

## Go for a Healthy Pregnancy

### Pregnancy is a very special event leading to a new life.

The care and feeding of your baby begins the moment he or she is conceived. An unborn baby totally depends on you for everything. The best way to care for your developing baby is to care for yourself.

**GO!**

### Get Early Medical Care

As soon as you think you might be pregnant, it's very important to see a doctor. Regular medical care beginning early in your pregnancy is the best way to ensure a healthy baby and a healthy you.

The first few weeks of pregnancy are very important. By day 58 all your baby's organs are formed. Because these first few weeks of pregnancy are so important, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends seeing your doctor before you are pregnant.

**GO!**

### Gain Enough Weight

Do you know the three times in your life when you gain weight faster than at any other times?

1. When you're a baby, you triple your birth weight in 1 year.
2. During your teen years you develop from a child to an adult.
3. During pregnancy, you usually gain between 25 and 35 pounds for your baby and yourself in just 9 months.

Gaining enough weight is vital for your baby's development, including his or her brain, heart, lungs and other organs.

If you were at a **healthy weight** before pregnancy, you should gain between **25 and 35 pounds**. A slow, steady weight gain is also important – the first 3 months, gain 2 to 5 pounds and 1 pound a week the next 6 months.

If **underweight**, gain **28 to 40 pounds** depending on your pre-pregnancy weight. The first 3 months, gain 2 to 5 pounds and 1 ½ pounds a week the next 6 months.

Even if you were **overweight**, you still need to gain **15 to 25 pounds**. Pregnancy is NOT the time to diet or try to lose weight because that could harm your baby.



If you have a multiple pregnancy (twins, triplets or more), talk to your health care provider. You will need to gain more weight during pregnancy depending on the number of babies you are carrying.

You might think this is a lot of weight gain, but 30 pounds is distributed about like this:

Weight Source	Pounds
Baby	7½
Placenta	1½
Amniotic fluid	2
<i>Mother</i>	
Breasts	2
Uterus	2
Body fluids	4
Blood	4
Maternal stores of fat, protein, other nutrients	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

If you gain the amount of weight your doctor recommends, you will probably get back to your normal weight about 3 to 6 months after your baby is born. Eating the right amount of food and getting enough exercise will help you get back to that weight.

## Healthy Baby Weight

The healthiest babies usually weigh 7 to 8 pounds. Babies who weigh 5 1/2 pounds or less at birth are not as healthy. Low birth weight is dangerous. Those babies have a greater chance of dying before they are 1 year of age and may have more health problems as children and adults.



## Eat Healthy Foods

Before birth, a baby totally depends on you for nutrients needed for growth and development. Pregnancy and lactation increase the need for many nutrients.

During pregnancy, it's important to eat regularly from MyPyramid's food groups, including fruits, vegetables, grains, lean meat and beans, milk and oils. Oils are not a group but an allowance has been set.



**Remember** – you may need different amounts of each group depending on what your doctor or health care professional says.

When you're pregnant, you're not eating for two. If you double your food intake, you'll probably gain too much weight. Most pregnant women need about 300 extra calories a day. That's equivalent to a glass of skim milk and turkey sandwich.



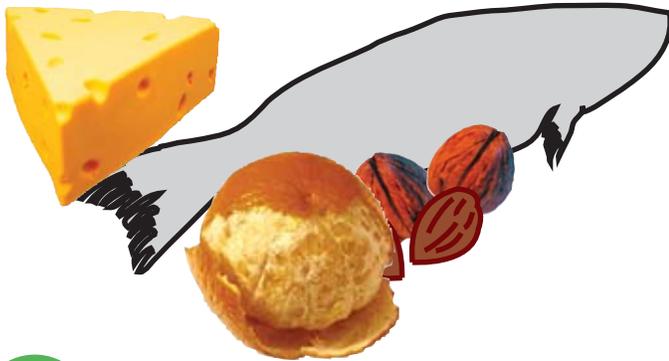
## Consume Essential Nutrients

Some nutrients may be lacking in many pregnant women's diets. These nutrients include:

- **Protein** – builds material for muscle and tissue for baby and mother
- **Calcium** – helps form baby's bones and teeth and maintains mother's bones
- **Iron** – builds red blood cells for healthy blood supply
- **Folic acid** – helps form red and white blood cells

Foods that supply these nutrients include:

- **Protein** – dairy foods (milk, yogurt and cheese) and lean meats, poultry, fish, dried beans, eggs and nuts
- **Calcium** – milk, yogurt, cheese and other dairy products; broccoli, kale, green, leafy vegetables; clams, oysters, fish with bones; almonds; dried peas and beans and calcium-fortified foods
- **Iron** – meat, liver, poultry, fish, oysters; enriched breads and cereals; green, leafy vegetables; dried beans and peas; dried fruit; broccoli, kale, collard greens
- **Folic acid** – liver; eggs; broccoli, kale, collard greens; yeast; dried peas and beans; oranges; whole-grain breads and cereals; fruits; vegetables



**GO!**

## Think About Feeding Well Before Baby Is Born

Think about feeding your new baby. This is an important decision for you to make. Breast milk best meets your baby's needs. It's easy to digest, protects against illness and allergies and is convenient. Breast milk is the perfect choice for your baby.

**GO!**

## Exercise Regularly

Regular exercise during pregnancy is important. Exercising regularly...

- Improves your muscle tone, heart and bones.
- Helps you feel better.

Before exercising, it's important to check with your doctor. If exercise is OK, follow these tips:

- Try a mild exercise like walking, swimming, low-impact aerobics or riding a stationary bike.
- Avoid activities with a high risk of falling or abdominal trauma.
- Build up exercise slowly. Don't try to walk a mile the first time you exercise if you haven't been exercising before.
- Warm up before exercise and cool down after.
- Exercise at the coolest time of day.
- Wear clothing and shoes that give support and comfort.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Exercise only to the point where you begin to get tired. You should be able to talk easily while exercising. If you're out of breath, you're working too hard.

**GO!**

## Use community resources

Several agencies and groups provide food and financial help. Some of these include WIC, Food Stamps, Family Assistance, etc. If you are eligible for these programs, they can help you get food and other needs for a healthy pregnancy.

**Caution!**

## Go easy on caffeine

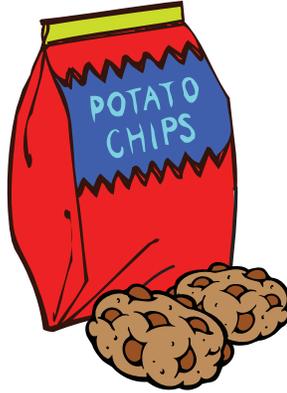
Talk to your doctor. Many doctors suggest cutting down on drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, cola and chocolate) during pregnancy because caffeine is passed to your baby through your blood supply. At one time, it was thought that caffeine might cause birth defects, but several major studies show no association. Nursing mothers pass caffeine through breast milk to their babies and high amounts may make babies irritable.



## Caution!

### Know the limits on fats, salt and sugars

Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars (caloric sweeteners).



Although severely cutting salt or sodium during pregnancy is not recommended, you should use salt in moderation and cut back on very salty foods. Some swelling is normal at the end of pregnancy. Rest often with your feet up.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved five artificial sweeteners considered safe during pregnancy. If you want to use artificial sweeteners, see what your doctor recommends.

## STOP!

### Do not smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs during pregnancy

Smoking cuts the blood supply to your baby and may cause low birth weight. Chemicals and drugs including alcohol can cause deformities and mental retardation. Even medicines like aspirin, laxatives or baking soda can harm your baby.



**Remember.** The best way to care for your developing baby is to care for yourself! Keep your doctor and clinic appointments. Follow your doctor's advice on how much weight to gain during pregnancy.

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