

# EATING FOR TWO?

**Tips for maintaining  
a healthy weight during pregnancy**



# CONGRATULATIONS!

You are pregnant! A lot of what you do now affects your health and the health of your developing baby. Eating a well-balanced diet, being active and having a healthy weight can help you have a healthy baby!

## What You Eat Matters

No doubt you will get advice from friends and family. Some of it may be good, some may not. This guide gives you good advice on ways to be healthy during pregnancy and after your baby is born. Share this information with your partner, mother, sister, neighbor or friend so they can support you during these important months.

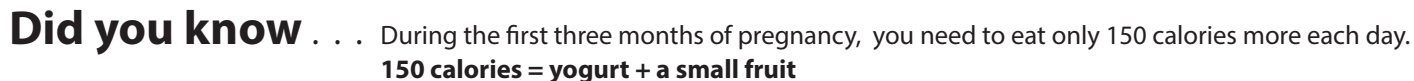
When you are pregnant you may find that you want to eat some foods more than others. And the smells of some foods may bother you. Eating a variety of foods makes it more likely that you and your baby get what you both need to be healthy.

If you find that you crave things that are not food (dirt, clay, starch, ice or coffee grounds) talk to your doctor or WIC nutritionist. It is possible that your blood may be low in iron.



Have you heard “Remember, you are eating for two now” or “Now you can eat whatever you want”? Your baby depends on you for all of its food and you will need to eat a little more, but not twice as much. **What** you eat is important for your baby’s health. **How much** you eat is important for your health.

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Eat fish, like salmon or “chunk light” tuna.
- Cut down on greasy foods and sweets.
- Drink plenty of water.



**300 calories = yogurt + a small fruit + a slice of whole grain bread**

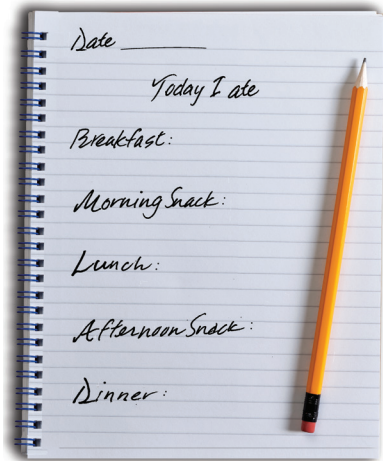




Have you heard “Eat small meals instead of big ones when you are pregnant”? That’s good advice and is a great rule to follow after the baby is born too.

## Tips:

- Try to eat three meals and several small snacks or five to six small meals each day.
- Try to avoid second helpings or large servings.
- Drink lots of water.
- Eat foods high in fiber to keep your digestion healthy.
- Write down everything you eat and drink. Share this with your health care provider or your WIC nutritionist. Ask what changes, if any, you should make.



## When you're hungry between meals choose:

Cheese and crackers and  
a cup of carrots.



Graham crackers, a cup of milk,  
and a small banana.





## Be Active— To Feel and Look Better

Being active doesn't mean you need to join a gym or run a marathon. You just need to move. Find someone to help you stay motivated and to encourage you.

Of course, if you have a medical condition, check with your doctor before starting to exercise.

Know your limits and start small. Work up to 30 minutes of exercise three times a week. Too much at once? Break it up and do 10 minutes at a time, three times a day. Walking and swimming are usually safe during pregnancy.

### You can also:

- Dance to your favorite music.
- Play “tag” with your children.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park farther from the entrance to your work or the store when it's safe.
- Take a walk.
- Swim or walk laps in a pool.

## Exercise has many benefits.

### It can:

- Help you sleep better and reduce back pain.
- Give you more energy.
- Help prevent too much weight gain.
- Make you stronger for labor.
- Help you get back in shape after the baby is born.

## Just Enough (Weight) for Two

The recommended amount of weight gain depends on your weight before pregnancy and your height. The amount of recommended weight gain is also different if you're carrying twins. Ask your doctor or WIC nutritionist how much weight you should gain.

In the first months of pregnancy, you may have nausea and feel like vomiting. This could affect your appetite and you might eat more, or less, during this time. You only need to gain about four pounds in the first three months. Gaining more weight than needed puts you at a greater risk of developing gestational diabetes and high blood pressure while pregnant. Listen to your body's hunger cues to get the right amount of energy to keep you and baby healthy.

### You can expect to gain:

**Two to four pounds total**  
during the first three months of pregnancy.

**Three to four pounds per month**  
between months four and nine.

### BEFORE YOU GOT PREGNANT, IF YOU WERE:

Average weight



**You should  
gain 25 to 35  
pounds.**

Underweight



**You should  
gain 28 to 40  
pounds.**

Overweight



**You should  
gain 15 to 25  
pounds.**

Obese



**You should  
gain 11 to 20  
pounds.**

# Don't Stress Over Your Weight

Yes, having a healthy weight is important while you are pregnant, but now is not the time to diet or to lose weight. Focus on eating five to six small healthy meals every day and finding types of movement that you enjoy.

If you are gaining too much weight too quickly, try to cut back on foods high in fat and sugar like soda, desserts, fried foods, and whole milk products.

Try these snacks instead:

- Nuts and raisins
- Apple slices, grapes or other fruit
- Hard-boiled egg
- Low-fat yogurt or cheese

| HOW MUCH DOES IT WEIGH? | POUNDS     |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Baby                    | 7.5 to 8.5 |
| Placenta                | 1.5        |
| Amniotic fluid          | 2          |
| Uterus                  | 2 to 3     |
| Breasts                 | 1          |
| Blood                   | 3          |
| Fluid                   | 5 to 6     |
| Other parts of the body | 3 to 10    |
| Total                   | 25 to 35   |

|                         |            |
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Before your baby is born, learn about the benefits of breastfeeding. Breast milk is the best food you can give your baby.

Breastfeeding can help you lose weight and costs nothing.

## Tip:

Talk to your WIC nutritionist or health care provider to learn more about breastfeeding your baby. The WIC program can provide special support such as one-on-one education and a breast pump if you need one.





## How Much Time Will It Take to Lose the Baby Weight?

Be patient. Remember, it took nine months to gain this weight. It will take time to lose this weight. After your baby is born you will want to keep eating well and being active. Listen to your body's signs and don't do too much too quickly.

It can be hard for new moms to find the time or energy to exercise. Here are some things you can do:

- Walk with your baby in a stroller or a soft baby carrier.
- Put on music and dance with your baby.
- Find other new moms and walk or be active together.
- Ask your partner or a family member to watch the baby for 20–30 minutes so you can walk or exercise by yourself.

HEALTHY  
MOMS,  
HEALTHY  
KIDS



NC Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Child and Family Well-Being  
Community Nutrition Services Section  
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