

A Guide to Nutrition and Weight Management in Pregnancy

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Introduction

Weight gain is a normal part of pregnancy, however gaining too much weight can put you and your baby's health at risk.

BMI is a measure of your weight in relation to your height. A high BMI OVER 30kg/m² predicts your risk of developing complications during pregnancy or ill health later in life.

Attempting to lose weight during pregnancy is not advised, but **limiting weight gain during pregnancy can be helpful**. The heavier you are at your booking appointment, the less weight you should gain during your pregnancy.

If your BMI is 30kg/m² or more, you should aim to gain NO MORE than 5-9kg over the course of your whole pregnancy.

BMI (kg/m ²) at booking appointment	Advised weight gain during pregnancy
18.5–24.9	11.5–16 kg (25–35 lbs)
25-29.9	6.8-11.4kg (15-25lbs)
30 +	5-9kg (11-20lbs)

Useful TIP! Controlling your portion sizes will be important to limiting your weight gain

Pregnancy Nutrition – The Essentials

Ensuring adequate intake of specific vitamins during pregnancy is essential. Please ensure you take the following:

Vitamin	Why should I take it?	Recommended dose	Dietary supplements/ recommendations
Folic Acid	Folic acid is required for the development of your baby's organs and has been shown to reduce the risk of neural tube defects such as Spina Bifida.	400 micrograms/day <u>If your BMI is greater than 30kg/m²:</u> 5mg/day	Folate rich foods: dark green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach, Brussels sprouts and broccoli), fortified breakfast cereals, peas, beans, granary bread, nuts, citrus fruits and juices, raspberries, strawberries and blackberries. <i>These are required for the development of healthy bones and teeth.</i>
Calcium & Vitamin D:	Calcium is needed for the development of healthy bones and teeth Vitamin D is essential to absorb calcium that you consume	10 micrograms/day (equivalent to 400 international units or 'iu') This should be taken throughout pregnancy and continue during breastfeeding.	It is recommended you eat three servings of dairy foods each day (see page 6) to ensure you get enough calcium. Other sources of calcium include tinned fish with bones like sardines; tofu and baked beans. <i>Vitamin D is found in a small number of foods but we get most of our vitamin D from sunlight. If you are of Asian origin, if you always cover up all your skin when you're outside, or if you rarely get outdoors, you may be particularly short of vitamin D.</i>
Vitamin A (retinol):	<u>Only needed in small quantities by your body.</u> High intakes during the first few weeks of pregnancy may harm your developing baby.	Supplementing with vitamin A is NOT RECOMMENDED	During pregnancy avoid taking supplements or eating foods that are very high in Vitamin A (retinol). This advice does not apply to supplements or foods rich in carotene , another form of Vitamin A. Liver, liver sausage, liver pate and cod liver oil are all high in vitamin A and should be <u>avoided</u> during pregnancy. However a well-balanced diet containing milk and dairy foods, eggs, fruits and vegetables will provide you with just the right amount of vitamin A for a healthy pregnancy.

Healthy Start Vitamins:

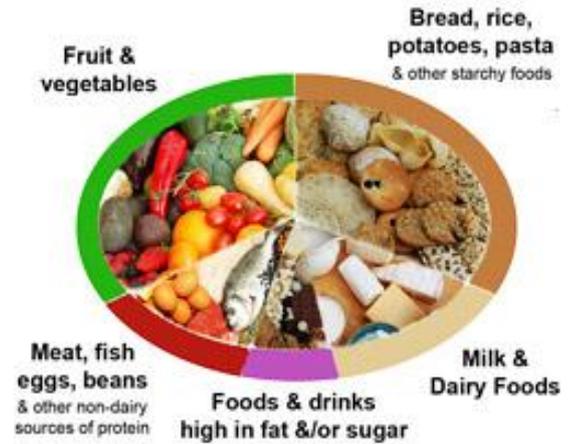
If you receive Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance you're entitled to free vitamin supplements which contain vitamin C, vitamin D and folic acid. Find out more online or from your GP. Please see www.healthystart.nhs.uk for more information.

How can I limit weight gain during pregnancy?

The Eatwell Plate: The Eatwell Plate shows the proportions of each food group you should be including in your diet. Avoid eating more than you need as this will lead to weight gain.

Do I need to eat for two?

NO - Energy requirements do not increase until the third trimester of your pregnancy, where they increase by only 200kcal per day. This is equal 2 slices of plain bread OR 150g low fat yoghurt and a banana OR one wholemeal pitta bread with lean chicken and salad.



Food group	Why do I need it?	How much should I be eating	Dietary recommendations
Starchy Foods	<p>Energy for fuel and growth</p> <p>Iron to prevent anaemia and maintaining the placenta</p> <p>B vitamins to allow you to obtain energy from food and help support your pregnancy.</p>	<p>Include a starchy food at each meal</p> <p>Approximately 1/3 of your plate</p>	<p>Bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, cereals, crackers, cous cous, pitta bread etc.</p> <p>Wholegrain varieties are higher in fibre – will keep you fuller for longer and prevent constipation.</p> <p>Fortified breakfast cereals are particularly rich in iron, vitamin D and folic acid which are essential in pregnancy.</p>
Fruit and vegetables	<p>Vitamin C to build new tissues and help iron absorption</p> <p>Rich in folic acid to prevent anaemia and neural tube defects in your baby.</p> <p>They are low in Calories so good for filling up on when trying to manage your weight.</p>	<p>Try to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables and include at least 5-7 portions a day.</p> <p>Eat a variety! Different coloured fruit and vegetables contain their own combination of vitamins and minerals, so try to include a variety of colours in your diet</p>	<p>1 portion =</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear - 2 smaller fruits (satsumas, plums etc) - 1 handful of berries, grapes, cherries - 3 tablespoons of raw/cooked vegetables - 1 small bowl of salad
Milk and dairy foods	<p>Protein for tissue repair and growth</p> <p>Calcium to maintain your bone density and to develop strong bones for your baby</p> <p>Vitamin A to support your immune system and support your baby's growth</p> <p>Vitamin B1 (thiamin) and B2 (riboflavin)</p>	<p>Aim to eat 3 portions a day</p> <p>Useful TIPS!</p> <p>Limit your intake of cheese to 90g a week– even half fat cheese is still high in saturated fat. Choose instead low fat cheese spreads or cottage cheese.</p> <p>Choose fat free yoghurt and fromage frais rather than thick and creamy alternatives.</p> <p>If you are lactose intolerant opt for lactofree milk or calcium fortified soya milk to ensure your intake of calcium is adequate.</p>	<p>1 portion =</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 200mls or 1/3 pint of semi skimmed/skimmed - 1 pot of fat free or diet yoghurt <p>A matchbox sized piece of cheese (30g)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low fat varieties contain the same amount of calcium but fewer calories.
Meat, fish, eggs, beans and alternatives	<p>Protein for tissue and organ growth</p> <p>Iron to prevent anaemia and maintaining the placenta</p> <p>Rich in folic acid to prevent anaemia and neural tube defects in your baby.</p>	<p>Aim to include at least 2 portions of protein a day - This should include 2 portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily.</p> <p>Useful TIPS!</p> <p><i>Try to avoid:</i> Fatty and processed meats e.g. sausages/salami/pies; any visible fat and skins; frying and adding excessive amounts of oil or butter.</p> <p><i>Healthier option:</i> Extra lean mince meat; Chicken/ turkey/fish; trim off any visible fat and remove the skin; steam, poach, bake, grill instead</p>	<p>Beef, pork, lamb, ham, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, soya, lentil, tofu, Quorn, nuts, texture modified protein.</p> <p>Oily fish (e.g. mackerel, sardines) provides vitamin D to maintain bone density and provide essential omega 3 fats which maintain heart health and are vital for the baby's developing nervous system and retina.</p>

Iron and Vitamin C:

- Iron is essential for healthy blood. If you do not have enough iron you may become anaemic and feel tired.
- Meat, sardines and pilchards are the richest sources of iron, so if you are vegetarian you may need extra advice about iron in your diet. Other sources of iron are pulses, fortified breakfast cereals, wholemeal bread, nuts, dried fruit and dark green leafy vegetables and Ovaltine.
- Eating (or drinking) foods which are good sources of Vitamin C with iron rich foods helps the iron to be used by the body e.g. grapefruit or orange juice with breakfast cereal or toast. Good sources of Vitamin C include most fruits, fruit juices and vegetables. Include some with each meal.

Foods and Drinks high in fat and/or sugar:

These foods and drinks provide us with very little nutrition but are high in calories and therefore can often lead to weight gain.

If you do want a treat, limit your portion size and choose a low-fat and low sugar alternative instead.

Nourishing and Tasty Snacks!

If you get hungry between meals, don't eat snacks that are high in fat and/or sugar, such as sweets, biscuits, crisps or chocolate. Instead, choose from the following nutritious snacks:

- Wholemeal sandwiches or pitta bread filled with grated low-fat cheese, lean ham, salmon or sardines and salad
- Salad vegetables, such as carrot, celery or cucumber
- Low-fat yoghurt or fromage frais
- Hummus with bread or vegetable sticks
- Ready-to-eat apricots, figs or prunes
- Vegetable and bean soups
- Unsweetened breakfast cereals, or porridge, with milk
- Milky drinks or unsweetened fruit juices
- Fresh fruit
- Baked beans on wholemeal toast or a baked potato

Useful TIPS:

Try to avoid: Added sugar; butter, oils, and other fats; fizzy drinks and energy drinks

Healthier option: Use sweetener in drinks, food and cooking; low fat spread and spray oils; 'diet' or 'sugar free' alternatives

Some high fibre meal and snack ideas:

Wholegrain breakfast cereal and chopped fruit

Baked beans on wholemeal/granary toast

Jacket potato (with skin) and chilli con carne and salad

Carrot and cucumber batons with cherry tomatoes and low fat hummus

Useful TIPS to keep the Calories down:

Choose fat free salad dressings or very low fat mayonnaise

Avoid adding cream, ice cream or full fat custard to fruit

Steam, microwave or boil vegetables

Use spray oil if roasting vegetables or in stir fries

Add herbs and spices to enhance the flavour



If you would like to arrange an appointment with the dietician, please call: 020 8934 3433

FOOD SAFETY:

- ❖ Wash fruit, vegetables and salad to remove all traces of soil that may contain toxoplasma, a parasite that can be harmful to your unborn baby
- ❖ Avoid unpasteurised cheeses and blue vein cheese (includes Camembert, Brie, Goats cheese) during pregnancy as these can contain a bacteria which could harm your baby.
- ❖ Ensure all meat and eggs are well cooked.
- ❖ Avoid tuna, marlin, shark, and swordfish in the first trimester as these can contain heavy metals and pollutants that can be harmful to your baby when pregnant. Limit tuna to 2 steaks/ 4 tins per week for the remainder of pregnancy
- ❖ Limit caffeine to no more than 200mg per day.

Keeping Active in pregnancy

Why exercise during pregnancy?

If you have a normal, low risk pregnancy, exercise plays a vital role in keeping you and your baby healthy during, and after, pregnancy.

The benefits for you include:

- Improved well-being and energy levels
- A stronger body, with better posture
- Decreased risk of gestational diabetes and preeclampsia
- Improved pregnancy weight management
- Reduced levels of back and pelvic pain
- Reduced stress levels and better sleep
- Better pelvic floor muscle function – this means no problems with continence
- Decrease risk of varicose veins



There are also benefits for birth and beyond:

- Some evidence has shown that exercise can decrease the length of labour and decrease risk of complications during birth
- Improved cardiovascular fitness
- Facilitated weight loss
- Raised mood, reduced anxiety and depression
- Increased energy

Exercise can be a great way to meet other expectant mums and socialise at the same time!

How much exercise should I be doing?

It is recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists that pregnant women should aim to do **30 minutes** or more of low to moderate intensity exercise on most, if not all, days of the week. This includes walking and swimming. If you were previously very sedentary, begin with 15 minutes 3 times a week and increase gradually.

Conditions requiring medical supervision while undertaking exercise in pregnancy

Cardiac disease, persistent bleeding in the second and third trimesters, pre-eclampsia or pregnancy-induced hypertension, preterm labour (previous/present), multiple gestations, body mass index greater than 40, poorly controlled diabetes mellitus, anaemia.

You don't have to join the gym, just limit the amount of time that you are sat still. As always, start with small, achievable changes. For example:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Park your car at the far end of the car park and walk
- Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk
- Go for a brisk walk with friends, children or pets to the park

Other useful websites:

www.nhs.uk

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

www.readysteadybaby.org.uk

