



You're happy and maybe a little nervous



What you can do to have a healthy baby

Congratulations on your pregnancy! One thing's positive: you want the best for your little one. The choices you make while you're pregnant can help give your baby a healthy start in life. Here are some things you can do for you and your baby.

Eating well for your baby

While you are pregnant, you should eat between 100 and 300 extra calories each day. Aim to gain 25 to 35 pounds. If you are underweight or pregnant with more than one baby, you should gain more. If you are overweight, you should gain less.¹ Not gaining the right amount of weight puts your baby at risk of low-birth weight, premature birth, or complications during delivery.¹ Talk to your doctor about any weight concerns you have.

You can make every calorie count for you and your baby when you:

- Plan meals and snacks ahead of time.
- Carry healthy snacks with you, such as nuts, fruit, cheese or fresh vegetables.
- Eat snacks or small meals every three hours so you don't get too hungry.

Know the signs of early labor

It's important for your pregnancy to go full term — at least 37 weeks. Babies born earlier suffer from more health problems and are at higher risk of death than those born at full term.^{2,3} Even babies born at 37 and 38 weeks are more likely to have health problems than those born at 39 and 40 weeks.³ If your labor starts too soon, your doctor can give you drugs to slow or stop labor contractions, prevent infection and help your baby's lungs mature faster.⁴ If you notice any signs of early labor, call your doctor right away.⁴



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Sources

¹ WebMD website: Pregnancy and Weight Gain (accessed October 2014); webmd.com

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: Born a Bit Too Early: Recent Trends in Late Preterm Births (accessed October 2014); cdc.gov

³ National Child and Maternal Health Education Program website: About the Issue: Elective Delivery Prior to 39 Weeks of Gestation (accessed October 2014); nichd.nih.gov

⁴ March of Dimes website: Preterm labor (accessed October 2014); marchofdimes.com