



WHEN TO SEEK HELP

- If you're having difficulty controlling your weight or managing any pregnancy-related symptoms like swelling, headaches, or dizziness.
- If you have questions about managing diabetes, high blood pressure, or any other health condition during pregnancy.

Handout provided by
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- **How can obesity affect my baby's health?** Babies born to mothers with obesity are at higher risk for birth defects, being too large at birth, and developing obesity later in life.
- **What should I do if I gain too much weight during pregnancy?** Don't worry; it's important to address this with your healthcare provider. They can help guide you toward healthy eating and lifestyle choices to manage weight gain.
- **Is it too late to change my habits during pregnancy?** No! It's never too late to make healthier choices. Even small changes in diet and activity can make a big difference in the health of you and your baby.
- **What support is available for pregnant women with obesity?** Your healthcare provider can connect you with nutritionists, diabetes educators, and other specialists who can provide tailored advice and support. Community resources may also be available for assistance with food, transportation, and prenatal care.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR BABY



*Understanding Obesity
During Pregnancy*

Institute of Medicine Weight Gain Recommendations for Pregnancy

- Underweight (BMI <18.5)
Recommended total weight gain (lb): 28-40
- Normal Weight (BMI: 18.5-24.9)
Recommended total weight gain (lb): 25-35
- Overweight (BMI: 25-29.9)
Recommended total weight gain (lb): 15-25
- Obese (BMI: 30 and greater)
Recommended total weight gain (lb): 11-20

• Source: <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2013/01/weight-gain-during-pregnancy>

Obesity During Pregnancy Matters

- Think of pregnancy like preparing for a long journey. Your body is the vehicle, and your baby is the passenger. You want your vehicle to be in good shape, so it can handle the road ahead. Being overweight or obese can cause complications such as gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and an increased risk for delivering a larger baby. However, with proper planning and care, you can reduce these risks.

Possible Risks of Obesity During Pregnancy



- **Gestational diabetes:** High blood sugar levels during pregnancy that can affect both mother and baby.
- **High blood pressure (pre-eclampsia):** Can lead to serious complications for both mom and baby.
- **Preterm birth:** Obesity may increase the risk of giving birth before 37 weeks.
- **Delivery complications:** Larger babies may require a C-section or cause injury during delivery.
- **Baby's health:** Increased risk of obesity and other health conditions in the baby later in life.

Managing weight and health during pregnancy

1. **Eat Balanced Meals:** Choose nutritious, lower-calorie foods to meet your and your baby's needs.
2. **Stay Active:** If approved by your doctor, aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. Walking, swimming, and prenatal yoga are good options.
3. **Regular Checkups:** Regular prenatal visits will help track your weight, blood pressure, and glucose levels. It's important to keep up with all your appointments.
4. **Monitor weight gain:** Gaining some weight is normal in pregnancy, but it's important to gain it slowly and steadily. Your doctor will help guide you on how much weight gain is right for your body type.
5. **Avoiding unnecessary stress:** Stress can affect your health, so take time for relaxation and self-care. Remember, just like a car needs breaks, so does your body.