

# Healthy Eating for Weight Control in Pregnancy (BMI>30)

Dietetics Department

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## IADAPT project

According to section 2.8 of the Statewide Maternity and Neonatal Clinical Guideline - all women with a Body Mass Index greater than thirty (BMI >30) should be offered nutritional consultation, ideally with a dietitian.

This project seeks to identify women who fit this criteria, and to provide them with information and support.

If you would like to speak with a dietician, please phone 47962152 to make an appointment.

The Dietetics Department is located on the first floor of The Townsville Hospital.

***If your pre-pregnancy BMI was 30 or higher, the recommended weight gain for the whole pregnancy is 5-9 kgs.***

## Healthy Weight Gain during Pregnancy

Now is a good time to consider your eating habits as your needs for many nutrients increase during pregnancy, to ensure healthy growth of the baby.

**PREGNANCY IS NOT A TIME FOR STRICT DIETING.**

However, keeping high fat high calorie foods to a minimum will help to restrict weight gain to a healthy amount during pregnancy.

It is important to eat well during pregnancy. Keeping track of your weight during pregnancy is also important for your's and your baby's health.

Women who are overweight or gain too much weight during pregnancy have a higher risk of:

- High blood pressure
- Gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)
- A large baby
- Caesarean sections
- Birth defects
- Difficulty losing weight after your baby is born. This can increase your long term risk of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

## How much weight should I gain?

The weight you should aim to gain depends on what your weight (and body mass index - BMI) was **before** you became pregnant. BMI is the number used to work out what is the recommended amount for you. If you were given a handheld record from antenatal clinic you may find your BMI in here. If not, you can work it out using the steps below.

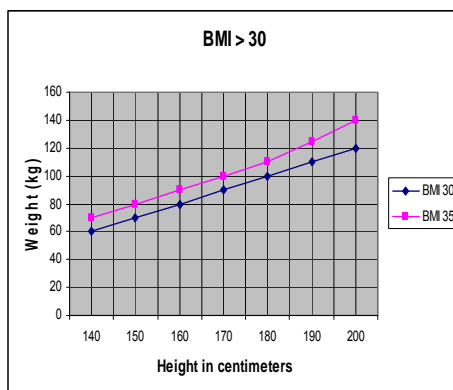
1. My pre-pregnancy weight: \_\_\_\_\_ kg

My height: \_\_\_\_\_ m

(e.g. 165cm would be 1.65m)

BMI = weight/(height x height) = \_\_\_\_\_ kg/m<sup>2</sup>

2. Another way to find your BMI is to use the graph below. From your height and weight trace your fingers along the lines until they meet. That is your BMI. Your dietitian or midwife could help if you are unsure of how to do this.



If your pre-pregnancy BMI was 30 or higher, the recommended weight gain for the whole pregnancy is 5-9 kgs, or 11-19 if you are expecting twins or triplets. This can be broken down to less than 300g per week of gain after the first trimester.

There is only a small increase in the amount of food you need to eat while you are pregnant. However, you do need more of certain nutrients, so it is very important that you make good choices for a nutritious diet. This is important so you and your baby get all you need for healthy growth and a healthy pregnancy.

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***However, keeping high fat high calorie foods to a minimum will help to restrict weight gain to a healthy amount during pregnancy.***

## What should I do if I am gaining weight too quickly?

Gaining too much weight when you are pregnant can increase your blood pressure. To control your weight gain, limit foods that are high in fat and sugar. Make sure you are not 'eating for two'. It is also important to include regular exercise most days.

### Limit the amount of fat you eat by:

- Limiting biscuits, cakes, chips and crisps
- Reducing the amount of fat in cooking
- Choosing low fat dairy products (e.g. milk, yoghurt)
- Avoiding cream and sour cream
- Trimming fat from meat before cooking
- Using healthy cooking methods like grilling, steaming, baking
- Removing skin from chicken
- Limiting high fat takeaway foods

### Limit high sugar foods by:

- Drinking water, not soft drink or cordial
- Using "diet" or low joule products
- Limiting fruit juices to **one glass** per day as these are high in sugar (even 100% juice)
- Limiting chocolates, lollies, sweets and desserts

**Listen to you hunger cues** and only have a snack if you are actually hungry

**Watch your serve sizes**, especially of foods like rice, pasta, potato and meat



## Being active during pregnancy

*Regular exercise is important for weight control and general health during pregnancy.*

As long as your pregnancy is uncomplicated, activities such as walking, swimming and bike riding are all acceptable, but it is important to check with your Doctor or physiotherapist first, before increasing your level of exercise during pregnancy.

### Which kind of activity is best?

Choose a form of exercise that you enjoy – you will be more likely to stick to it!

Choose exercise that fits into your daily routine and can be sustained.

Keep up 'background activity' – use the stairs, walk or ride rather than drive.

Start slowly and build up fitness gradually

If possible, find someone to exercise with – it will increase your motivation when you don't feel like it. Or get involved in social activities such as tennis or golf!

### How much is enough?

To get the most health benefits, a good goal is **at least half an hour of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably, all days**. You do not have to do it all at once. Your exercise can be spread over the day, in ten minute blocks. Try three ten minute walks, or two fifteen-minute periods of activity.

### What DOES moderate-intensity activity MEAN?

*Moderate-intensity* means you are exercising at a comfortable pace. A good guideline is the "talk test" - you should be able to easily hold a conversation without being short of breath.

### What are some activities that I can do?

Many activities are safe during pregnancy including:

- Swimming
- Walking
- Cycling on an exercise bike
- Yoga or Pilates
- Low-impact aerobics, like water aerobics
- Light resistance gym program

Classes that specially cater to pregnant women may be more suited to your needs and body changes during your pregnancy. They can adapt exercises for you, such as having you lie on your side as you exercise rather than on your back, which is not advised throughout your pregnancy.

Remember that incidental activity counts too! This is physical activity that builds up as part of everyday activities. Try to:

- Use the stairs instead of the lift
- Park your car further away from the shops for extra steps
- Get off the train or bus one stop early and walk home
- Be active around the house or garden

Most activities are safe, as long as you:

- take things easy
- stop when you are tired
- drink plenty of water
- wear suitable clothing
- do not become overheated
- stop the activity if you experience any pain that doesn't settle quickly
- 



### Avoid:

- excessive stretching. Your ligaments can be softened by the hormonal changes during pregnancy. Be careful with side kicks in aqua-aerobics and swimming breaststroke.
- high impact activities or contact sports. These include running, surfing, water skiing, trampolining, gymnastics, netball, touch football or squash.
- activities that may limit your oxygen supply. Two examples are scuba diving and mountain climbing.

***Starting your pregnancy at a BMI above the healthy weight range puts you and your baby at greater health risks during pregnancy and retaining excess weight over subsequent pregnancies increases your risk of lifestyle diseases.***

### How can I keep motivated?

- Plan to do an exercise class each week or to walk with a friend
- Do exercises that you enjoy
- Remind yourself of how good you feel when you do and after you are active.

Remember the benefits of being active during pregnancy.

Benefits include:

- less lower back pain
- less nausea
- less heartburn
- lower stress levels
- more energy
- better bowel habits
- better sleep
- being more relaxed
- less anxiety
- a lower risk of diabetes and heart disease
- quicker return to normal after child birth

### Returning to your pre-pregnancy weight.

The greatest amount of weight loss occurs in the first 3 months after birth and then continues at a slow and steady rate until 6 months after birth. Breastfeeding helps you return to your pre-pregnancy weight as some of the weight you gain during pregnancy is used as fuel to make breast milk. Healthy eating and regular physical activity in the postnatal period will also help you to lose the weight gained during

### Future pregnancies

If you are planning another pregnancy, it is a good idea to return to your pre-pregnancy weight first, or close to this. Starting your pregnancy at a BMI above the healthy weight range puts you and your baby at greater health risks during pregnancy and retaining excess weight over subsequent pregnancies increases your risk of lifestyle diseases. Speak to your Dietitian for more advice.

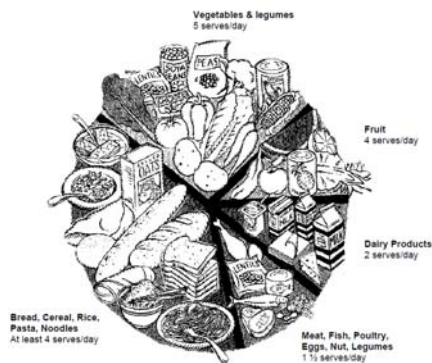
### Content in this handout was informed by:

Callaway, L.K., et al., The prevalence and impact of overweight and obesity in an Australian obstetric population. Medical Journal of Australia, 2006. 184(2): p. 56-59

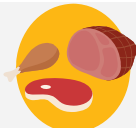
Institute of Medicine (2009). Weight gain during pregnancy: Re-examining the guidelines. Accessed on 2 June 2009. [www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/48191/68004.aspx](http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/48191/68004.aspx)

Physical Activity - Information provided is consistent with current Active Australia guidelines for physical activity and Sports Medicine Australia – Exercise in Pregnancy

## Food Guide for Pregnant Mothers



### MEAT AND MEAT ALTERNATIVES



#### 1 1/2 serves daily

- 1 serve
- = 65-100g cooked meat/chicken eg. 2 slices roast meat, 2 chops
  - = 80-120g cooked fish, tuna
  - = 2 small eggs
  - = 1/2 cup cooked (dried) beans, lentils
  - = 1/3 cup peanuts or almonds

Meat and meat alternatives contain a wide range of vitamins and minerals, particularly IRON & VITAMIN B, however, they can also be very high in FAT.

To keep fats to a minimum, try to:

- TRIM OFF VISIBLE FAT from all meats, including the skin from chicken, before cooking.
- Buy TRIMMED meat with LITTLE FAT MARBLING because they will shrink less during cooking – and will give you better value for money.
- Avoid fat laden pies, battered fish, sausage rolls and other 'convenience foods'.
- Use LOW FAT COOKING METHODS: roast on a rack, use the griller or non-stick frying pan rather than frying in butter/oil. Prepare stews/soups/casseroles the day before, & remove the solid fat before reheating.
- Try dried beans, peas or lentils as a substitute for meat once a week (or make your bolognese sauce with kidney beans and mince to make the mince go further).

### FATS

You need only a SMALL amount of fat in your diet to cover your nutrients needs.

Fat is found in many foods. Whether it comes in a solid form (margarine, butter, lard), or as a liquid (eg. oil) it is still a concentrated form of energy. Reducing your intake of fat will definitely help your weight control.

### DAIRY PRODUCTS



#### 2 serves daily

- 1 serve
- = 250ml milk
  - = 40g (2 slices) low fat cheese
  - = 200g (1 tub) yoghurt

Dairy foods are our best natural dietary source of CALCIUM, and low fat cheese (eg. reduced fat cheddars), light, trim & skim milk, low fat yoghurts give as much calcium as the full fat varieties without the fat.

### VEGETABLES



#### 5 serves daily

- 1 serve
- = 1/2 cup cooked vegetables
  - = 1 potato
  - = 1 cup salad

These are also high in vitamins, minerals and fibre, essential for a healthy pregnancy.

Don't add fat/butter or creamy sauces to naturally low kilojoule vegetables!

Vegies are a great filler, so pile your plate high, and snack on them freely during the day.

Add FLAVOUR with:

- Chilli sauce
- Pepper
- Lemon juice
- Tabasco
- Herbs (eg parsley, mint)

### SUGARS

Sugar provides kilojoules (energy) without any nutrients.

For example:

- 11 strawberries = 160 kilojoules (KJ) + fibre, vitamins and minerals
- 2 level teaspoons sugar = 160 KJ + NOTHING!

Eating too many foods containing sugar contributes to becoming overweight.

High sugar foods include:

- Sugar (white, brown, raw)
- Jam, marmalade
- Honey, golden syrup, treacle, corn syrup
- Monosaccharides, disaccharides
- Dextrose, maltose
- Sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol
- Chocolate, lollies, cough lollies
- Biscuits, cakes
- Sugar coated cereals
- Jelly, soft drinks
- Cordials, flavoured milks
- Condensed milk
- Ice cream

### BREADS AND CEREALS



#### 4 serves daily

- 1 serve = 2 slices bread
- = 1 cup cooked rice/pasta
  - = 1 1/3 cup cereal flakes
  - = 1/2 cup muesli

Choose WHOLEMEAL & WHOLEGRAIN breads & cereals, as the fibre in these will keep your hunger at bay for longer. Breads and cereals are fairly low in kilojoules, but WATCH THE TOPPING!!

Try to:

- Spread your bread with less margarine or butter.
- Add fresh or dried fruit to breakfast cereals instead of sugar or honey.
- Choose unprocessed breakfast cereals, as they are high in fibre, have no added fats/sugar (and are usually less expensive) eg weeties, porridge oats.
- Instead of sour cream or butter on your potato, try tasty toppings such as low fat yoghurt with chives, mushrooms or parsley.
- Make your own low fat pasta sauces, (tomato based ones are lower in kilojoules than creamy ones).

### FRUITS



#### 4 serves daily

- 1 serve
- = 1 medium piece, eg. apple, orange, pear
  - = 2 small pieces, eg. apricots, kiwi fruit
  - = 1 cup diced/canned fruit
  - = dried fruit eg. 1 1/2 tbsp sultanas

Fresh fruit is high in vitamins, minerals & fibre.

Fruit juices are a concentrated form of fruit with NO FIBRE so are best avoided. One small glass can contain the juice of up to 4-5 pieces of fruit. Try diluting these with water or soda water.

Canned fruits are a great dessert (especially topped with plain, low fat yoghurt or low joule jelly) but choose the ones canned in natural juices or water, rather than the ones in heavy sugar-laden syrups.

### ALCOHOL

It is best to avoid alcohol during pregnancy. This is because alcohol is carried across the placenta into the baby's bloodstream. Unborn babies cannot effectively break down alcohol and may be at risk of abnormalities, particularly in the first 3 months of pregnancy.

It is especially important to avoid alcohol if you are trying to restrict your weight gain during pregnancy, as this provides calories with little nutrition. Drinking alcohol can also reduce your resolve to keep away from high fat/sugar foods.



## SNACKS

There may be times when you will need a snack to tide you over until the next meal...

TRY:

- wholemeal/wholegrain crackers or crispbreads
- salads & vegetables (eg. carrot, celery)
- low fat milk or yoghurt
- fresh fruit
- soda water / unflavoured mineral water
- clear soup, broths (fat skimmed off)

COMBINATION OF THE ABOVE, eg:

- Non fat yoghurt and raw vegetables to dip
- Crackers, low fat cheese and tomato
- Fruit smoothie: using skim milk and one piece of fruit – blended

## Handy hints for the supermarket



1. Never shop on an empty stomach.
2. Write a shopping list: this will help you withstand the temptation to buy unsuitable foods.
3. Choose less processed foods as these are generally lower in fat & sugar, and high in fibre (and cheaper too!!!) eg. Rolled oats instead of cocopops Low fat yoghurt or milk instead of ice cream or flavoured milk.
4. Avoid buying tempting snack foods eg chips & lollies. When they are not in the house, you can't eat them!!

## Shopping – label reading

Learn to read labels COMPARING labels & choose foods low in FAT and SUGARS, and high in FIBRE.

### NUTRITION INFORMATION

Serving size – 30g (1/2 cup)	Per 30g	per 100g
ENERGY	443kj	1478kj
PROTEIN	3.9g	13.1g
FAT	0.7g	2.2g
CARBOHYDRATE		
- TOTAL	22.0g	73.4g
- SUGARS	4.1g	13.5g
DIETARY FIBRE	8.6g	28.7g
SODIUM	292mg	973mg
POTASSIUM	247mg	822mg
INGREDIENTS: WHEAT BRAN, SUGAR, MALT EXTRACT, SALT, CASTER SUGAR, VITAMINS (THIAMIN, RIBOFLAVIN), MINERAL (IRON)		

Useful information includes:

**SERVING SIZE:** this is the average serving size of the product, **but** this may not be the same as the serving you have. Weigh your **normal** serve and work out the amount of nutrients you are consuming using the figures per 100g.

**PER 100G:** 100g is a useful standard to compare products, eg which is lower in fat. Use this information when choosing products.

**FAT:** Use the figure per 100g and pick the product with the least fat. Generally, look for products with less than **10g fat per 100g**.

### CARBOHYDRATE:

**TOTAL:** this includes both sugars and starches, use this figure to work out how much carbohydrate you are eating.

**SUGARS:** this tells you how much of the total carbohydrate is sugar, again, look for products with less than **15g per 100g**.

**DIETARY FIBRE:** Use the figure per 100g and choose the product which is higher in fibre. 25-30g is the recommended daily intake for dietary fibre.

**INGREDIENTS LIST:** this lists the ingredients contained in the product in order of quantity, from most to least. Useful for identifying sources of added fat, sugars and salt.

## Suggested Meal Plan

### Breakfast

#### Fruit or juice

Breakfast cereal with low fat milk  
Wholemeal bread/toast with scraping margarine/butter  
Vegemite, jam or honey  
Glass of milk or water

### Lunch

#### Wholemeal bread/roll/pita/wrap or rice cakes

Lean meat, chicken, fish, egg or low fat cheese  
Salad  
Water, milk or juice

### Dinner

#### Lean meat, chicken, fish or legume (beans/lentils) dish

Vegetables or salad  
Boiled potato, rice or pasta  
Fruit or low-fat milk based dessert

### Between meals

#### Fresh fruit

Low fat yoghurt  
Dried fruit

Slice of bread or low fat crackers if hungry



For Further information please contact the dietitian, Women's and Children's Allied Health Dept. Townsville Hospital. ph: 4796 2152