

Weight Gain During Pregnancy

During pregnancy, it is important for all women to gain weight. Your weight just before pregnancy or prenatal body mass index (BMI) determines the amount of weight you need to gain. BMI is calculated using your weight and height (weight in kg divided by height in metres² or kg/m²). For a quick BMI check, go to http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/weights-poids/guide-ld-adult/bmi_chart_java-graph_imc_java-eng.php

BMI	Total Weight Gain	Weekly Gain (2 nd and 3 rd trimester)
18.5-24.9	25-35 lbs (11-16 kg)	1 lb/week (0.5 kg/week)
25-29.9	15-25 lbs (7-11 kg)	0.6 lb/week (0.3 kg/week)
>30	11-20 lbs (5-9 kg)	0.5 lb/week (0.2 kg/week)

If you are carrying twins, you need to gain more weight based on BMI. Talk to your health care professional.

Gaining the Recommended Weight

If you have already gained more weight than recommended, don't worry. Continue to follow the weight gain recommendations listed above, which can help to control your weight gain for the remainder of the pregnancy. Fluid retention also may lead to greater than recommended weight gain; however no diet changes are needed.

Helpful tips to control weight gain include:

- 1) Control your portions sizes at meals. Include at least 3 of the 4 food groups at each meal (example: vegetables, grains/starch, meat or alternatives). If you are still hungry, choose extra vegetables. Finish the meal with a cup of milk and/or a serving of fruit.
- 2) Women who are pregnant only need 2 to 3 extra Food Guide Servings per day during pregnancy. Examples: fruit and yogurt for a snack or an extra slice of toast for breakfast and a glass of milk at supper. For information about Canada's Food Guide go to www.healthcanada.gc.ca.
- 3) Drink lots of water to stay well hydrated and to prevent constipation (aim for at least 8 cups of fluid per day)

- 4) Limit high calorie beverages, like regular pop. Instead of drinking juice all the time, try whole fruit. Milk does contain calories but is a great choice and has beneficial nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D and protein. Using a lower fat milk (2% or less) is helpful.
- 5) Prepare foods using healthy cooking methods, such as baking, broiling and grilling. This will limit the amount of added fat and calories.
- 6) If you are hungry between meals, eat a healthy snack such as low fat popcorn and fruit, a bowl of cereal or cheese and crackers. This may help prevent overeating at meals.

Physical Activity

In addition to eating a healthy diet in pregnancy, physical activity can help. Walking, swimming and being active can increase energy levels and overall sense of well-being. As long as you do not have any activity limitations in pregnancy (speak with your health care provider if you are unsure), aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity (i.e. brisk walking) on most days.

Risks of Gaining Too Much Weight

While it is difficult to prove the effects of gaining too much weight, research suggests the following.

Possible problems for mom if she gains more weight than recommended:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes in pregnancy
- Increased risk of cesarean section
- Complications during labor and birth
- Losing weight after the baby is born may be harder

Possible problems for baby if mom gains more weight than recommended:

- Baby is more likely to be too large at birth
- Preterm birth
- Childhood obesity