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10 Simple Ways to Upgrade



Healthy eating doesn't mean that you have to overhaul your habits. These little tweaks can make a big difference.

With a baby on the way, chances are your to-do list is plenty long: Get the nursery in order. Sign up for [childbirth education classes](#). Speak with your benefits manager. It may seem like there aren't enough

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hours in the day, which can make the task of prepping and eating healthy meals and **snacks** seem overwhelming.

But hitting all your nutrition bases doesn't mean that you have to completely overhaul your current habits, says Sharon Richter, R.D., a dietitian based in New York City. A few simple changes can go a long way in adding more of those essential nutrients to your diet.

Read on to learn the little moves that can add up to big results.

1. Habit: Using iceberg lettuce for salads

Upgrade: Swap in spinach

Although iceberg lettuce is low in calories and contains vitamin A, you'll get a bigger nutrient punch from a dark

leafy green, such as spinach. **Spinach** is packed with folate, an important vitamin for your baby's neural development: One cup of the veggie delivers more than 60 percent of your daily needs. It also contains a dose of iron, and pregnant women need twice as much of the mineral, or 27 milligrams (mg) each day. Not accustomed to the taste of spinach? Try baby spinach leaves, which have a milder flavor.

2. Habit: Seasoning food with salt

Upgrade: Reach for spices

If you watch *Top Chef*, you know that nothing makes a dish fall flat more than sparse seasoning. But excess sodium can lead to bloating, not to mention an increased risk of high blood pressure. And the majority of Americans are consuming too much of the salty stuff—3,600 mg a day, more than twice than the 1,500 mg limit recommended by the **American Heart Association**.

Instead of reaching for that shaker, try livening up your food with spices. According to research published in **Nutrition Journal**, dried spices are one of the top sources of disease-fighting antioxidants. So sprinkle some cumin on your sweet potato, rosemary on that chicken breast or thyme on those scrambled eggs—get creative!

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3. Habit: Adding a dollop of sour cream

Upgrade: Try nonfat yogurt

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Plain yogurt has the same creaminess of sour cream, but it also provides calcium, a mineral important to your child's skeletal development. One cup of yogurt contains 488 mg of calcium—nearly half of the 1,000 mg needed daily by expectant mothers. So swap yogurt for sour cream: Add a dollop to that bowl of chili or tacos, or stir it into mashed potatoes. If you want to try using it in hot dishes, take the pot off the stove before stirring it in; heat can cause the yogurt to separate.

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