

Does Your Body Weight Matter if There is a Baby in Your Future?

DOES YOUR BODY WEIGHT MATTER?

Yes. Your body weight before pregnancy affects your ability to get pregnant and the health of you and your baby. If you are underweight or very overweight, you and your baby could be at risk now and in the future. Some of these risks include: stillbirth, pre-term birth, low or high birth weight, hypertension and diabetes.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU NEED TO BE A HEALTHIER WEIGHT?

A health care professional can use a chart to find out what is the best weight for you.

WHAT CAUSES WEIGHT PROBLEMS?

There are many factors that influence weight, shape and health. Some factors are related to genetics and others are related to lifestyle. For most people, it is a combination of both.

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

When you make lifestyle changes before becoming pregnant, you can help prevent health problems for you and your baby. There are many things you can do that will help you reach and maintain your best weight and health.

Babies begin to develop even before women know they are pregnant. This means that the time to start preparing for your baby's health is before you even get pregnant.

TIPS ON HEALTHY EATING

- * Follow Canada's Food Guide.
- * Be aware of your portion sizes.
- * Don't skip meals. Eat breakfast every day; it may help control your hunger later in the day.
- * Take nutritious snacks from home to eat at school, at work or when on the go.
- * Enjoy eating with family and friends.
- * Think fibre. Choose whole-grain breads, cereals and pastas. Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- * Eat vegetables and fruit at all meals and as snacks.
- * Drink water for thirst throughout the day.
- * Limit take-out and highly processed foods.
- * Moderation is the key! Limit junk food to an occasional treat.
- * Limit pop and other sweetened beverages to special occasions.
- * Take time to eat and enjoy every bite.

Every woman who could become pregnant should take a daily multivitamin containing folic acid. Your health care professional can help you find the multivitamin that is right for you.





TIPS ON ACTIVE LIVING

- * Try to be active for at least 150 minutes a week.
- * Do something active that you enjoy every day. If you love dancing, turn up your music and dance away! If you love the outdoors go for a walk or run.
- * Every step counts. Walk or take the stairs whenever you can.
- * Be active with family and friends. If you have an activity buddy, you are more likely to stay active and enjoy it!
- * Limit leisure time spent in front of the television, computer screen and video games.
- * One small goal per week can lead to a lifelong healthy habit.

Everyone can benefit from being physically active every day.



Love yourself and who you really are. What you think of yourself is more important than what others think of you.



SELF-ESTEEM BOOSTERS

- * Recognize that everyone is unique in his or her own way, including you.
- * Don't criticize the weight or shape of anyone – yourself included!
- * Try to get seven to eight hours sleep per night.
- * Think of three positive thoughts about yourself before getting out of bed.
- * Take time to do something you are good at!
- * Be kind to others. It will help you feel better about yourself.
- * Pay attention to the short-term benefits from eating well and being active, such as stress relief and having more energy.
- * Surround yourself by positive people – attitude is contagious!

RESOURCES

Eastern Health Website * www.easternhealth.ca/B4URPregnant

Healthy Eating * www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Dietitians of Canada * www.dietitians.ca

Physical Activity * www.paguide.com

Body Image Network * www.bodyimagenetwork.ca

Go Healthy! * www.gohealthy.ca

Folic Acid * www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/women_need_folic_acid.pdf

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