



2000 Medical Parkway, Ste. 304
Annapolis, MD 21401

NUTRITION AND WEIGHT GAIN IN PREGNANCY

A nutritious, well balanced daily diet during your pregnancy is important for the proper growth and development of your baby. Eating healthy foods will help you feel better and help to manage your weight gain. Increasing your fluid intake daily, especially water, is an important way to stay well hydrated and maintain good health.

Eating a variety of foods, along with a prenatal vitamin, will help you get the protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats in your diet, and provide the proper nutrients for your baby. It is recommended that your daily intake should be between 2,000 & 2,500 calories, depending on your height, weight and activity level. If you are carrying twins then it will be significantly more. Please discuss this with your provider.

Weight Gain

Most women should gain between 25-35 pounds in their pregnancy.

- **First Trimester** - you may only gain a total of 5 pounds
- **Second Trimester** - it is common to gain between 9-12 pounds
- **Third Trimester** – you may gain about a pound a week

**** However, if you are overweight your weight gain should be between 15-20 pounds.
** And if you are obese you should try not to gain more than 15 pounds in your entire pregnancy.**

Healthy eating and exercise will help to prevent high blood pressure related to pregnancy and Gestational Diabetes.

Where does the weight gain in pregnancy go?

- Baby: 7 to 8 pounds
- Larger breasts: 2 pounds
- Larger uterus 2 pounds
- Placenta: 1 ½ pounds
- Amniotic fluid: 2 pounds
- Increased blood volume: 3 to 4 pounds
- Increased fluid volume: 3 to 4 pounds
- Fat stores: 6 to 8 pounds

Staying active will also help you manage your weight and aide in your digestion. Most women find that moderate exercise also boosts energy, and helps them feel better mentally and physically throughout the pregnancy.

Please refer to our website link "**Exercise in Pregnancy**".

Nutritional Guidelines

Understanding what foods to avoid and limit during pregnancy can help you make the healthiest choices for you and your baby. Being sure to wash all fruits and vegetables, as well as fully cooking all meats, chicken and eggs, will help to prevent potentially serious food borne illnesses.

Foods to avoid:

- **Seafood high in mercury:** this can affect your baby's developing nervous system. The FDA encourages pregnant women to **avoid Swordfish, Shark, King Mackerel and Tilefish.**
- **Raw, uncooked fish and shellfish:** especially important to avoid oysters and clams. Lox is usually not cooked as well. If it is smoked then it should be ok.

However, shrimp, crab, salmon, cod, tilapia, canned light tuna and tuna steak (up to 6 ounces a week) are low in mercury and considered **safe in moderation.**

- **Undercooked meat, poultry and eggs:** you are at increased risk of bacterial food poisoning. Use a meat thermometer to be sure of correct temperature. Avoid refrigerated pates, meat spreads, and lunch meats, as well as pre-stuffed poultry or pork. Cook eggs until the whites and yolks are firm.
- **Unwashed fruits and vegetables** might contain disease-causing bacteria and make you very ill. Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables and cut away any damaged portions.
- **Large amounts of vitamin A:** high quantities can cause birth defects. The recommended daily amount is 2,565 IU. Foods high in vitamin A are cooked beef or chicken liver. Good sources are carrots, sweet potato, spinach and cantaloupe.
- Excess caffeine or herbal teas – too much caffeine can cross the placenta and increase the baby's heart rate. Limit your caffeine intake to 2 cups of coffee, tea, or cola a day. Herbal teas are not regulated and should be avoided unless it is a nationally packaged brand.
- Artificial sweeteners: Avoid sweeteners that contain saccharin, like Sweet 'N' Low, as they are not considered safe in pregnancy. However, Stevia, Truvia, and Splenda are considered safe. NutraSweet and Equal may also be used in moderation.
- Alcohol consumption

- **Foods high in sodium** - if you are retaining fluids and having swelling in your feet, hands and legs. Read food labels and avoid, chips, lunchmeats, cheeses and prepared meals that can be high in sodium.

Essential Nutrients

Being aware of the essential nutrients in pregnancy can help promote your baby's growth and development. Eating the right amount of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins, along with a prenatal vitamin, will ensure a well balanced diet.

- **Folate and folic acid** – prevent birth defects. Folate is a B vitamin and known as folic acid in most foods. Folate helps to prevent neural tube defects in the baby's spinal cord and brain. Recommended daily dose is 400-800mcg.

Good sources are spinach, beans, peas, asparagus, oranges, and fortified cereals.

- **Iron** – you will need almost double the amount of iron during pregnancy. This extra iron helps your body make more blood to supply oxygen to your baby. The recommended daily amount of iron is 27 mg, which is in most prenatal vitamins.

Good sources are lean red meats, poultry, fish, dried beans, peas and prune juice.

- **Calcium** – builds your baby's bones and teeth. Calcium also helps the circulatory system run normally. Recommended daily dose is 1,000 mg.

Good sources are dairy products, milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified juices

- **Vitamin D** - also strengthens baby's bones and teeth and helps in the absorption of calcium. Recommended daily dose is 600 IU.

Good sources are sunlight, fatty fish such as salmon, milk and cereals.

Healthy Meal Planning:

Please visit www.choosemyplate.gov - This website helps pregnant women learn how to make healthy food choices for each meal.