

Pregnancy - Weight Gain

During pregnancy, a healthy weight gain is necessary for promoting the growth and development of the unborn baby. It also supports the mother's health needs during pregnancy. For most normal weight women, a healthy weight gain is about 25-35 pounds for most women. This is usually accomplished by eating 150-200 calories a day during the first few months of pregnancy and about 300 calories more a day in the 2nd or 3rd trimester. Weight gain is usually distributed as follows:

Baby - 7 to 8 pounds

Mother:

- Breast growth - 1-3 pounds
- Protein and fat stores - 6 to 8 pounds
- Placenta - 1.5 pounds
- Uterus growth - 2 pounds
- Amniotic fluid - 2 pounds
- Mother's blood volume - 3 to 4 pounds
- Mother's body fluids - 2 to 3 pounds

Normal weight women do not need to gain much weight during the first trimester. Consistent weight gain is necessary during the 2nd and 3rd trimesters, usually 3 to 4 pounds a month until delivery. This, of course, will vary if women are underweight, overweight, obese or carrying multiples:

- If underweight, should gain between 28-40 pounds
- If overweight, should gain between 15-25 pounds
- If obese, should gain at least 15 pounds
- If carrying twins or triplets, should gain between 35-45 pounds

Symptoms *may* include:

Positive pregnancy test

What *your doctor* can do:

- Diagnose pregnancy and perform a physical exam
- Prescribe a prenatal vitamin, iron and folic acid supplement
- Recommend a balanced diet to include Grains, Fruits and Vegetables, Protein and Dairy products
- Recommend small snacks and small meals throughout the day to help reduce nausea symptoms
- Monitor weight gain throughout pregnancy
- Refer to a nutritionist for meal planning
- Monitor chronic medical conditions related to diet like diabetes mellitus
- Recommend an exercise program

What *you* can do:

- Visit with your doctor BEFORE becoming pregnant
- Follow-up with your doctor regularly; keep all prenatal visits

This material has been provided by your doctor as an educational tool and is not meant to take the place of professional care. Please consult your doctor for any questions, concerns or changes in your condition.

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- Eat a variety of foods daily to ensure that you receive the necessary nutrients. Refer to the food pyramid developed by the USDA for the latest recommendations (www.mypyramid.gov)
- Talk to your doctor about your weight gain goals. This may vary if pregnant with multiple babies (twins, triplets, etc...)

What you can expect:

- Morning sickness may change your eating habits
- Food cravings for certain foods
- Periods of increased or decreased appetite
- Gaining more weight than recommended during pregnancy and failure to lose the extra pounds within six months after delivery can lead to obesity
- If underweight, gaining weight during the 2nd and 3rd trimesters is important to prevent premature birth and low-birth weights

Consult with your doctor if you are thinking about becoming pregnant or if you are pregnant and need assistance with healthy food choices and meal planning.

Seek immediate medical attention if you are pregnant and are experiencing periods of uncontrolled nausea/vomiting, a severely decreased appetite, or any unexpected weight loss or weight gain.