



Healthy Weight Gain in Pregnancy

EXTENSION

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Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets
are also available on our website at:
extension.okstate.edu

Gaining the right amount of weight is a good way to help your baby be healthy when it is born and when he or she is older. The total amount of weight you should gain depends on your weight before you became pregnant. Women who have a healthy weight should gain between 25 to 35 pounds. Women who are overweight or underweight will need to gain different amounts. Check with your doctor to know how much weight gain is best for you and your baby.

Why is healthy weight gain so important?

Gaining too little weight can cause your baby to be small. Low birth weight (under 5 1/2 pounds) is a threat to your baby's health and life. Your baby will usually gain weight properly if you follow the weight gain guidelines during pregnancy.

Gaining too much weight can cause you to have a difficult delivery and put the baby at risk. The weight can also be hard to lose after your baby is born. Gaining the right amount will help you get back to your normal weight several months after your baby is born, especially if you exercise and continue healthful eating habits.

How fast should I gain weight?

Generally, for women with a healthy weight pre-pregnancy, doctors will recommend 1-4 pounds during the first 3 months and 2-4 pounds/month during the last 6 months of pregnancy. The weight gain advice for underweight and overweight mothers is different and should be discussed with a doctor. You may also go to www.myplate.gov-myplate-plan to create your own personalized food plan.

For a woman pregnant with one baby

Pre-Pregnancy BMI Status	Recommended Weight Gain During Pregnancy
Underweight BMI less than 18.5	28-40 pounds
Normal Weight BMI 18.5-24.9	25-35 pounds
Overweight BMI 25.0-29.9	15-25 pounds
Obese BMI greater than or equal to 30.0	11-20 pounds

Where do the pounds go?

The weight you gain is not just the baby. There are other important changes in your body that add to the weight you are gaining.

Baby	7-8 pounds
Placenta	1 1/2 pounds
Amniotic fluid	2 pounds
Uterus enlargement	2 pounds
Breast enlargement	2-3 pounds
Maternal blood volume	3-4 pounds
Fluids in tissue	3-4 pounds
Fat deposits	7-10 pounds

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

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The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.
- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.
- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

References

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