

Healthy Weight Gain During Pregnancy

Gaining weight is a natural part of pregnancy. It helps your baby grow and develop, and prepares you for breastfeeding.

How much weight you should gain depends on your Body Mass Index before you became pregnant (your pre-pregnancy BMI).

Find out your pre-pregnancy BMI and your recommended weight gain at healthcanada.gc.ca/pregnancy-calculator and talk to your health care provider.

Based on my pre-pregnancy BMI (___), my recommended weight gain is between ___ and ___ kilograms (kg) pounds (lbs)

Most of this weight gain will happen in the second and third trimesters, as your baby and the tissues that support your pregnancy continue to grow.

Where does the weight go?

Here's an example:

Sarah's pre-pregnancy BMI: 23
Her recommended weight gain:
11.5-16 kg (25 to 35 lbs)

- Extra blood, fluids and protein: 3.5 kg
- Breasts and energy stores: 3 kg
- Uterus: 1 kg
- Placenta: 1 kg
- Baby: 3.5 kg
- Amniotic Fluid: 1 kg

Sarah's total weight gain at 40 weeks: 13 kg (29 lbs)

Note to the health professional

Use the handout titled *Healthy Weight Gain during Pregnancy* to establish and discuss a gestational weight gain goal with your client.

Steps to establish a gestational weight gain goal:

- 1) Calculate your client's pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI).

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{pre-pregnancy weight in kilograms}}{(\text{height in metres})^2}$$

- 2) Find your client's pre-pregnancy BMI in the table below and identify the total gestational weight gain recommended.

Health Canada's recommended total weight gain for singleton pregnancies (2010)

| Pre-pregnancy BMI | Recommended total weight gain ^a | |
|-------------------------|--|---------|
| | kg | lbs |
| BMI < 18.5 | 12.5 - 18 | 28 - 40 |
| BMI 18.5 - 24.9 | 11.5 - 16 | 25 - 35 |
| BMI 25.0 - 29.9 | 7 - 11.5 | 15 - 25 |
| BMI ≥ 30.0 ^b | 5 - 9 | 11 - 20 |

(a) Calculations assume a weight gain of 0.5 to 2 kg (1.1 to 4.4 lbs) in the first trimester.

(b) A lower weight gain may be advised for women with a BMI of 35 or greater, based on clinical judgement and a thorough assessment of the risks and benefits to mother and child.

Order additional copies of the handout and get more information (including new guidelines for health professionals) at healthcanada.gc.ca/prenatal-nutrition.