

What you eat during pregnancy will have a great impact on your child now and in the future.

Nutrition and Pregnancy

Good nutrition is especially important during the childbearing years. The types and amount of food you eat can affect your baby's growth and development. What you eat will have a great impact on your unborn child during development and in the future. If you would like more information regarding nutrition and pregnancy, call the neonatal dietitian at 312-926-0571 to make an appointment.

Weight Gain during Pregnancy

Adequate weight gain during pregnancy is needed to provide the mother and child with good nutrition. Pregnancy should not be a time for dieting. You should expect a range of weight gain between 25 and 35 lbs. A gradual weight gain is important. During the first 3 months, a weight gain of only 2 to 4 lbs. is adequate since the fetus is very small at this time. Starting with the 4th month of pregnancy, most women need an extra 300 calories per day. After that, a weight gain of one-half to 1 lb. each week is suggested. The amount of weight you should gain will depend upon your pre-pregnancy weight.

Based on a "normal" pre-pregnancy weight, this chart shows how the weight gained during pregnancy is distributed:

Affected Anatomy	Additional Weight
Fetus	7.0 lb.
Placenta (afterbirth)	1.5 lb.
Amniotic Fluid (water bag)	2.0 lb.
Uterus (womb)	2.0 lb.
Breasts	1.0 lb.
Blood	3.0 lb.
Fluid	3.0 lb.
Fat	9.0 lb.
Total	28.5 lb.

Gastrointestinal Discomfort

Gastrointestinal (GI) discomfort is common during pregnancy. We suggest the following tips to help you deal with these common GI discomforts.

Morning Sickness

- Eat 5 to 6 small meals per day every 2 to 3 hours
- Do not let yourself feel hungry
- Select foods containing mostly carbohydrates (toast, crackers)
- Drink fluids between meals
- Avoid fried foods or other foods that may cause you discomfort

Constipation

- Increase fluid intake
- Select whole-grain breads and cereals
- Select fresh fruits and vegetables
- Increase physical exercise as allowed by your doctor
- Obtain adequate rest and sleep
- Consult your doctor if constipation persists

Heartburn

- Eat small meals more frequently, every 2 to 3 hours
- Eat slowly in a relaxed setting
- Avoid large meals before bedtime
- Avoid lying flat after eating
- Avoid tight clothing
- Ask your doctor about antacids if the problem persists

Some Things to Think About

Alcohol: Drinking alcohol during pregnancy has been associated with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, a condition causing birth defects. Since we do not know how much alcohol or at what point in pregnancy the fetus would be affected, pregnant women should avoid alcohol. Instead of alcohol, try club soda, a juice spritzer, sparkling grape juice, tomato juice or soda.

