

Mindfulness

Mindfulness -the practice of being present and aware without judgment, can be a powerful tool to help you understand and manage cravings in a healthy way.

- **Urge surfing** - Before reaching for a craving, take a moment to pause. Ask yourself: Do I truly need this right now, or is this just a passing urge? Most cravings fade within 10–15 minutes. Give yourself a short break to see if it passes.
- **Tune into your hunger** - Check in with your body: On a scale of 1 to 10, how hungry am I?
-If you're genuinely hungry, try to choose a nourishing option. If it's not mealtime, go for a healthy snack or consider a healthier version of the food you're craving.
- **Mindful Eating Practice** - Eat slowly and without distractions. Pay attention to textures, flavours, and how your body feels before, during, and after eating
- **Practice self-kindness**- If you do give in to a craving, don't feel guilty. Occasional treats are perfectly fine and can be part of a balanced diet. What matters is your overall pattern of eating, not one choice.

If the information in this leaflet does not help or if you have any concerns remember to discuss this with your GP or midwife.



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HEALTHY PREGNANCY

Pregnancy symptoms and diet

Cravings and aversions





Cravings and aversions

Many women experience cravings and aversions for certain foods and drinks in pregnancy.

Some common aversions to alcoholic drinks, caffeinated drinks and fatty foods can actually be beneficial in pregnancy. Other aversions can include foods with strong smells.

Typically it's fine to avoid aversions in pregnancy, as long as you are eating a variety of foods to ensure you and baby are getting all the nutrition you need - **if you are unsure check out the free Foodwise in Pregnancy app.**

Frequently craved foods often include dairy, sweet foods, fruit, fruit juices, and savoury snacks. Some cravings are harmless and can be helpful as part of a balanced diet but others may lead to overeating.

If you are having cravings for foods and drinks that are high in sugar, salt and/or fat, it is important to keep these to less often and in small amounts.

If cravings and aversions mean that a very limited diet is eaten, this could mean that important nutrients are missing and you may require support from a dietitian - speak to your GP or midwife if you have any concerns.

Craving for non-food items (such as soil, coal, pencil leads or washing powder), is called pica, and has sometimes been reported among pregnant women. You should seek advice from your GP or midwife as eating non-food items can be harmful.

Managing cravings

Having regular meals can help to manage cravings as it prevents you getting too hungry.

Sometimes thirst is mistaken for hunger, try having a drink of water, decaf tea or coffee, or sugar free drink.

Limit how often you buy high fat and sugar items, so they are not always in the house and choose smaller portions e.g. mini bags or bars of chocolate/ sweets and small individual packets of crisps.

Have easy to grab healthy snacks in your bag or at home, for example fruit, pre-chopped vegetable sticks with humous or mini packets of breadsticks

Do something to take your mind off the craving- e.g. going for a walk, doing some housework, having a bath or reading a book.

Practice mindfulness (see the back of this leaflet for more information)



For more advice on cravings and aversions see:
Pregnancy cravings and food aversions | Tommy's
www.Tommys.org

