



**Healthy
Weight Gain**
During Pregnancy

This resource was created using input and quotes from First Nations women in Saskatchewan, including focus group participants from the following communities:

Big River First Nation, George Gordon First Nation, Kahkewistahaw First Nation, Onion Lake Cree Nation, Pasqua First Nation, and Southend Community of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.

Thank you to the First Nations women who provided feedback and whose photos are included. Thank you also to the Saskatoon Health Region's "Food For Thought CPNP Program in Saskatoon", and the many nurses, dietitians, and other healthcare providers across Saskatchewan who contributed to this resource.

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Healthy weight gain during pregnancy ... what does it mean?

Healthy weight gain during pregnancy means gaining the amount of weight that is best for your health and the health of your growing baby.

Pregnancy is a time to take special care of yourself. By taking care of yourself, you will also be taking care of your growing baby.

You are more likely to have a healthy baby if you eat well and are active.



Why is my weight gain during pregnancy important?

Gaining the right amount of weight for you (*not too much or too little*), gives you a better chance at a healthy pregnancy and delivery and helps your baby have a healthy start and long-term health.

Gaining the right amount reduces **your** risk of:

- Gestational Diabetes (a type of diabetes that happens in pregnancy)
- High blood pressure (e.g., hypertension, preeclampsia)
- Complications (e.g., gaining too much weight can increase risk of having a c-section)
- Having your baby too early (preterm)

Gaining the right amount increases the chance **your baby** will have:

- A trauma-free birth
- A healthy weight at birth
- Easier breastfeeding
- Better health in the future (lower risk of being overweight)

Gaining the right amount helps **you** to:

- Have a healthier weight after pregnancy
- Be less likely to develop type 2 diabetes



**How much weight
should I gain
during pregnancy?**

Talk to your healthcare provider *early in your pregnancy* to learn how much weight you should gain in your pregnancy. Together you can set a weight gain goal, and come up with strategies to meet the goal.









You need to gain some weight to have a healthy pregnancy. The weight you gain:

- Helps your baby grow
- Helps you stay healthy
- Gets your body ready for breastfeeding

Pregnancy is not the time to go on a diet or lose weight.

How much weight you should gain depends on your weight before you get pregnant.

See basic guidelines on the next page for how much weight you should gain during your pregnancy.

Which body did you most look like when you got pregnant?	Recommended total weight gain during your pregnancy
 <p>*BMI before pregnancy was less than 18.5</p>	<p>28 to 40 lb (12.5 to 18 kg)</p> 
 <p>*BMI before pregnancy was 18.5 - 24.9</p>	<p>25 to 35 lb (11.5 to 16 kg)</p> 
 <p>*BMI before pregnancy was 25.0 - 29.9</p>	<p>15 to 25 lb (7 to 11.5 kg)</p> 
 <p>*BMI before pregnancy was 30 or above</p>	<p>11 to 20 lb (5 to 9 kg)</p> 

Weight gain for 1st Trimester	Weight gain per week for 2nd and 3rd Trimester
<p>Weight gain is usually slow during the first three months of your pregnancy (a total of about 2-5 pounds).</p>	<p>1 lb/week (0.5 kg/week)</p>
	<p>1 lb/week (0.5 kg/week)</p>
	<p>0.6 lb/week (0.3 kg/week)</p>
	<p>0.5 lb/week (0.2 kg/week)</p>



The recommended amount of weight for you to gain during your pregnancy depends on the body mass index (BMI) range you were in when you got pregnant. BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. You can use the images in this chart, or the BMI chart on pages 28 and 29 of this booklet to figure out which BMI range you were in when you got pregnant. If you would like help figuring out your BMI, talk to your healthcare provider.





**If you are a teenager
or if you are carrying
more than one baby,
please talk with your
healthcare provider
about weight gain,
as there are different
guidelines.**

“I didn’t know my weight affected my baby so it would have helped to know about that. I got told a lot of old wives’ tales and I wish I heard more true information.”

Pregnant Woman, Pasqua First Nation





How quickly should I gain weight?

It is important to pay attention to how quickly you gain weight. Weight gain is usually slow during the first three months of your pregnancy (a total of about 2-5 pounds).

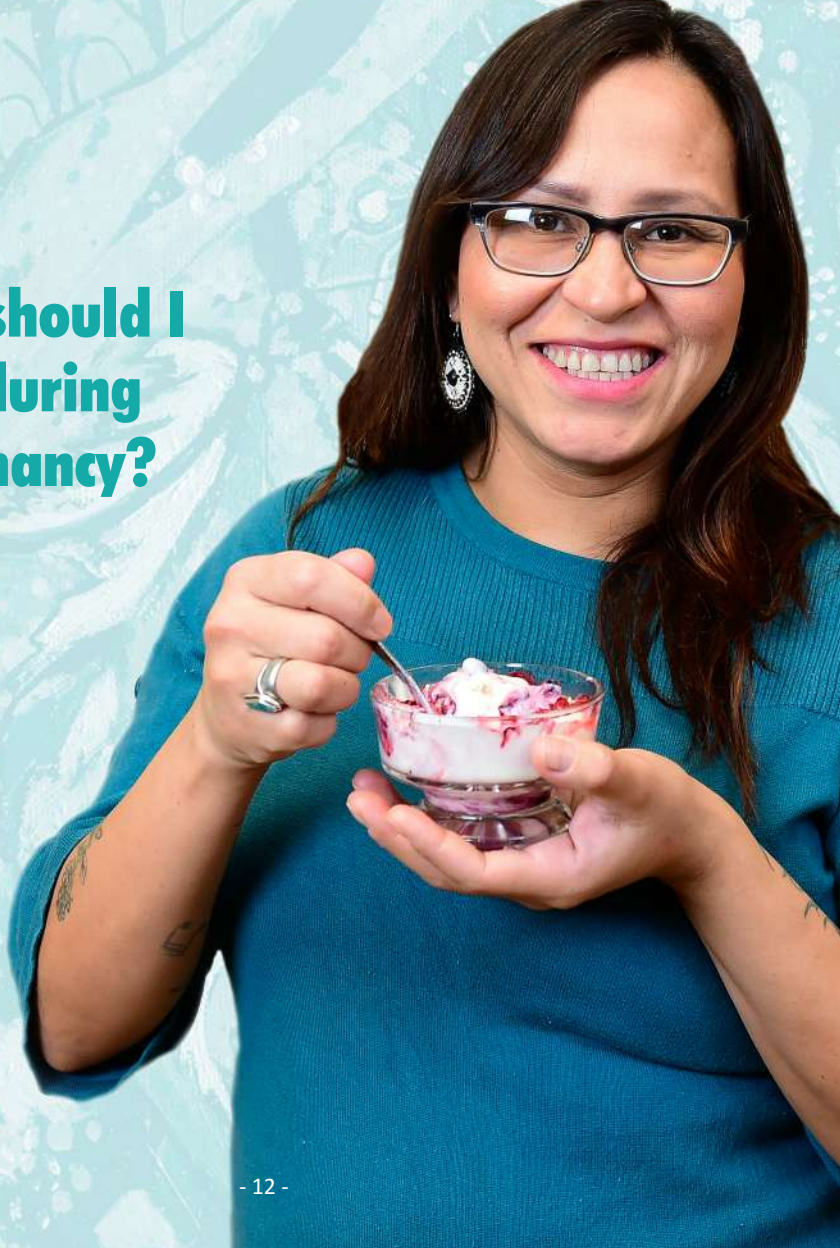
Most weight gain should happen in the second and third trimesters of your pregnancy. See the chart on pages 6 and 7 for the recommended amount of weight gain per week based on your weight before you got pregnant.

Talk with your healthcare provider if you are gaining more or less than the recommended amount.

“With my first pregnancy, my weight doubled ... I went from 102 pounds to 205 at delivery and my baby was only 4 pounds, but she was okay. But with my boy I knew I should make better choices so my (weight gain) was much more healthy.”

Pregnant Woman, Pasqua First Nation

What should I eat during pregnancy?



Eating well is important for gaining a healthy amount of weight during your pregnancy. It is also important for your growing baby's health. Healthy foods are the building blocks for a strong body and healthy brain.

Here are tips for healthy eating:

Should I Eat for Two?

You are eating for two while you are pregnant. **But this means eating twice as healthy, not twice as much.**

How Much Should I Eat?




Pregnant women need **just a little more food each day**, but not until the second and third trimesters.

Are There Specific Nutrients I Need?

Certain nutrients are important during pregnancy. These include Vitamin D, folic acid, and iron. Talk to your community dietitian or healthcare provider about how to ensure you are getting enough of these important nutrients.

**“You’re eating for you and your baby,
but not for like two full sized people.”**

Pregnant Woman, Pasqua First Nation

Trimester	Extra Food Needed	Food Snack Ideas
1st Trimester Month 1-3	No extra snack is needed	 <p>veggies and dip/hummus</p>
2nd Trimester Month 4-6	Enjoy an extra snack	 <p>nuts, seeds, and dried fruit</p>
3rd Trimester Month 7-9	Enjoy an extra snack	 <p>oven roasted chickpeas</p>



yogurt and berries
(or other fruit)



fruit and cheese



peanut butter and
celery sticks



eggs and toast

ENJOY



- Plenty of vegetables and fruits
- Protein foods like lean meats and poultry, eggs, low fat yogurt and milk, and plant-based proteins such as lentils, peas, and beans
- Whole grain foods like oats, quinoa, whole grain bread, whole grain rice (brown or wild rice)

LIMIT HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS

These are foods and drinks processed or prepared with excess sodium (salt), sugars, or saturated fat. Examples of highly processed foods include: sugary drinks, chocolate and candies, ice cream and desserts, fast food like French fries and burgers, bakery products like muffins, buns, and cakes.



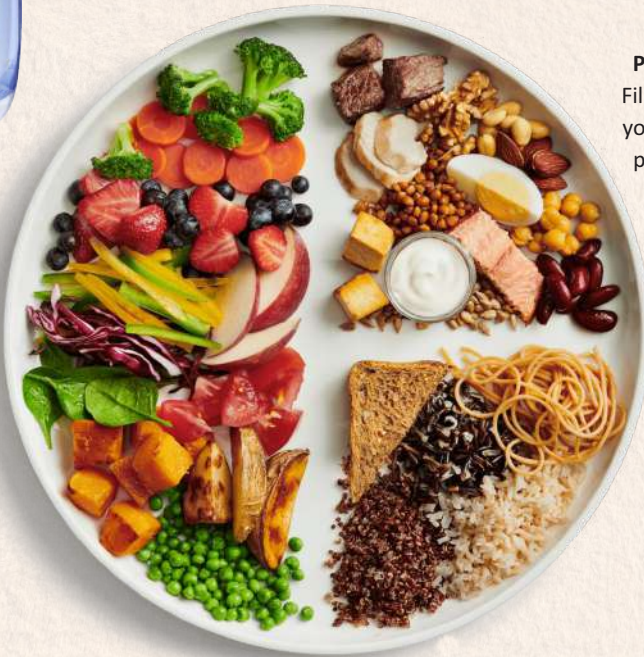


Water

Make water your drink of choice. Other healthy drink options can include white milk (unsweetened lower-fat), and fortified plant-based beverages (unsweetened).

Fruits and Vegetables

Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables for every meal.



Protein Foods

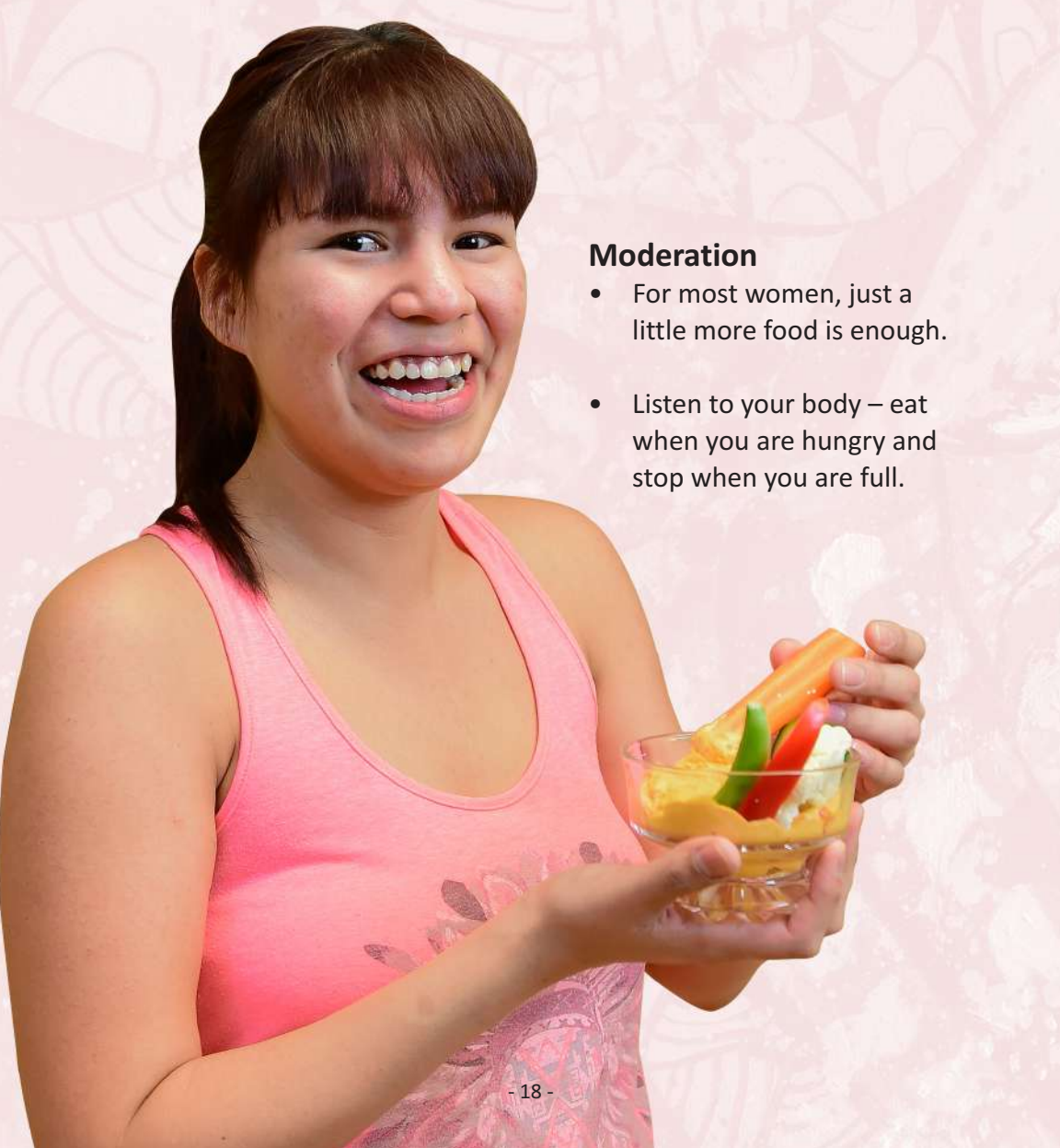
Fill a quarter of your plate with protein foods.

Whole Grain Foods

Fill a quarter of your plate with whole grain foods.

Source: © All rights reserved. Canada's Food Guide: Plate. Health Canada, 2019.
Adapted and reproduced with permission from the Minister of Health, 2021.

Frozen and canned vegetables and fruit are healthy, affordable, and last longer. Choose canned fruit with little to no added sugars.



Moderation

- For most women, just a little more food is enough.
- Listen to your body – eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full.

Eat Home Cooked Food and Eat with Others

- Cook food at home with family and friends as much as possible.
- Sit down and eat with family or friends when you can. You likely won't eat as much or as fast if you are enjoying the company of others.
- When not eating at home, choose places that serve freshly made meals.

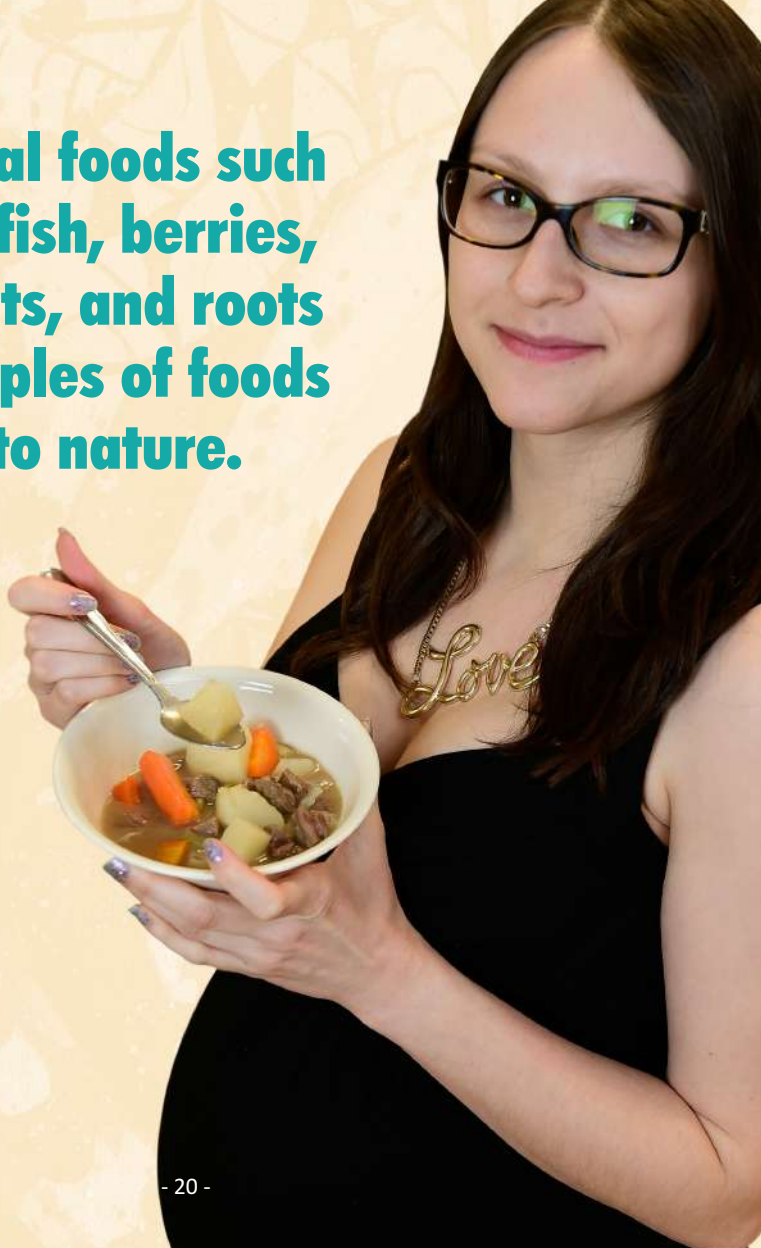
Choose Close to Nature

- Limit highly processed foods (often high in sugar, salt/sodium, and unhealthy fats).
- Eat whole foods, vegetables, fruits, plant-based proteins, and whole grains.
- Look for fresh meat - wild meat can be a healthy, nutritious option (avoid lead shot).
- Have seafood and fish regularly (choose fish lower in mercury such as whitefish, rainbow trout, salmon, light canned tuna or sardines, and smaller sizes of pickerel, northern pike, and lake trout).
- Drink water often.

“My mom made me eat wild meat all the time. She said it was healthier for me and the baby.”

Pregnant Woman, Big River First Nation

Traditional foods such as stew, fish, berries, wild meats, and roots are examples of foods close to nature.

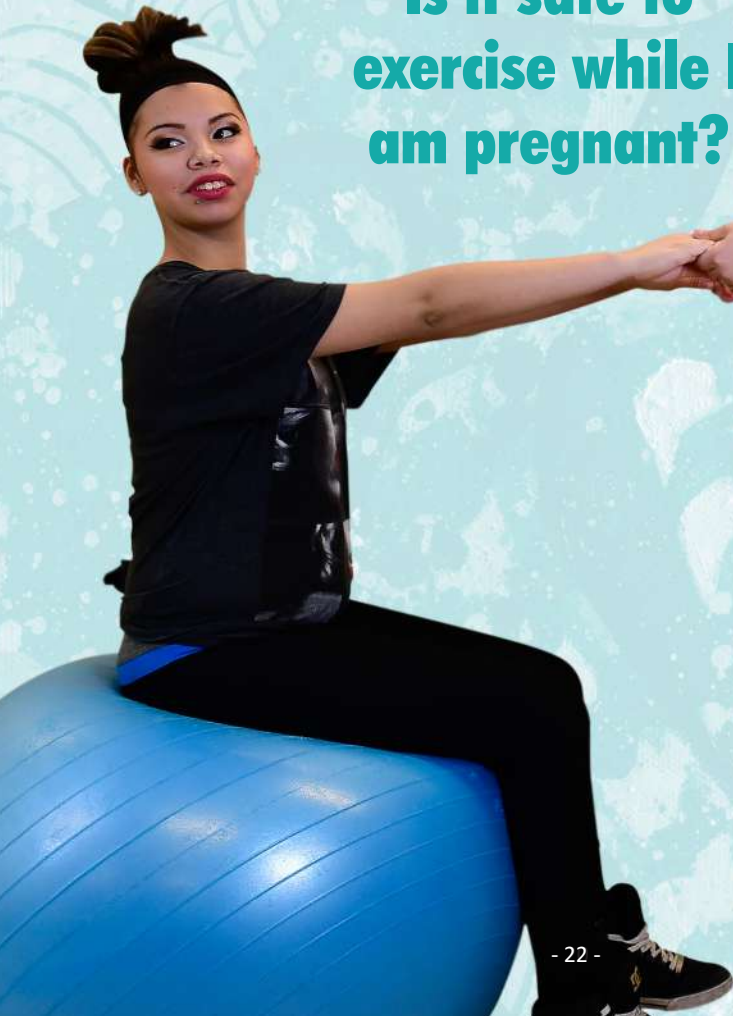


If you have any questions or concerns about healthy eating and important nutrients in pregnancy, ask your healthcare provider to refer you to your community's dietitian.

Sometimes it is difficult to access healthy foods – talk to your healthcare provider about local programs and services that may provide vouchers, prenatal vitamins, and other food resources. Resources that may be available in your community include the Good Food Box Program and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP).



**Is it safe to
exercise while I
am pregnant?**



It is important to be physically active during your pregnancy. Being active has many benefits to your growing baby and makes you feel better too.

If you were not very active before you got pregnant, it is important to start slowly and to speak to your healthcare provider before you begin any new activity.

Activities that are safe for most pregnant women are walking, gardening, hunting, housework, playing actively with children, swimming, snowshoeing, and prenatal yoga.

Being pregnant is a great time to make healthy food choices and be active. Your baby will thank you!

“Traditional wisdom is that pregnant women stay busy and be on their feet doing things rather than sitting around.”

Saskatchewan First Nations Elder



What else can I do to gain a healthy amount of weight?

Eating healthy and staying active during your pregnancy are the most important things you can do to gain a healthy amount of weight. Here are some other things that can help:

- Manage stress.
- Get enough sleep.
- Practice self-care. Take time to do activities that nurture your mind, body, and spirit.
- Keep track of your weight gain. You can use the chart at the end of this resource or the 'My Weight Gain' feature found in the My Saskatchewan Pregnancy app. Talk with your healthcare provider about whether keeping a food diary or a physical activity diary will be helpful for you.





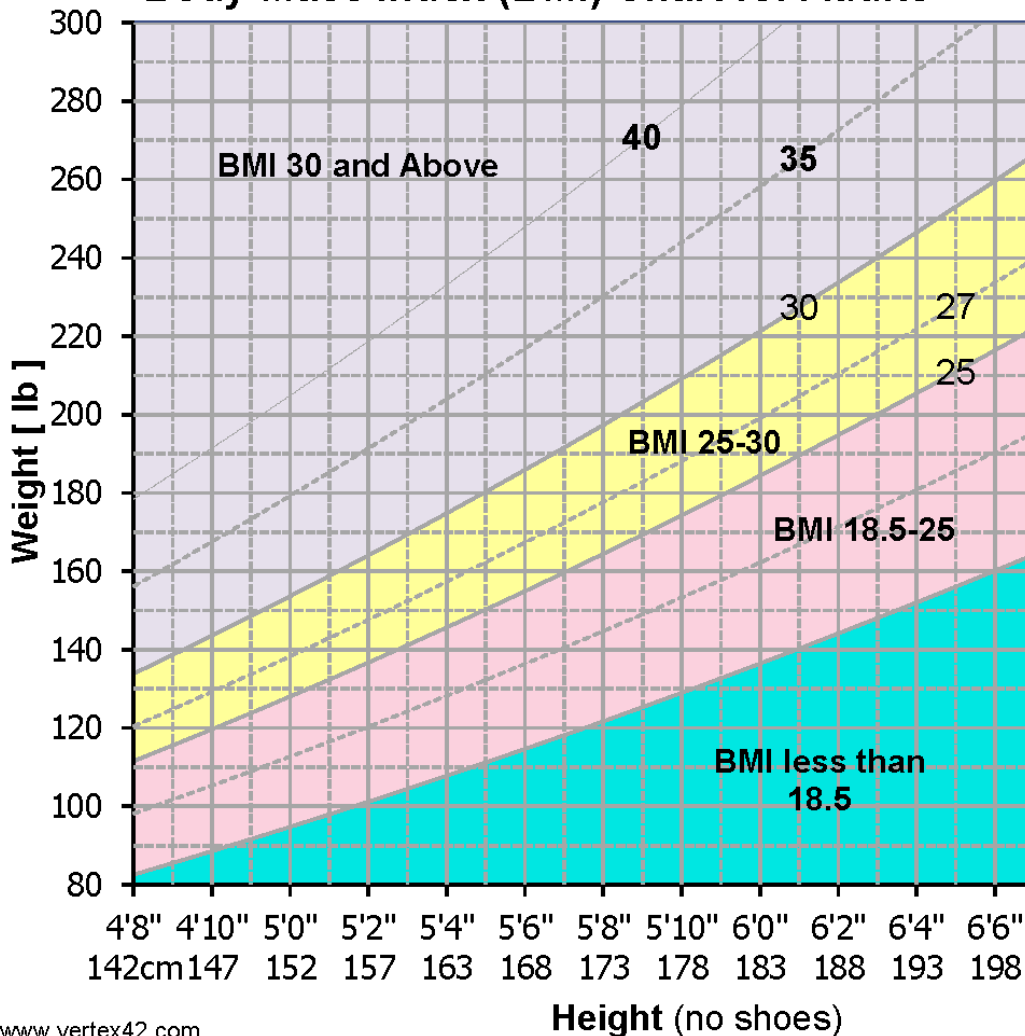
Healthy weight gain is not just about the number on the scale. It is about doing what you can to support you and your baby to be as healthy as possible.

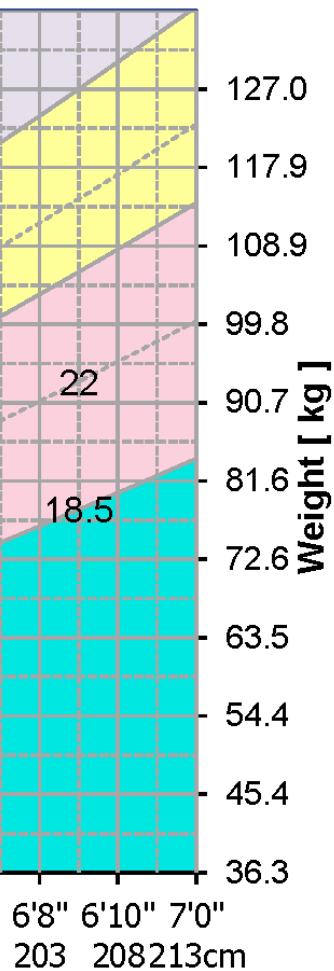
If a pregnant woman is not at a healthy weight or is gaining more than the recommended amount, what can she do?

It is never too late to start eating healthy, being more active, and taking care of yourself in other ways. Do the best that you can and don't be afraid to ask for help and information from healthcare professionals.

Even small changes in your life can lead to big improvements for your health and your baby's health.

Body Mass Index (BMI) Chart for Adults





To use this BMI chart, find your height along the bottom of the chart and your weight (before pregnancy) along the side of the chart; follow the line up from your height and the line across from your weight. Those two lines will meet in a coloured section that is your BMI range (before pregnancy). Use this BMI range when looking at the chart on pages 6 and 7 to determine the amount of weight that is recommended for you to gain during your pregnancy. For example, if your BMI range is 25 to 30, it is recommended you gain between 15 to 25 lb (7 to 11.5 kg), or if your BMI range is 30 or above, it is recommended you gain 11 to 20 lb (5 to 9 kg).

Notes Page

It is important that I gain a healthy amount of weight during my pregnancy because:

Things I will do to help me gain a healthy amount of weight during my pregnancy:

1st Trimester :

2nd Trimester:

3rd Trimester:

Track Your Weight Gain

You can use the chart on this page to keep track of your weight gain during your pregnancy. It is important to use the same scale each time. One way to do this is to use the weight recorded at your prenatal visits.

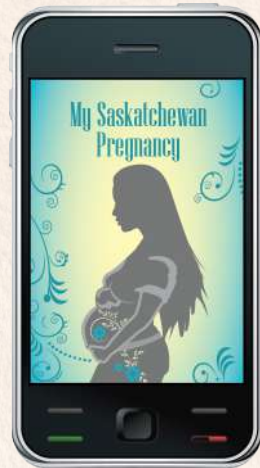
If you are gaining more (or less) than the recommended amount of weight (based on the guidelines on pages 6 and 7), please talk with your healthcare provider or community dietitian.

Write your weight at the start of your pregnancy →			
Trimester	Date	My Weight	Weight Gain <i>(Current weight minus weight at start of pregnancy).</i>
1st Trimester <i>Month 1-3</i>			
2nd Trimester <i>Month 4-6</i>			
3rd Trimester <i>Month 7-9</i>			

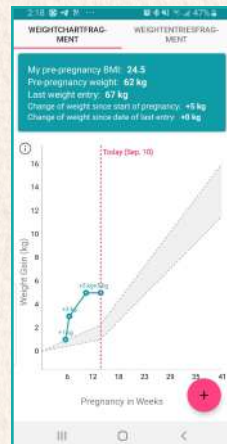
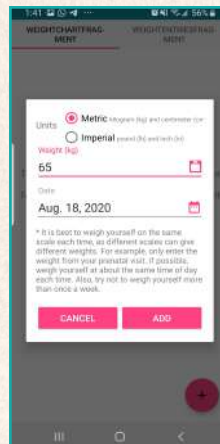
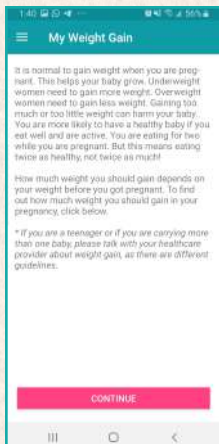
Track Your Weight Gain Using the My Saskatchewan Pregnancy App

This is an evidence-based app created for pregnant women living in Saskatchewan. Key features of the app include daily tips, a monthly summary of baby's growth, a "to-do" list for each trimester, educational videos, a pregnancy timeline, a GPS-enabled resource map, My Health feature (with trackable functions for blood pressure, weight gain, and mental health), and more.

To use the app to track your weight, go to 'My Weight Gain', which can be found under the 'My Health' feature in the app. For more information, visit <https://skprevention.ca/my-saskatchewan-pregnancy/>.



Available at:



Community Resources

These resources in my community can help me with healthy weight gain during pregnancy:

Note: Healthcare provider can write available resources in this box.

saskatchewan
prevention institute
our goal is **healthy** children

RESOURCE 2-459
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