

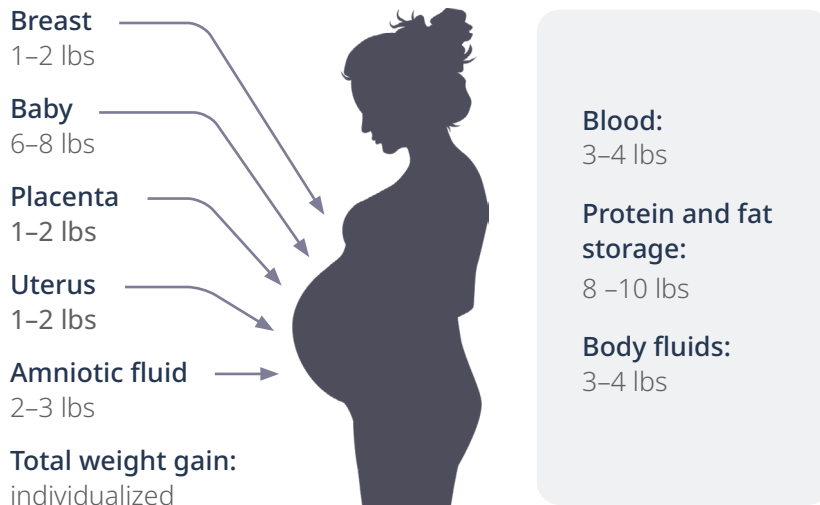


PREGNANCY WEIGHT GAIN & EXERCISE



Weight gain

Weight gain is healthy and expected during pregnancy. It is attributed to the growing baby, as well as changes that occur in the client's body to support the developing pregnancy.



Most healthcare providers use a BMI-based model to determine and educate clients about ideal pregnancy weight gain.

Pre-pregnancy BMI		Weight gain
Underweight	Less than 18.5	28–40 lbs
Normal weight	18.5–24.9	25–35 lbs
Overweight	25–29.9	15–25 lbs
Obese	30 and greater	11–20 lbs

Research is evolving around the validity of BMI as a measure of health and the significance of “excess” weight gain during pregnancy. Nurses should be aware of anti-fat bias in healthcare and how it may affect pregnant clients. Educate about healthy weight gain while providing client-centered care:

- Screen all pregnant clients for history of eating disorders.
- Discuss what weight and weight gain means to the client.
- Ask how they want to discuss their pregnancy weight gain.
- Respect client's desire to not discuss weight, if applicable.

Exercise

Physical activity during pregnancy has many benefits:

- Promotes overall health
- Reduces risk of pregnancy complications
- Eases pregnancy-related aches and pains
- Supports healthy weight gain
- Prepares client for physical exertion of labor

General recommendations

Exercise at least 150 minutes per week:
30 minutes per day on average

Aim for moderate-intensity exercise:

If not previously active, start with low-intensity activity and build intensity over time. If accustomed to high-intensity exercise, limit to periods of 15 minutes.

Be aware of shifting center of gravity:

Take precautions to avoid falls.

Be aware of effects of prolactin:

Prolactin increases flexibility in joints; take care not to over stretch.

Safe exercises in pregnancy

- Brisk walking
- Stationary cycling
- Yoga, Pilates, low-impact aerobics
- Swimming
- Jogging
- Low-impact weight training

Exercises and activities to avoid in pregnancy

- Lying flat on back
- Crunches or sit-ups
- High-intensity interval workout
- Contact sports
- Activities with risk of falling
- Hot yoga or other excessive heat
- Scuba diving