



Weight Gain and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

As part of your medical history, your midwife will ask for your height and pre-pregnancy weight. The ratio of these two numbers is a calculation called Body Mass Index (or BMI). Although this number does not account for your body type, it does give a general guideline for your weight category.

Below is a BMI chart that you can use to calculate your own BMI:

Height	Underweight (BMI less than 18.5)	Normal Weight (BMI 18.5-25)	Overweight (BMI 25-30)	Obese (BMI 30-40)	Morbidly Obese (BMI above 40)
4'11	Less than 91 lbs	91-112 lbs	124-148 lbs	149-199 lbs	Above 200 lbs
5'0	Less than 94 lbs	95-128 lbs	129-153 lbs	154-204 lbs	Above 205 lbs
5'1	Less than 97 lbs	98-132 lbs	133-158 lbs	159-211 lbs	Above 212 lbs
5'2	Less than 101 lbs	102-136 lbs	137-165 lbs	166-218 lbs	Above 219 lbs
5'3	Less than 104 lbs	105-141 lbs	142-169 lbs	170-225 lbs	Above 226 lbs
5'4	Less than 107 lbs	108-145 lbs	146-174 lbs	175-233 lbs	Above 234 lbs
5'5	Less than 111 lbs	112-150 lbs	151-180 lbs	181-240 lbs	Above 241 lbs
5'6	Less than 114 lbs	115-154 lbs	155-185 lbs	186-247 lbs	Above 248 lbs
5'7	Less than 118 lbs	119-159 lbs	160-191 lbs	192-255 lbs	Above 256 lbs
5'8	Less than 121 lbs	122-164 lbs	165-197 lbs	198-263 lbs	Above 264 lbs
5'9	Less than 125 lbs	126-169 lbs	170-203 lbs	204-270 lbs	Above 271 lbs
5'10	Less than 128 lbs	129-174 lbs	175-209 lbs	210-278 lbs	Above 279 lbs
5'11	Less than 132 lbs	133-179 lbs	180-215 lbs	216-286 lbs	Above 287 lbs
6'0	Less than 136 lbs	137-184 lbs	185-221 lbs	222-294 lbs	Above 295 lbs
6'1	Less than 140 lbs	141-189 lbs	190-227 lbs	228-303 lbs	Above 304 lbs
6'2	Less than 144 lbs	145-194 lbs	195-233 lbs	234-311 lbs	Above 312 lbs

New research has recently been published regarding ideal weight gain during pregnancy. This research showed that optimal health for both mother and baby are achieved when women gain according to these guidelines. They are as follows:

- Underweight women: 28-40lbs total weight gain during pregnancy
- Normal weight women: 25-35 lbs total weight gain during pregnancy
- Overweight women: 15-25 lbs total weight gain during pregnancy
- Obese women: 11-20 lbs total weight gain during pregnancy

In addition to the above guidelines, an issue relevant to weight management is your body's ability to process sugar. As obesity can increase your risk for diabetes, it is our recommendation that

women with a BMI greater than 30 do a gestational diabetes screening test twice during their pregnancy (see handout on Gestational Diabetes for more information).

We recognize that weight and weight gain are sensitive issues. Under no circumstances do we recommend that women intentionally limit their weight gain by restrictive dieting. However, we do have some general recommendations regarding healthy lifestyle choices, which women of every BMI category can adopt for a healthier pregnancy. These include:

- Regular light exercise. This can include swimming, walking, or yoga.
- Healthy food choices.
- If you are a smoker, we encourage you to consider quitting. We would be pleased to discuss options for support and resources with you.

I Have Never Exercised Much. Is it Safe to Start Now?

Not only is it safe, it is also very good for you. You probably walk a bit every day already. That's exercise! It is perfectly safe for you to walk 30 to 60 minutes every day. Wear comfortable shoes and clothes. Open your front door and walk away from your house for 15 minutes as fast as you can. If you can sing while you walk, you are not walking fast enough.

Eating Healthy in Pregnancy

The most important thing is that the food you eat is healthy and that your diet meets all of your nutritional needs.

Every Day, Make Sure That You Eat

- Six servings of whole grain foods like bread or pasta. By reading the label you will know that you are really getting "whole" grain and not just brown-colored bread or pasta (1 slice of bread or half a cup of cooked pasta is a serving).
- Three servings of fruit. Fresh, raw fruit is best (1 small apple or half a cup of chopped or cooked fruit is a serving).

- Five or more servings of vegetables. Fresh, raw vegetables are best (1 medium-sized carrot or half a cup of chopped or cooked vegetables is a serving). Avoid butter, margarine, and fatty salad dressing. If you would like a topping on your vegetables, use low fat salad dressing or low fat yogurt.
- Three servings of protein- or iron-rich foods, like lean meat, fish, eggs, or nuts (a piece of meat or fish the size of a pack of cards is a serving).
- One serving of vitamin C-rich food each day -- like oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, sweet peppers, mustard greens, or tomatoes (1 small orange is a serving).
- Three servings of calcium-rich food -- like low fat milk, low fat yogurt, or mustard greens or chard (1 cup of milk or yogurt is a serving).
- Six to 8 large glasses of water. If you do not like the taste of water, add a squirt of lemon juice or a splash of your favorite fruit juice to the glass of water. It is best to avoid soft drinks, artificially sweetened drinks, excessive caffeine or sweet juices. Provided that your diet contains adequate calcium, you do not need to drink anything other than water or milk when you are pregnant.

Some Tips for Making This Work

Keep a daily log of all the food you eat and the exercise you have done. It is a great way to make sure you are getting what you need.

Ask a friend to walk or exercise with you. Every day, take a few minutes to focus on your baby. You are growing a healthy baby. You can do this!