

Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



When You're Underweight

Why is gaining less weight than recommended risking your baby's health? Your baby's health at birth is related to the amount of weight you gain before the baby is born. Your baby may be born too early or face health problems at birth if you do not gain enough weight while you are pregnant. If you were underweight before pregnancy, you will need to gain between 28 to 40 pounds. Discuss your recommended weight gain with your doctor. Try these ideas to help you gain weight:

- Eat a good breakfast.
- Eat 4 or 5 small meals during the day.
- Tape notes and pictures on your refrigerator as reminders to eat.
- Keep your favorite, healthy, easy to fix food in good supply at home.
- Take food that is easy to carry and eat when you are on the go. Good choices are cheese and crackers, peanut butter sandwich, apple, muffin, low salt peanuts and oatmeal cookies.

- Avoid eating "junk food" to gain weight. Instead choose healthy foods that offer both calories and nutrition.

- Choose healthy snacks and try to include them in your diet daily.

>Milk-fruit shakes, smoothies.

>Yogurt topped with fruit or nuts

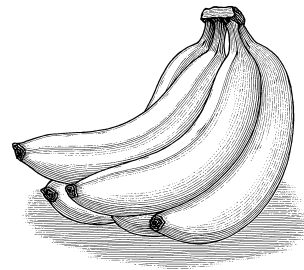
>Peanut butter and crackers, cheese and crackers

>Sandwiches with tuna, chicken, or egg salad, pizza



>Low salt peanuts and sunflower seeds

>Raisins, fresh fruit, fruit juice



>Banana or pumpkin bread, muffins

>Bagels, crackers, graham crackers

REMEMBER: Gradual steady weight gain is important. Your doctor will check your weight regularly.

Suggested Readings:

Erick, M. (1987). *D.I.E.T. during pregnancy*. Brookline, MA: Grinnen-Barrett Publishing Company.

March of Dimes (1989). *Public health education information sheet: Low birthweight*. White Plains, NY: Author.

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References:

Eisenberg, Arlene, Murkoff, Heidi E., and Hathaway, Sandee. E. (1986) *What to eat when you're expecting*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, Inc.

Frisancho, A., Matos, J., and Bollettino, L. (1984). Influence of growth status and placental function on birth weight of infants born to young still-growing teenagers. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 40, 801-807.

Gong, E. (1990). Weight issues and management. In M. Story (Ed.) *Nutrition management of the pregnant adolescent* (pp. 55-65). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse.

Worthington-Roberts, B., Rees, J. , and Endres, J. (1989). Nutrition management of adolescent pregnancy: Technical support paper. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 89, 105-109.



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***For more information, contact your OSU
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