

# Healthy Weight Gain in Pregnancy



## 1 Calculate BMI

To work out how much weight you should gain during your pregnancy, you need to know your BMI (body mass index).

If you know how much you weighed before pregnancy, or in early pregnancy (less than 10 weeks) and have your height measured, you can work out your BMI with this chart.

If you would like help with this you can ask your midwife, or health practitioner.

Height (m)	Pre-pregnancy or early pregnancy (<10 weeks) Weight (kg)																																									
	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110	112	114	116	118	120	>120		
2	11	12	12	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31		
1.98	11	12	12	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	
1.96	11	12	12	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	
1.94	12	12	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	
1.92	12	12	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	33
1.90	12	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33
1.88	12	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34
1.86	13	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34
1.84	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34	
1.82	13	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34	
1.80	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34		
1.78	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34			
1.76	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34			
1.74	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34				
1.72	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34					
1.70	15	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34						
1.68	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34						
1.66	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34							
1.64	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34								
1.62	17	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34								
1.60	17	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34									
1.58	18	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34										
1.56	18	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34											
1.54	19	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34												
1.52	19	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34													
1.50	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34														
1.48	20	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34															
1.46	21	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34																
1.44	21	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34																	
1.42	22	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34																		
1.40	22	23	23	24	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29	29	30	30	31	31	32	32	33	34																			

## 2 Match your BMI to see how much weight you should gain

Gaining the right amount of weight is very important! Particularly if you were underweight or obese at the start of your pregnancy.

BMI	Recommended weight gain (kg)
Underweight <18.5	13–18
Healthy weight 18.5–24.9	11–16
Overweight 25–29.9	7–11
Obese >30	5–9

Reference: Institute of Medicine. *Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines*. Washington, DC; 2009

## 3 What you can do

- Pregnancy is not about 'eating for two.' In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, you can eat the same amount as you usually would. It is important you eat nutritious food.
- After the 12th week, and if you are a healthy weight, the extra food you need each day is about the same as a wholegrain peanut butter sandwich and a banana. If you are overweight or obese, the extra food you need is about the same as one slice of wholegrain bread or two apples.
- Drink water rather than sweetened drinks, fizzy drinks or fruit juices.
- Drink low-fat trim (green top) or calcium-extra (yellow top) or light blue top milk instead of full-fat (blue or silver top) milk.
- Eat wholegrain bread instead of white bread.

- Eat a healthy breakfast every day, such as wheat biscuits or porridge with low-fat milk, or two slices of wholegrain toast.
- Have at least four servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit every day. Buy vegetables and fruit that are in season, or buy frozen vegetables to help reduce cost, waste and preparation time.
- Prepare and eat meals at home. Have takeaways no more than once a week.
- Choose healthy snacks such as unsweetened low-fat yoghurt, fruit, cheese and crackers, a small bowl of cereal, home-made popcorn or a small wholegrain sandwich.
- Aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five or more days a week, for example, brisk walking or swimming (or as advised by your midwife, doctor or physiotherapist).

Discuss your weight gain with your midwife.

## What are some of the risks of gaining more weight than recommended?

There is an increased risk of:

- having a large baby
- increased blood pressure in pregnancy with complications (pre-eclampsia)
- needing a caesarean section
- diabetes in pregnancy (gestational diabetes)

Gaining more weight than recommended in pregnancy may also make it harder for you to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight following the birth of your baby.

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