



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

- Weight gain during pregnancy is made up of several elements. About half comes from the baby, placenta and the amniotic fluid; about one third comes from increased weight of the uterus, extra breast weight and increased blood and tissue, and the balance of the weight is stored fat.
- The weight gained in pregnancy varies from one individual to another and the guidelines discussed are averages. The main concern is to eat a high-quality, balanced diet with adequate calories that will ensure good health for you and the baby. If you eat well and nutritiously, the weight gain should take care of itself.
- At the first prenatal visit, your height and weight will be measured and the two compared to help determine if you are starting the pregnancy at about the right weight for your height. At each subsequent prenatal visit, you will be weighed and any concerns you or the doctor has about your weight gain will be discussed.

AVERAGE WEIGHT GAIN GUIDES

- A general recommendation for weight gain in pregnancy is in the range of 25 to 35 pounds. Underweight women may need to gain more. For overweight women, pregnancy is not a time to try and lose weight. However, a special pregnancy diet may be recommended to keep weight gain within certain limits.
- Weight gain should be steady throughout the pregnancy.
 - A gain of 3 to 4 pounds the first trimester.
 - 1 pound about every week during the second trimester for a total of 12 to 14 pounds.
 - During the third trimester, one pound a week gain continues for the seventh and eighth month, and then just 1 to 2 pounds are gained during the ninth month for a total of 9 to 10 pounds.
- With each monthly prenatal visit, the expected weight gain is 3 to 4 pounds over the previous visit. If the weight gain is significantly under or over that amount, further evaluation may be necessary to assess nutrition and diet, or the presence of edema (swelling in the hands, feet and legs).
- If a woman is pregnant with more than one fetus, the weight gain will be higher, but not double or triple. The doctor will discuss a recommended amount.

WEIGHT GAIN CONCERNS

- Controlling weight gain is more difficult in late pregnancy, so it is important not to gain most of the total weight during the first months. If an excess amount of weight is gained during the first or second trimester, do not diet. Your nutritional intake needs to stay balanced to supply the daily needs for the fetus.
- A lack of weight gain in pregnancy may be due to poor nutrition or an illness in the mother-to-be. It can contribute to intrauterine growth retardation (IUGR), a term used to describe infants whose weights are much lower than expected for gestational age.
- When an obese woman becomes pregnant, there is a somewhat higher risk of gestational diabetes and hypertension than in the average weight mother. It may be more difficult to determine the size of the fetus during prenatal visits because of the fat layers, and delivery is sometimes more complicated because the fetus may be larger than average. A cesarean delivery is also complicated by the amount of fat in the abdomen area. Obese women should not diet during pregnancy, but should make every attempt to control weight gain to keep it within recommended guidelines.
- On the average, the larger the weight gain in pregnancy, the larger the baby. However, a woman can gain 35 to 40 pounds and still have a 6 or 7 pound baby.
- For more information, check the library or the internet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member is pregnant and wants additional information on weight gain.
- You are pregnant and your weight increases significantly or doesn't increase at all during a 2 week period.