

WEIGHT GAIN IN PREGNANCY

Pregnancy is a time to eat the healthiest diet possible. Pregnant women have increased nutritional needs for fetal, maternal and placental tissue growth and development. You will gain a certain amount of weight to support your body and to properly nourish your baby as it grows and develops inside of you. However, the old adage that “you are eating for two” is not true. Some women rationalize they can eat unlimited calories or “treats” as they are gaining weight anyway. This approach does not serve you in the long term.

Current recommendations regarding weight gain in pregnancy state that you do not need to gain more than 25-35 pounds over the course of your pregnancy. Women who are underweight at the beginning of pregnancy may need to gain up to 40 pounds, women who are overweight do not need to gain more than 15-20 pounds and women with a BMI of over 35 do not need to gain any weight during pregnancy to properly support their own health and the health of their babies. Typical components of a pregnancy weight gain are:

Breasts.....	1-3 pounds
Placenta.....	1 1/2 pounds
Amniotic fluid.....	2 pounds
Uterus.....	2-3 1/2 pounds
Maternal Fluid Stores.....	3 pounds
Maternal Blood Supply.....	3 1/2 pounds
Fetus.....	Depends!
Maternal Tissue Stores.....	8-10 pounds

A very general recommendation of how weight gain should be distributed during the pregnancy is about 3-6 pounds in the first trimester and 0.5 – 1.0 pounds per week until term. The amount of weight gained is not as important as adequate growth of the fetus and eating healthy food to obtain the appropriate amount of calories and nutrients needed to maintain a healthy pregnancy. This is a most important part of nurturing yourself and your baby. You will feel much better postpartum if you are not carrying a lot of unnecessary weight.

Be assured that the weight you gain in pregnancy is not permanent. Within your baby’s first week of life you can expect to lose about 12- 14 pounds or more. Many women will however, need to exercise to lose the last ten pounds! Remember to eat to appetite throughout your pregnancy and after your baby is born and be sure to eat a variety of healthy foods.

FLUID INTAKE

It is important to be adequately hydrated throughout your pregnancy. Do not wait until you are thirsty before having something to drink. Generally, fluid intake should be about 2 liters a day. Water is the best fluid for your body during pregnancy. Avoid nutrient depleting beverages such as soda, pop and moderate caffeine intake. If you drink fruit juice dilute it with water. It is better to eat the fruit than drink the juice. Drink fluid between meals to reduce the symptoms of reflux commonly experienced in pregnancy, especially as your belly grows.