

Nutrition During Pregnancy




- Eating healthy when you're pregnant is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your baby. The foods you eat are the main source of nutrients for your baby and give your baby energy to grow.
- All women need to gain weight during pregnancy. Healthy weight gain comes from eating healthy foods that are good sources of vitamins and minerals.

KEY NUTRIENTS DURING PREGNANCY

Nutrient RDA	Why You and Your Baby Need It	Best Sources
 Folate 600 mcg	Helps make the neural tube that becomes your baby's spinal cord. It reduces the risk of neural tube defects, including spina bifida.	Citrus fruits and juices, leafy dark green vegetables, and enriched grain products (cold cereals, enriched breads and tortillas, flour, pasta, and rice).
 Vitamin A 770 mcg	Forms healthy skin and helps eyesight.	Carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and dark or yellow vegetables.
 B Vitamins	Helps your body release energy from the foods you eat.	Lean meats (pork, beef, and poultry) and enriched grain products like whole wheat breads and tortillas.
 Vitamin C 85 mg	Helps with wound healing, and tooth and bone development, and promotes metabolic processes.	Vegetables and fruits, such as broccoli, green and red peppers, collard greens, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, lemon, cabbage, pineapple, strawberries, and citrus fruits.
 Iron 27 mg	Carries oxygen to cells and tissues, helps make red blood cells, and supports brain development. Too little iron can cause <i>anemia</i> .	Liver, lean red meat eggs, poultry, leafy dark greens (spinach and mustard greens), broccoli, dried fruit, dried beans, nuts, and all WIC cereals.
 Calcium 1000 mg	Helps your body regulate fluids, and it helps build your baby's bones and tooth buds. If you do not get enough calcium in your diet, you will lose calcium from your bones to build your baby's bones.	Dairy foods (milk, cheese, and yogurt), canned fish (salmon and sardines), fortified orange juice, WIC soy milk and tofu, leafy dark greens (collard, kale, turnip, and mustard), and dried beans.
 Choline 450 mg ¹	Helps to form the brain and spinal cord.	Eggs, meats, oatmeal, iceberg lettuce, soybeans, and wheat germ.
 Iodine 220 mcg	Helps in the production of thyroid hormones. Infants born to mothers with <i>severe</i> iodine deficiency can have mental retardation and problems with growth, speech, and hearing. ²	Iodized salt, dairy foods (milk, cheese, and yogurt), seaweed, shellfish, fish, navy beans, meats, and eggs. Check with your health care provider to make sure that the prenatal vitamins you are taking contain iodine. WIC recommends a prenatal supplement providing 150 mcg.

1. Adequate Intake 2. Iodine Deficiency. American Thyroid Association, www.thyroid.org

- Most doctors recommend that pregnant women take a vitamin and mineral supplement every day. Check with your health care provider before taking a supplement.
- There is no known amount of alcohol that is safe to drink while pregnant. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a baby to be born with birth defects and have disabilities.

	Baby	7 ½ lbs
	Breast Growth	2 lbs
	Maternal Stores	7 lbs
	Placenta	1 ½ lbs
	Uterus growth	2 lbs
	Amniotic fluid	2 lbs
	Blood	4 lbs
	Body fluids	4 lbs
	Total	30 lbs

“Where Does the Weight Go?”

Sources

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, www.acog.org.
- Institute of Medicine. Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, May 2009.
- Your Pregnancy and Birth, Fourth Edition-2005 by American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Washington, DC.

Weight Gain During Pregnancy

- To make a healthy baby you need about 300 extra calories a day after the first trimester and especially later in your pregnancy when your baby grows quickly.
- One way to meet the increased nutrient needs for you and your baby is to eat a variety of foods from each of the food groups every day. Consider using MyPlate to meet your nutritional needs during pregnancy. <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>
- How much weight you need to gain during pregnancy depends on your weight before pregnancy. During the first three months (first trimester), most women can expect to gain about 2 to 4 pounds.
- Your weight gain should be steady throughout the second and third trimester. Most women need to gain 3 to 4 pounds each month.
- A healthy weight gain for most women is between 25 and 35 pounds. Too much or too little weight gain may cause health problems for mother and baby.

Low Maternal Weight Gain is associated with an increased risk of low birth weight infants, retarded fetal growth, cesarean delivery, preterm birth, and failure to initiate breastfeeding.

High Maternal Weight Gain increases the risk for a C-section and delivering larger than average infants. Gaining too much weight can lead to postpartum weight retention and maternal obesity. It may also be associated with high blood pressure and abnormal glucose levels.



Early testing for gestational diabetes is important during pregnancy and at the postpartum follow up visit. It is especially important for women who are overweight, have a history of high blood sugar, or have a family history of diabetes.

Gestational diabetes is usually found around 24-28 weeks of pregnancy.

Not gaining enough weight? If you are not gaining weight, you may need to eat more from each of the food groups. To increase calories, eat small frequent meals throughout the day and include healthy snacks.

Gaining too much weight? The best way to decrease calories is to limit extras in your diet. Extras are added sugars and fats such as desserts, fried foods, whole milk, and soda.

Recommended Weight Gain For Pregnant Women

BY PREPREGNANCY BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)*

Weight Categories	Range (kg)	Range (lbs)
Underweight (< 18.5)	12.5-18	28-40
Normal Weight (18.5-24.9)	11.5-16	25-35
Overweight (25.0-29.9)	7-11.5	15-25
Obese (≥ 30.0)	5-9	11-20

Pregnant with Multiples

- In twin pregnancies normal weight women should gain 37-54 pounds, overweight women 31-50 pounds, and obese women 25-42 pounds. A gain of 1.5 pounds per week during the second and third trimesters is advisable.
- In triplet pregnancies the overall weight gain should be around 50 pounds. A gain of 1.5 pounds per week throughout the pregnancy is advisable.

Talk with your doctor about the amount of weight you can expect to gain.

- * Body Mass Index (BMI) is the relationship between weight and height, and it gauges your health risks.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{(\text{weight in pounds} \times 703)}{\text{height in inches}^2}$$

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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