

TEACHER INFORMATION**NUTRITION / WEIGHT GAIN DURING PREGNANCY**

A mother brings to her pregnancy, all of her previous life experiences; diet, food habits, attitudes. Birth defects occur before the 10th week of pregnancy, even before a woman may know she is pregnant. The outcome of her baby's health depends on her nutritional state. If a woman wants to get pregnant, she should start preparing her body 2 years ahead. If nutrients are lacking the mother suffers first and then the baby suffers.

Bad diet can cause:

1. Premature birth
2. Low birth weight
3. Feeble, weak
4. Inability to breast feed
5. Deformed babies
6. complications at birth
7. Depression
8. Babies have fewer brain cells

Can I really eat twice as much now that I'm pregnant?

When you're tempted to overdo it, remember that you're eating for a baby, not another full-sized adult. Although you may be sorely tempted to eat twice as much, you have no medical reason to do so. Your body becomes more efficient during pregnancy and is able to absorb more of the nutrients you eat. So consuming twice as much doesn't double your chances of having a healthy baby — instead, it's likely to mean excessive weight gain for you, which can put you at risk for pregnancy complications. Doctors suggest weight gain of 25-30 pounds while pregnant.

How much you should gain during your pregnancy depends on your height and how much you weighed before you conceived. If you were at an average pre-pregnancy weight, you should gain between 25 and 35 pounds.

If you were underweight, you should gain between 28 and 40 pounds; and if you were overweight, between 15 and 25 pounds. If you're having twins, you should gain about 35 to 45 pounds. If you fall into one of these categories, talk to your healthcare provider about how much you should gain each month.

Keep in mind that weight gain recommendations change often over time; it's important to pay more attention to how well you're eating than how much you gain.

Height Without Shoes	Underweight If You Weighed This or Less	Normal Weight Range	Overweight If You Weighed This or More
4'10"	88	89-108	109
4'11"	91	92-112	113
5'	94	95-115	116
5'1"	99	100-121	122
5'2"	104	105-127	128
5'3"	108	109-132	133
5'4"	113	114-138	139
5'5"	118	119-144	145
5'6"	123	124-150	151
5'7"	127	128-155	156
5'8"	132	133-161	162
5'9"	137	138-167	168
5'10"	142	143-173	174
5'11"	146	147-178	179
6'	151	152-184	185

*Normal weight for "thin-boned" women will be closer to the lower end of this range. For "big-boned" women, it will be closer to the higher end.

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Total recommended weight gain is often not as helpful as a weekly rate of gain. Most women gain 3 to 5 pounds during the first trimester (first 3 months) of pregnancy. During the second and third trimesters, a good rate of weight gain is about three quarters of a pound to one pound per week. Gaining too much weight (2 or more pounds per week) results in putting on too much body fat. This extra body fat produces an insulin-resistant effect which requires the body to produce more insulin to keep blood sugar levels normal. An inability to produce more insulin, as in gestational diabetes, causes your blood sugar levels to rise above acceptable levels. If weight gain has been excessive, often limiting weight gain to approximately three-quarters of a pound per week (3 pounds per month) can return blood sugar levels to normal. Fetal growth and development depend on proper nourishment and will be placed at risk by drastically reducing calories. However, you can limit weight gain by cutting back on excessive calories and by eating a nutritionally-sound diet that meets your needs and the needs of your baby. Remember that dieting and severely cutting back on weight gain may increase the risk of delivering prematurely. If blood sugar levels continue to go up and you are not gaining excessive weight or eating improperly, the safest therapy for the well-being of the fetus is insulin.

Occasionally, your weight may go up rapidly in the last trimester (after 28 weeks) and you may notice an increase in water retention, such as swelling in the feet, fingers, and face. If there is any question as to whether the rapid weight gain is due to eating too many calories or too much water retention, keeping records of how much food you eat and your exercise patterns at this time will be very helpful. A Food and Exercise Record Sheet is included at the end of this book. By examining your Food and Exercise Record Sheet, your nutrition advisor can help you determine which is causing the rapid weight gain. In addition, by examining your legs and body for signs of fluid retention, your physician can help you to determine the cause of your weight gain. If your weight gain is due to water retention, cutting back drastically on calories may actually cause more fluid retention. Bed rest and resting on your side will help you to lose the build-up of fluid. Limit your intake of salt (sodium chloride) and very salty foods, as they tend to contribute to water retention.

Marked fluid retention when combined with an increase in blood pressure and possibly protein in the urine are the symptoms of pre-eclampsia. This is a disorder of pregnancy that can be harmful to both the mother and baby. Inform your obstetrician of any rapid weight gain, especially if you are eating moderately and gaining more than 2 pounds per week. Should you develop pre-eclampsia, be especially careful to eat a well-balanced diet with adequate calories.

After being diagnosed as having gestational diabetes, many women notice a slower weight gain as they start cutting the various sources of sugar out of their diet. This seems to be harmless and lasts only 1 or 2 weeks. It may be that sweets were contributing a substantial amount of calories to the diet.

Distribution of weight gain:

<u>WEIGHT GAIN IN POUNDS</u>	<u>AREA</u>
7.5-8.5	Fetus
7.5	Stores of Fat & Protein
4	Blood
2.7	Tissue Fluids
2	Uterus
1.8	Amniotic Fluid
1.5	Placenta & Cord
10	Breasts
28-29	Pounds

How will gaining so much weight affect my body?

Some of the aches and pains you'll feel during pregnancy are related to weight gain. Increased clumsiness and backache are the most common. Many women complain of leg- and ankle-swelling (edema), but this symptom is actually caused by the extra amount of blood in your body, not fat.

In fact, you need only 300 or so extra calories a day when you're pregnant, fewer during your first trimester. That's about the number of calories found in two and a half cups of low-fat milk or a tuna sandwich. So instead of helping yourself to extra servings at mealtime, think in terms of a smart snack, such as a glass of orange juice and a couple of slices of whole-wheat toast, to boost your calories during your pregnancy.