

Everyone's body shape during pregnancy is different. You will gain weight in pregnancy, that's normal, but keeping your weight gain to a healthy level, by eating well and keeping active, will be good for both you and your baby.

In this FAQ we look at weight during pregnancy and gestational diabetes.

What should I do if I'm a larger weight and pregnant?

Pregnancy is not a time to diet or try to lose weight but it is a brilliant time to eat healthily and keep active to. This will help:

- ensure your baby is getting the best nutrition from you as he or she grows;
- reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth;
- to have less weight to lose after the baby is born.

Dieting during pregnancy may mean you aren't getting all the nutrients you and your baby need.

The focus should be on healthy eating rather than reducing your weight.

Healthy eating – The basics

The basic principles of a healthy diet stay the same in pregnancy. You should still eat a diet that includes:

- plenty of fruit and vegetables;
- wholegrain or high fibre carbohydrates like brown rice, wholewheat pasta, potatoes with skins, wholegrain breads, bulgur wheat, porridge and other wholegrain breakfast cereals;
- good quality proteins like beans and pulses, eggs, nuts, lean meat and poultry, fish (white and oily);
- dairy foods, such as milk, yogurt and cheese (or calcium-fortified dairy-free alternatives);
- wisely chosen fats in small amounts like unsaturated fats (such as rapeseed or olive oil, unsaturated fat spreads) and foods that are sources of unsaturated fats, such as nuts;
- limited amounts of foods and drinks that are high in saturated fat, salt and sugar like deep fried foods, salty snacks, cakes biscuits, chocolate, confectionary and sugary drinks.



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What complications are related to obesity in pregnancy?

Many obese women (BMI>30 kg/m²) will have healthy pregnancies.

However the risk of some conditions, such as gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure), miscarriage and the need for a Caesarean delivery, is increased.

Larger pregnant women may be able to reduce their risk of these complications by managing weight gain during pregnancy through eating healthily, keeping active and not falling into the trap of eating for two!



I have been diagnosed with gestational diabetes, how can I eat well if I have it?

Although some women may be able to control their blood sugar levels through lifestyle changes alone, they may also require medications such as insulin. Always follow the advice of your dietitian and GP or midwife.

Lifestyle changes play an important role in the management of gestational diabetes. A healthy diet, physical activity, and avoiding too much weight gain is important in helping to control blood sugar levels, but medical management may also be a necessary.

As well as the basic guidelines for a healthy balanced diet you may find it helpful to:

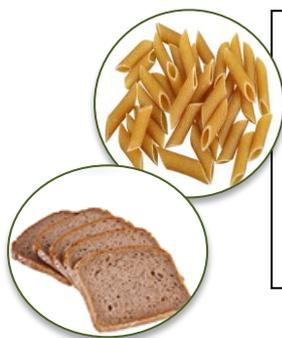
- Eat regularly – usually three meals a day – and avoid skipping meals;
- Choose low glycaemic index (GI) foods that release sugar slowly.

What is the glycaemic index (GI)?

The GI is a measure of how quickly food affects your blood sugar (glucose) level when that food is eaten on its own.

Many low GI foods fit well into a healthy balance diet and include:

- wholewheat pasta and basmati rice;
- high fibre cereals (e.g. porridge);
- pulses (peas, beans and lentils).



High GI to Lower GI food swaps

- Cornflakes → muesli (no added sugar) or porridge
- White bread → seeded or rye bread
- Fried crisps → plain nuts (walnuts, almonds etc.)
- Old potatoes → new potatoes, wholewheat pasta or noodles
- Naan bread → wholewheat chapatti or roti
- Ice cream → low-fat Greek yogurt



And try to...

- Limit foods and drinks high in free sugars, these include: fizzy sugary drinks, chocolate, biscuits, cakes, sweet pastries and confectionary. Be aware that fruit juices and smoothies provide nutrients but also contain free sugars, so keep portion size to no more than 150ml a day.
- Eat plenty of different fruit and vegetables – try and get at least 5 A DAY every day.

When it comes to what we eat there is no one-size-fits-all approach, so you should find your own way to enjoy a healthy, balanced diet during your pregnancy.



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