









# 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 fuel to grow.
- All women need to gain weight during pregnancy. Healthy weight gain comes from eating healthy foods that contain good sources of vitamins and minerals.

## KEY NUTRIENTS DURING PREGNANCY

Nutrient RDA	Why You and Your Baby Need It	Best Sources
 <b>Folate</b> 600 mcg	Helps make the neural tube which becomes your baby's spinal cord. It reduces the risk of neural tube defects, including spina bifida.	Citrus fruits and juices, dark green leafy vegetables and enriched grain products like whole wheat breads and tortillas, flour, pasta, rice, and ready-to-eat cereals.
 <b>Vitamin A</b> 770 mcg	Forms healthy skin and helps eyesight.	Carrots, sweet potatoes, dark or yellow vegetables.
 <b>B Vitamins</b>	Helps your body release energy from the foods you eat.	Lean meats (pork, beef, poultry) and enriched grain products like whole wheat breads and tortillas.
 <b>Vitamin C</b> 85 mg	Helps with wound healing, 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, citrus fruits.
 <b>Iron</b> 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 meats, eggs and poultry; also leafy greens like spinach, broccoli, mustard greens, and dried fruit.
 <b>Calcium</b> 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, the body will use the calcium from your bones to build your baby's bones.	Dairy foods (milk, cheese, yogurt), canned fish (salmon, sardines); fortified orange juice, WIC soy milk and tofu; leafy green vegetables (collard, kale, turnip, and mustard greens).
 <b>Choline</b> 450 mg <sup>1</sup>	Helps to form the brain and spinal cord.	Eggs, meats, oatmeal, iceberg lettuce, soybeans and wheat germ.
 <b>Iodine</b> 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. <sup>2</sup>	Iodized salt, dairy foods (milk, cheese, yogurt), seaweed, shellfish, fish, meats, and eggs. Check with your health care provider to make sure that the prenatal vitamin you are taking contains iodine. WIC recommends a prenatal supplement providing 150 mcg.

1. Adequate Intake 2. Iodine Deficiency. American Thyroid Association. <http://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.

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

*Where does the weight go?*

### Sources:

1. Institute of Medicine. Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, May 2009.
2. MyPyramid for Moms (poster). United States Department of Agriculture. [www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramidmoms](http://www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramidmoms)
3. Your Pregnancy and Birth, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2005. The American Academy of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Washington, DC. [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

# 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.
- 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. Try to gain about the same amount of weight each week or month during 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.
- Pregnancy is not the time to try to lose weight. After pregnancy and nursing you will be able to cut down on calories.

**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. It may also be associated with high blood pressure during pregnancy and abnormal glucose levels. Gaining too much weight can lead to postpartum weight retention and maternal obesity.



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. Follow MyPyramid to help you choose nutrient-rich foods.

**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 such as peanut butter with celery, whole-grain pita and hummus, cottage cheese with fruit or a small handful of nuts.

**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. Choose foods that are low-fat, fat-free, unsweetened or with no-added sugars.

## Recommended Weight Gain

FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

BY PREPREGNANCY BODY MASS

INDEX (BMI)\*

	Range in Kg	Range in lbs
<b>Underweight</b> ( $<18.5$ )	12.5-18	28-40
<b>Normal Weight</b> (18.5-24.9)	11.5-16	25-35
<b>Overweight</b> (25.0-29.9)	7-11.5	15-25
<b>Obese</b> ( $\geq 30.0$ )	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 your health risks.

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

