# Cooling Foods for a Hot Summer Pregnancy

The cure for a fever used to be more cowbell. But what's the cure for an unending, unrelenting season of hotter than average summer weather, especially if you're pregnant? Whether this is your first little one or you've been down this road before, figuring out how to efficiently solve problems is crucial. Why not take the same approach to how you cool down, using nutrient-rich and healthy foods to streamline your body's cooling functions? Some of the best foods for a much-needed break from the heat also provide other pregnancy-related benefits. Here are some of the best two-for-one deals that you can nibble on through the last (and possibly hottest) months of summer. And you don't have to be pregnant, or even female, to benefit from these foods!

## Cool Down With Watermelon

Let's start with the big guns here – watermelon. For many people, sweet and juicy watermelon is the ultimate summer fruit. Watermelon is a natural diuretic that helps with swelling while still replacing important nutrients. Approximately 75% of pregnant women suffer from some degree of fluid retention, and vitamins B, C, beta-carotene, and folic acid in watermelon are ideal for flushing that excess water while cooling you down. As an added side benefit, watermelon can also help regulate bowel movements. Pregnancy hormones and shifting organs can disrupt a regular elimination routine. Watermelon is a delicious summertime treat that can help you get back on track. Watermelon can be added to salads, but for maximum cooling and eating benefits, just leave yours in the fridge and enjoy it as soon as it cools down.

# Stay Hydrated With Berries

Staying hydrated is key in surviving a hot summer, especially while pregnant. Berries also help you stay hydrated. Now is the time to be buying fresh berries, as the peak of summer makes them more plentiful and more delicious than ever. Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and cranberries are potent sources of antioxidants, which repair stress damage in the body. They are considered to be a cooling food in Chinese medicine, and their high water content can help promote alkalinity in the body. For a pregnant lady craving something sweet, berries are a great way to indulge that desire. They contain fiber, which slows down your body's absorption of the sugar. The "more sugar, bigger baby" theory might be an old wives' tale, but why not choose something sweet that comes with some cooling powers and a heaping side of nutritional benefits as well? Use berries as a snack throughout the day to help with the perpetual hungry feelings or try them in a creamy, healthy smoothie.

# Benefits of Dark Leafy Greens

Dark, leafy greens provide cooling summer hydration along with other great health benefits. These bad boys are composed of 80 to 95% water (depending on which green it is) and though they might not have an immediately noticeable cooling effect, they could actually increase the body's ability to regulate itself long term. The body's temperature regulations occur in the brain, and greens like spinach and collards have been found to protect the brain from premature aging and stress damage. These greens are power packed with nutrients like vitamins A, C, K, and folic acid. Folic acid is an often discussed pregnancy nutrient, as it makes a difference in preventing birth defects, but some medical professionals disagree as to whether using folic acid supplements is actually doing more harm than good. Up your daily dose of dark greens for a little

piece of mind and a more efficient summer cooling system!

## Healthy Tea

Iced tea during a hot summer isn't just good hospitality, it's practically a cooling-off requirement. Since cutting back on any kind of caffeine like that in black or green tea is a pretty standard recommendation for any pregnancy diet (and caffeine can dry out the skin anyways), a good herbal tea is the solution. Red raspberry leaf is a great herb for pregnant ladies to know about. It contains vitamin B, iron, calcium, and magnesium and has been shown in research to reduce the time spent in the second stage of labor, improve circulation, and strengthen uterine muscles. There have been women who report red raspberry leaf has helped induce their labor, so it's a good idea to do some research before you take it. Red raspberry (not the leaf) is a common ingredient in many readily available pregnancy teas, but to get the benefits from it, buy quality red raspberry *leaf* in herb or tea form from a company you trust. Mountain Rose Herbs has a great organic pregnancy blend that adds spearmint for that extra refreshment factor.

## The Hotter the Cooler?

It might sound crazy, but spicy foods like hot peppers can also help you cool off. Yes they make you sweat more…but that's actually the body's way of expelling heat. We are always producing heat and your ability to remain cool depends on how fast you can sweat off that excess warmth. This method is most effective at cooling down the skin, and peppers also have other benefits. You'll feel more alert, experience better digestion, and use the calories you consume more effectively. As peppers have been identified as a cause of heartburn (which some women experience during pregnancy), it's important to take it slow and know what spice level is comfortable for you.

Adding a little bit of cayenne to cranberry lemonade combines the benefits of berries and hot peppers and wraps it up in a refreshing summertime package.

Of course, these aren't the only cooling foods available to you. It's easy to fantasize about consuming one ice cream bar after another in an attempt to stop the sweaty madness, but after the short term buzz you're left with an inner cooling system that is less able to reliably do its work. Choosing a cooling snack that pairs something nutritious with the heat relief you're seeking is an efficient way to make your life (and baby's!) a little easier.

**Recommended Reading:**

- *Everything You Should Know About Watermelon*
- *5 Foods for the Summer Season that Cool, Nourish, and Detoxify the Body*
- *Six Common Superfoods For Your Pregnancy Diet*
- *How to Get the Right Nutrition While Pregnant and Reduce the Risk of Birth Defects*
- *Acupuncture for Fertility*
- *Top 6 Superfoods to boost your energy!*

**Sources:**


- *10 Cooling Foods to Eat in the Summer Heat* – onegreenplanet.org
- *Will Eating Watermelon Help Swollen Ankles* – livestrong.com
- *Leafy Green Vegetables* – thescienceofeating.com
- *Red Raspberry Leaf Tea in Pregnancy – Benefits of Raspberry Leaf* – bellybelly.com/au
- *Ten Ways Hot Peppers Help You Be Healthy and Lose Weight* – naturalnews.com