

Pregnancy Weight Matters

Achieving healthy weight gain in pregnancy

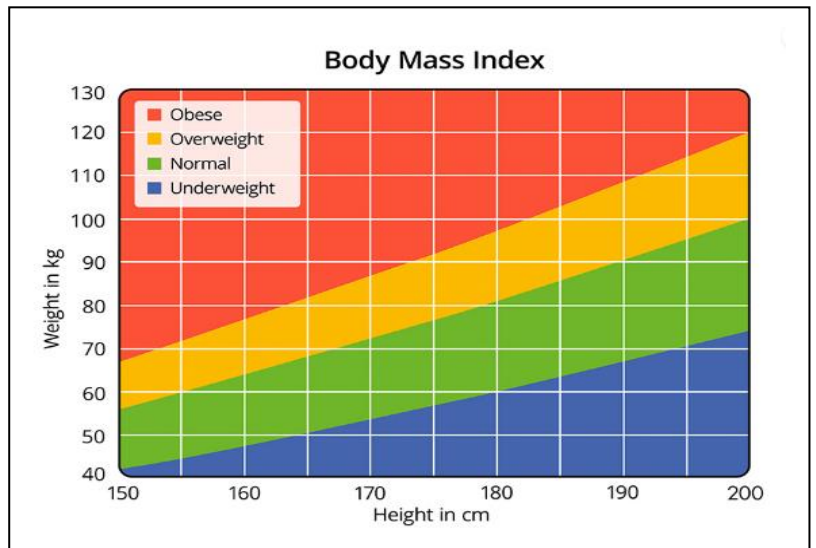
Information for consumers

What is the normal weight gain for pregnancy?

During pregnancy it is normal to gain weight as your baby grows and your body adapts. Gaining too much weight during pregnancy can cause complications for both you and your baby. Being underweight can also cause complications. This information is to help you to understand the risk of gaining too much weight or being overweight in pregnancy and help you manage your weight. Weight is often a sensitive issue for women. In pregnancy many women struggle with body shape changes, and you may feel uncomfortable discussing weight issues. The following information will help you to understand why additional precautions are taken during your pregnancy and how you can achieve the best possible outcomes for you and your baby.

How do we measure weight?

The amount of weight gain in your pregnancy depends on your pre-pregnancy weight. You need to know your height and weight to calculate your body mass index (BMI).



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How much weight should I gain in my pregnancy?

Weight gain varies for each woman and each pregnancy. The table is a general guide to healthy weight gain.

Pre-pregnancy weight (BMI)	Approx weight gain (kg)
Underweight BMI <18.5	12.5-18 kg
Normal Weight BMI 18.5-24.5	11.5-14 kg
Overweight BMI >25	7-11 kg
Obese BMI > 30	5-9 kg



What are the risks of gaining too much weight during your pregnancy?

Most pregnancies are uncomplicated. However, gaining too much weight or being overweight increases the risk of some pregnancy complications. The higher your BMI the more your risk will increase.

When you are pregnant:

- Gestational diabetes - a form of diabetes that occurs in pregnancy.
- Pre-eclampsia - high blood pressure and protein in urine.
- Abnormalities of your baby's growth, development, and general health.
- Sleep apnoea.

During Labour:

- Delay progressing in labour.
- Shoulder dystocia - baby's shoulder temporarily stuck behind pubic bone.
- Difficulties monitoring your baby's heart.
- Difficulties with providing satisfactory pain relief.
- Increased need for caesarean section.

After the birth of your baby

- Increased risk of wound infection.
- Increased risk of blood clots.
- Increased risk of postnatal depression.

What do I do if I gain too much weight?

Pregnancy is not a time for strict dieting and attempts to lose weight during pregnancy should be avoided. However, you do not need to "eat for two". If you would like more advice about eating and managing your weight gain in pregnancy, please ask your midwife or doctor for a referral to a Dietitian.

Things you can do to achieve healthy gestational weight gain:

Limit high sugar foods:

- Soft drink, fruit juices, lollies, biscuits and crackers.

Limit the amount of fat you eat:

- Reduce chocolate, chips, crisps.
- Choose low fat or reduced fat milk, yoghurt, and cheese.
- Trim fat from meat prior to cooking.
- Limit high fat take-away foods.

Try to exercise as much as you can

Regular exercise can help prevent excess weight gain, aim for no less than 30 minutes; three times a week.

Please do not hesitate to contact your midwife or doctor to assist you to understand this information.