

Fact Sheet

Gestational weight gain

womensnewbornhealth.com.au

Healthy eating, controlled weight gain and regular physical activity during pregnancy can keep you and your baby healthy during pregnancy, birth and after birth.

It is normal to gain weight during pregnancy as your baby grows and your body changes to support your baby's development. However gaining too much weight can increase your risk of developing gestational diabetes and increase your baby's risk of becoming overweight.

Body mass Index (BMI)

Your body mass index (BMI) can help you know if you are underweight, overweight or an ideal weight for your height.

BMI is a measure of body fat. It is calculated using weight divided by height and written as kg/m².

BMI is measured early in pregnancy. If a woman has a BMI greater than 30 in the first trimester there is an increased risk of complications in pregnancy, including diabetes, high blood pressure, blood clots, obstructed labour and wound infections. There may also be an increase in fetal abnormalities.

You can use your BMI to estimate the right amount of weight gain during pregnancy.

Calculate your BMI.

(<http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au/bmi-calculator>)

How much weight should I gain during pregnancy?

This depends on whether you were at a healthy weight before pregnancy. Mothers who were already overweight should aim to gain less than those who started within a health weight range.

During the first 3 months of pregnancy normal weight gain is 1-2kg, you can use table 1 (see page 3) to calculate the recommended weight gain for the duration of your pregnancy.

While it is important to monitor your weight gain and aim to be within recommendations, it is important not to try and lose weight. Dieting and food restriction may result in your baby not getting all the nutrients for their development. Overweight women may sometimes gain less weight than recommended in the table and may even lose some weight with a healthier diet. This is not harmful and assists with weight loss after the birth.

If you find you are gaining weight too fast, check that you are having the right amount of serves from each food group and limit the number of optional foods. It is only in the last 12 weeks of pregnancy that you need to eat more than usual. The increase is only 200 calories a day.

If you are concerned about your weight, your midwife or doctor can refer you to a dietitian.

See section on eating well during pregnancy. (Eating well during pregnancy page)

Gaining too much weight in pregnancy and or being overweight can lead to higher rates of complications including:

Complications in labour or birth:

- increased risk of caesarean section because baby is too big or the uterus does not contract well during labour
- labour is often slower
- infection of the stitches for both caesarean and vaginal birth
- increased risk of bleeding during and after birth and need for blood transfusions

womensnewbornhealth.com.au

- Stretch marks

Medical complications:

- Diabetes
- high blood pressure
- blood clots in the legs (DVTs- Deep vein thrombosis)

Complications to the baby:

- chance of becoming sick during the pregnancy due to high sugars or fats in the diet that are toxic to the baby in the uterus
- chance of abnormalities in the baby
- injury to baby during birth.

Did you know? You can access free support from a Get Healthy Service health coach

<http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au/get-started>

They can provide you with 10 telephone coaching calls during your pregnancy to

Table 2: Recommended weight gain during pregnancy.

(source: RANZCOG, 2013 college statement on the management of obesity in pregnancy)

Pre-pregnancy BMI	Total weight gain	Rates of weight gain per week for 2 nd and 3 rd trimester
Underweight (<18.5 kg/m ²)	12.5 – 18.0 kg	440 – 580g
Healthy weight (18.5 – 24.9 kg/m ²)	11.5 – 16.0 kg	350 – 500g
Overweight (25.0 – 29.9 kg/m ²)	7.0 – 11.5 kg	230 – 330g
Obese (>30.0 kg/m ²)	5.0 – 9.0 kg	170 – 270g

womensnewbornhealth.com.au

Table 1: Guidance for ideal weight gain in pregnancy (+/- 2 kg)

Gestation	BMI <25	BMI 25---30	BMI > 30	Your weight
8 weeks	1 kg	0-1 kg	0-1 kg	
12 weeks	1 kg	0-1 kg	0-1 kg	
16 weeks	2 kg	1-2 kg	0-2 kg	
20 weeks	4 kg	2 kg	1-2 kg	
24 weeks	6 kg	3 kg	2 kg	
26 weeks	7 kg	3 kg	3 kg	
28 weeks	7 kg	4 kg	4 kg	
30 weeks	8 kg	5 kg	4 kg	
32 weeks	9 kg	6 kg	5 kg	
34 weeks	10 kg	7 kg	5 kg	
36 weeks	11 kg	8 kg	6 kg	
38 weeks	12 kg	9 kg	6 kg	
40 weeks	14 kg	9 kg	7 kg	
41 weeks	14 kg	9 kg	7 kg	

We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service.

Send your feedback to:
WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au