



# 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.<sup>1</sup> Not gaining the right amount of weight puts your baby at risk of low-birth weight, premature birth, or complications during delivery.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2,3</sup> Even babies born at 37 and 38 weeks are more likely to have health problems than those born at 39 and 40 weeks.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> If you notice any signs of early labor, call your doctor right away.<sup>4</sup>



#### Sources

<sup>1</sup> WebMD website: Pregnancy and Weight Gain (accessed October 2014): webmd.com

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

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> March of Dimes website: Preterm labor (accessed October 2014): marchofdimes.com

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: Guidance for Preventing Birth Defects (accessed October 2014): cdc.gov

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#### Warning signs of premature labor:<sup>4</sup>

- Stomach tightness (contractions) every ten minutes or more often (these contractions may not be painful)
- Change in vaginal discharge (leaking fluid or bleeding)
- Pelvic pressure; feeling as though your baby is pushing down
- Low, dull backache
- Menstrual-type cramps or pain
- Stomach cramps with or without diarrhea

#### What you can do to help your baby be healthy

##### Before you get pregnant:<sup>5</sup>

- Have a well-woman exam and make sure your shots are up to date.
- Begin taking a daily multivitamin that has 400 micrograms of folic acid.
- Get yourself to a healthy weight.
- Quit smoking.

##### Once you become pregnant:<sup>5</sup>

- Begin seeing a doctor early in your pregnancy.
- Don't change a cat's litterbox and avoid places where cats may have defecated.
- Don't eat undercooked meat.
- Avoid touching rodents, including hamsters, mice and guinea pigs.
- Don't eat fish that contain high amounts of mercury. Examples include shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish. Limit your intake of tuna, shrimp, salmon, pollock and catfish.
- Don't drink any alcohol.
- Don't take any prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs or herbs, unless your doctor tells you to.
- Avoid pesticides and speak with your doctor about any chemicals you're exposed to at work.

#### Helpful resources

Visit [choosemyplate.gov/mypyramidmoms](https://choosemyplate.gov/mypyramidmoms) for pregnancy wellness tips, recipes and meal ideas. Or visit the March of Dimes site at [marchofdimes.com](https://marchofdimes.com) for information on healthy pregnancy.

**Visit [anthem.com](https://anthem.com) for more ways to get healthy and stay healthy.**

