

Myths about Nutrition & Pregnancy

Myth: If you do not eat well during pregnancy, the baby will be fine because it can draw on the nutrients stored in your body to meet its needs.

Fact: Although this may be true for some nutrients such as calcium, research has shown that poorly nourished women are more likely to give birth to small and unhealthy babies. Nutrient needs should be met by a varied diet and prenatal vitamins.



Myth: Pregnant women instinctively crave foods which their bodies need and avoid those which are not wholesome.



Fact: Pregnant women often crave foods which are completely unrelated to their nutritional needs. Satisfying these cravings is fine if weight gain is acceptable and nutrient needs have been met. A different kind of craving called "pica" is experienced by some women. This involves a desire for non-food substances, such as laundry starch, ice, clay and ashes. It is very important to discuss this desire with your prenatal care provider.

Myth: Restricting intake of salt will help lower fluid retention and swelling.

Fact: Salt contains sodium, an essential nutrient. It is not healthy to consume too much sodium but restricting salt may actually be harmful during pregnancy because the need for sodium increases. Salt food to taste unless your care provider recommends not to.



Myth: The less weight you gain during pregnancy, the easier the delivery will be.



Fact: Research shows that babies born to mothers with low weight gains are much more likely to be born prematurely or be too small which puts them at risk for complications.

Myth: I'm pregnant, so I need to eat for two.

Fact: You only need 200-300 extra calories per day to support your baby's growth and development. One extra healthy snack, such as four fig bars and a glass of skim milk, will provide these calories.

Be selective about your food choices; choose foods that contain vitamins, minerals, and protein. If you need help planning a healthy diet, talk to your prenatal care provider and ask about seeing a dietitian or nutritionist.



USDA's My Pyramid has been developed to remind consumers to make healthy food choices and to be active every day. For more details visit: www.mypyramid.gov

If you need additional information contact the Family Health Line at 1-800-451-BABY (2229)



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Weight Gain During Pregnancy

The extra weight you gain during pregnancy nourishes your developing baby. Gaining the right amount of weight will make it easier to lose weight after delivery and will prepare your body for breastfeeding. It also helps protect the health of your baby.



Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade

A sensible meal plan that is rich in vitamins and minerals are essential for a developing baby.

Like it or not, all women gain weight during pregnancy. Your baby's growth and development depend on it. However gaining too much or too little can be harmful to you and your baby. Following the recommended weight gain guidelines during pregnancy can help you to: have a healthy pregnancy and delivery, a healthy baby and increases your chances of recovering your 'ideal' weight after you have your baby.

Optimal Weight Gain

Gaining the right amount of weight depends on your pre-pregnancy weight. The average recommended weight gain is 25-35 pounds. How much weight gain is right for you depends on if you were overweight or underweight before your pregnancy. Even if you begin pregnancy at a normal weight, women who gain too much weight during pregnancy are at increased risk for complications. Too much weight gain is associated with cesarean delivery, high blood pressure, diabetes, varicose veins, backache, extreme tiredness and leg pain. Additionally, infants born to mothers who have gained too much weight are at increased risk for birth trauma, pneumonia, hypoglycemia, respiratory distress, jaundice and anemia. Gaining weight at a steady rate within recommended boundaries can also lower your chance of having hemorrhoids, stretch marks, indigestion, and shortness of breath during pregnancy.

How Can I Gain the Appropriate Amount of Weight During Pregnancy?

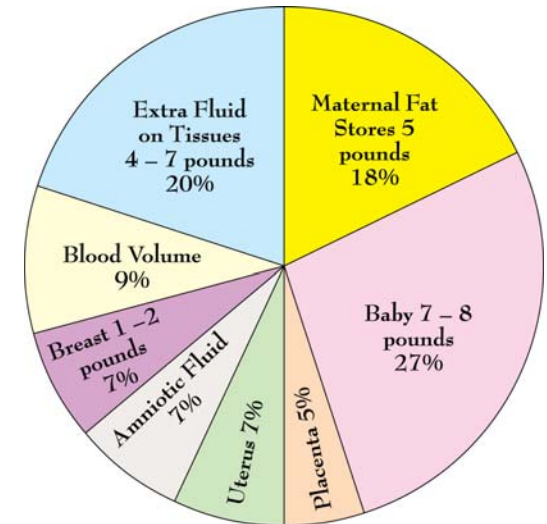
- Keep quick, easy snacks on hand, such as nuts, raisins, cheese and crackers, dried fruit, and yogurt.
- Eat five to six small, frequent meals every day.
- Spread peanut butter on toast, crackers, apples, bananas, or celery. One tablespoon of creamy peanut butter will provide about 100 calories and seven grams of protein.

Where does all that weight go?

Gaining the right amount of weight is important for your health and your baby's health. By the end of the first trimester total weight gain should be three to eight pounds, which reflects an increase in maternal tissues. Putting on weight slowly and steadily is best, but don't be too concerned if you gain less than four pounds in the first trimester. You may make up for it later, or vice versa. During the second and third trimester, weight should increase 2/3 of a pound to one pound each week for the best possible fetal growth. Many women have one or two "growth spurts" during which they gain several pounds in a short time period, then gain at a slower pace. Again, don't be worried unless it becomes a pattern. The important thing is to keep an eye on your overall gain.

When you're overweight

Recent data shows that obese or overweight women experience higher rates of low birth weight, premature delivery, infant mortality and



complications during childbirth than women with 'normal' weights. Pregnant obese women are at an increased risk for pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, cesarean delivery and postpartum infection. In addition, the unborn baby is at increased risk for neural tube defects, birth trauma, and late fetal death.

When you're underweight

Significantly underweight women have a higher risk of anemia, cardiopulmonary problems, endometritis, premature rupture of membranes, and low birth weight.

<u>Pre-Pregnancy</u>	<u>Recommended Gain</u>
Underweight	Gain 28-40 pounds
Normal Weight	Gain 25-35 pounds
Overweight	Gain 15-25 pounds
Obese	Gain about 15 pounds