

Your Healthy News – Fertility Newsletter
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Prenatal Nutrition During the Holiday Season

The holidays are just around the corner, bringing seasonal foods, time with family, and festivities. With tons of turkey, holiday cookies, and other decadent desserts it is very easy to over indulge and justify extra helpings because you're "eating for two". During the holiday season it is important to watch your caloric intake so that you stay within the pregnancy weight guidelines. Too much weight gain during pregnancy can increase the risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and a cesarean delivery, and poor weight gain is associated with premature birth and/or low birth weight.

Gaining Weight During Pregnancy

Weight gain recommendations for pregnancy vary depending on a woman's body mass index (BMI) upon entering pregnancy. Typically recommendations of additional calories are only 300 per day; with the majority of weight gain occurring in the second and third trimesters. On average a 1-4 lb weight gain in the first trimester, and then 0.5-1 lb weight gain per week in the second and third trimesters are seen.

To calculate your BMI:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{(\text{weight in pounds} \times 703)}{\text{height in inches}^2}$$

Now use your BMI calculated above to determine your recommended weight gain during pregnancy.

<i>Weight status</i>	<i>BMI</i>	<i>Recommended weight gain</i>
Underweight	< 18.5	28 – 40 lbs
Normal weight	18.5 – 24.9	25 – 35 lbs
Overweight	25.0 – 29.9	15 – 25 lbs
Obese	≥ 30	11 – 20 lbs

Making Healthy Nutrition Decisions

Have another helping

Consider having another helping of calcium-rich foods (milk, yogurt, cheese, juice), folic acid-rich foods (dark leafy greens, beans, fortified breads and cereals), and iron-rich foods (lean red meat, spinach, dried fruits). Extra servings of these foods encourage development of your baby as well as promote your overall health.

In moderation

It is important to limit your caffeine intake to less than 200 mg daily. Consuming greater than 500mg of caffeine daily can decrease your baby's weight and head circumference. For instance, a 5oz cup of coffee contains 50-130mg of caffeine, a 5oz cup of tea contains 25-50 mg, and a 12oz soft drink contains 30-60 mg. The holidays often encourage indulging in high-fat, high-sugar foods, which have very little nutritional value that you and your baby need. Filling up on empty calories will only cause you to eat less healthy foods that contain nutrients essential for your baby's growth.

Avoid altogether

Be aware of spiked eggnog as it is strongly recommended to avoid alcohol during pregnancy. Consuming alcohol during pregnancy and even while breast feeding could cause serious problems in your baby's development. Another reason to steer clear of the eggnog as well as Caesar dressing and uncooked cake or cookie batter is because they may contain raw eggs, which can contain salmonella and other harmful bacteria. At the hors d'oeuvres table skip the platter of deli meats and soft cheeses, like Brie, Camembert, feta, and queso. Deli meats and soft cheeses are both common sources of the bacteria listeria, which can cause miscarriages, premature labor, low-birth weight, mental retardation, paralysis, seizures, blindness, blood infections and meningitis.

Remember making healthy holiday eating choices for you and your baby will allow you to have more to celebrate in the years to come. We hope these quick tips allow you to make smart nutrition decisions, while still enjoying some of your favorite holiday treats!