

Dietary Guidelines for Restricted Weight Gain During Pregnancy



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Appropriate weight gain during pregnancy is important. Excessive weight gain may lead to complications like insulin resistance, gestational diabetes or hypertension, all of which are associated with health risks for the newborn.

A balanced diet, rich in good quality proteins, essential fatty acids, iron, calcium, folic acid, B complex vitamins and vitamin C with optimum calories is advisable. The total calorie requirement is calculated based on the weight gain goal. The optimal weight gain during pregnancy is based on pre-pregnancy BMI.

Prepregnancy BMI	Total weight gainrange in kg	Mean rates of weight gain (kg/wk) in 2nd and 3rd trimester
Underweight (< 18.5 kg/m ²)	12.5 – 18	0.51
Normal weight (18.5–24.9 kg/m ²)	11.5 – 16	0.42
Overweight (25.0–29.9 kg/m ²)	7 – 11.5	0.28
Obese (> 30.0 kg/m ²)	5 – 9	0.22



General Guidelines

1. Meal timings: Adhere to fixed meal times.

2. Eat small frequent meals:

- ✓ Eat every 3 hours and about the same time every day.
- ✓ Do not skip or delay meals so as to avoid fatigue and excess hunger.

3. Include a variety of whole grains:

- ✓ Choose whole grains over refined foods. Prefer brown rice, whole wheat and millets. Use of ragi, jowar, bajra and other millets is more beneficial than taking only rice and rice based products.
- ✓ Include at least one serving of whole beans and legumes (moong, moth, chana, rajma, lobia, green peas etc).
- ✓ Always use whole-wheat flour or fibre enriched flour. Take a blend of wheat flour and soya bean flour or wheat flour and roasted channa flour in the ratio of 4 : 1.

4. Eat a variety of vegetables in good quantity with each meal. Include plenty of green leafy vegetables; at least one serving per day. Include vegetable salad daily and use a variety of vegetables.

5. Prefer fruits like oranges, sweet lime, watermelon, musk melon, pears, strawberries, kiwis, ripe papaya, figs, apples, guava and plums daily, but in specified quantities.

6. Nuts and oil seeds: Limit the use of nuts and oil seeds like groundnut, kaju, badam,

walnuts and cashews to specified quantities. It is preferable to use puffed bengal gram (putana) or vegetable chutney instead of coconut, groundnut chutney or pickles.

7. Eat protein rich foods:

- ✓ Sources of protein for vegetarians are milk, curds, yoghurt, cheese, beans, pulses, soya nuggets, tofu and paneer.
- ✓ In addition to the above, sources of protein for non-vegetarians are eggs, lean meats, fish and chicken.
- ✓ It is preferable to use low fat or zero fat milk, i.e. skimmed milk (0.3%) or double toned (1.5% fat) (commonly known as diet or slim milk).

8. Eat Iron-rich foods:

- ✓ Plant foods like legumes (cluster beans, channa, rajma, lobia, moong dal, green peas etc.), and green leafy vegetables (amaranth, fenugreek, spinach, mint, coriander, spring onion etc.) contain iron.
- ✓ Iron is also obtained through egg yolk, meat, fish, liver and poultry products.
- ✓ Take vitamin-C rich foods like citrus fruits (orange, sweet lime), guava, tomatoes, lime juice, cucumber etc. along with your meals to improve iron absorption from plant foods.
- ✗ Beverages like tea and coffee bind dietary iron and make it unavailable. Hence they should be avoided before, during or soon after a meal.

9. Eat folate-rich foods:

- ✓ Bengal gram, green gram, green peas, cluster beans, liver and green leafy vegetables are good sources of folic acid.

10. Eat calcium-rich foods:

- ✓ Milk, curds, tofu, cheese, fish and green leafy vegetables are good sources of calcium.
- ✗ Avoid taking iron and calcium together as it reduces the efficacy of both minerals.

11. Cooking oil: Total quantity of cooking oil to be used is 4 – 6 teaspoon (20 – 30 ml) per day. Preferably use groundnut, rice bran, til or soya bean oil.

12. Fluids: Need to include plenty of fluids. The minimum intake should be 2½ – 3 lit/day. Take tea, coffee in moderation.

13. Physical activity: Ensure adequate physical activity suitable or convenient to



Foods to Avoid

- ✗ Processed foods and 'maida' products (vermicelli, noodles, white bread), packed and tinned foods.
- ✗ Bakery items and desserts like puffs, pizzas, rolls, burgers, biscuits, cakes, pastries cookies and pies.
- ✗ Deep fried foods, chips, samosas, biryani.
- ✗ Ghee, vanaspathi, salad dressings, mayonnaise, butter, cream, cheese.

- ✗ Gravies made from coconut, khus khus, groundnut or kaju pastes.
- ✗ Whole fat (full cream) milk.
- ✗ Sweets, chocolates, sugar, jams, ice-creams, soft drinks, smoothies, milkshakes.
- ✗ Bananas, mangoes, sapota, custard apple and seedless grapes.
- ✗ All fruit juices.
- ✗ All red meats like mutton, beef, pork and seafoods like shellfish, crabs, prawns.

Regular follow-up is required throughout the pregnancy to monitor weight gain.



For a detailed nutrition counseling and prescription by our team of nutritionists, call **+91 40 4022 2397** for an appointment. For any queries, please e-mail us at **nutrition@fernandez.foundation**