **Dieting is not recommended while TTC:** However, there are special "diets" for thyroid conditions and insulin resistance (prediabetes, or diabetes), that can be important to consider when TTC.
- **Overwhelm:** It can feel overwhelming trying to eat for 3 different things, so think warm whole food, do the best you can, and reach out for support or questions if you need to!



## Additional Considerations

It's important to note that these food suggestions are never "one size fits all." The specific food recommendations important for you depend on your unique medical history, lifestyle factors, and previous testing and treatment outcomes.

My goal as a Fertility Coach and Educator is to help you learn about options that are available which may improve your chances of a successful pregnancy. While I provide the suggestions and research to empower your journey, a thorough consultation with your medical team—including your RE, endocrinologist, naturopathic doctor, reproductive immunologist, etc.—is crucial to finalizing your clinical plan.

I am here to help you prep for those appointments, make sense of the results, and assist with next steps. Please reach out with any questions!



Hi, I'm Mariah Tuffy Joseph, MSW — a Fertility Coach and Educator. I offer personalized support, guidance, education, tools and resources to help you navigate the practical, physical, emotional and relational challenges of fertility, pregnancy loss, and sexual health. I specialize in helping clients uncover and address root causes of fertility challenges and recurrent pregnancy loss, as well as providing guidance for natural and IVF conception, especially for women over 35.

I lead One on One and Couples Sessions. I also hold Online and In Person Support Groups for women (South Florida, USA).

I am on this intense life changing fertility journey with you—after 3 years, 3 losses, multiple fertility programs, and 3+ IVF cycles, we still don't have our baby...



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