

# That magic number

The food lover's guide getting your extra 300 calories a day

By **Kate Geagan M.S., R.D.**


We all know the saying, but are you really “eating for two” now that you’re sporting a baby bump? And, if so, do you have license to reach for a second helping because “the baby loves chocolate cake?” Tempting, for sure—but wrong!

Although it’s true your baby’s fully forming in the first trimester, it isn’t until the second that her major growth starts. That’s when your calorie needs go up an extra 300 a day, a requirement that lasts for the remainder of your pregnancy. The goal, of course, is to get these extra calories from healthy, baby-building sources, rather than donuts and ice cream.

So, technically you’re not so much eating for two as you are eating for one healthy, hungry pregnant momma. And considering that an increasing number of women in the United States are starting their pregnancies at higher-than-ideal body weights, throwing out the eating-for-two notion is more important than ever.

Fortunately, you don’t have to get too hung up on getting exactly 300 calories each and every day. “Some days you’ll be extra hungry and eat an additional 500 calories, and other days

food might not seem that interesting, and you’ll only get an extra 150 calories,” says Frances Largeman-Roth, R.D., a new mom herself and author of *Feed the Belly: The Pregnant Mom’s Healthy Eating Guide*. “What matters is that you’re eating healthy, mostly unprocessed, whole foods over the course of the week, and getting an average of 300 extra calories a day.”

Of course, there’s a catch: Most of us have no idea what 300 calories of food actually looks like. So if you dig into your favorite indulgence in the name of baby, chances are good that you’ll zoom right past your target, increasing your risk of gaining more weight than you need. Take a look at what 300 calories of your fave cravings look like, and then consider some healthier alternatives that let you nosh more. 

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## When you’ve gotta have it

Actual calories:  
**293**



You can nibble on just three-fourths of a **burger**, unless you lose the bun. (Better option, cook up a bison burger at home: It has more brain-building omega-3s!)

Two ounces of **potato chips** looks like plenty, but for the same number of calories, you could have more than five cups of air-popped popcorn!

Actual calories:  
**300**



If you find comfort in **ice cream**, take care: this 1/2 cup serving might not satisfy your urge. Nearly three times that amount in pudding has the same calorie count.

Actual calories:  
**290**



**Nuts** are a healthy choice, but they're calorie-dense, especially when roasted in oil. It's OK to enjoy about three tablespoons of cashews a day.

Actual calories:  
**280**



This **jelly donut** hits the number right on the nose. But...is it worth it to have to watch your diet for the rest of the day?

Actual calories:  
**300**



Sometimes nothing else will do—satisfy your sweet tooth with 1.75 ounces high-quality **dark chocolate** with at least 70% cocoa and have heart benefits to boot.

Actual calories:  
**297**

