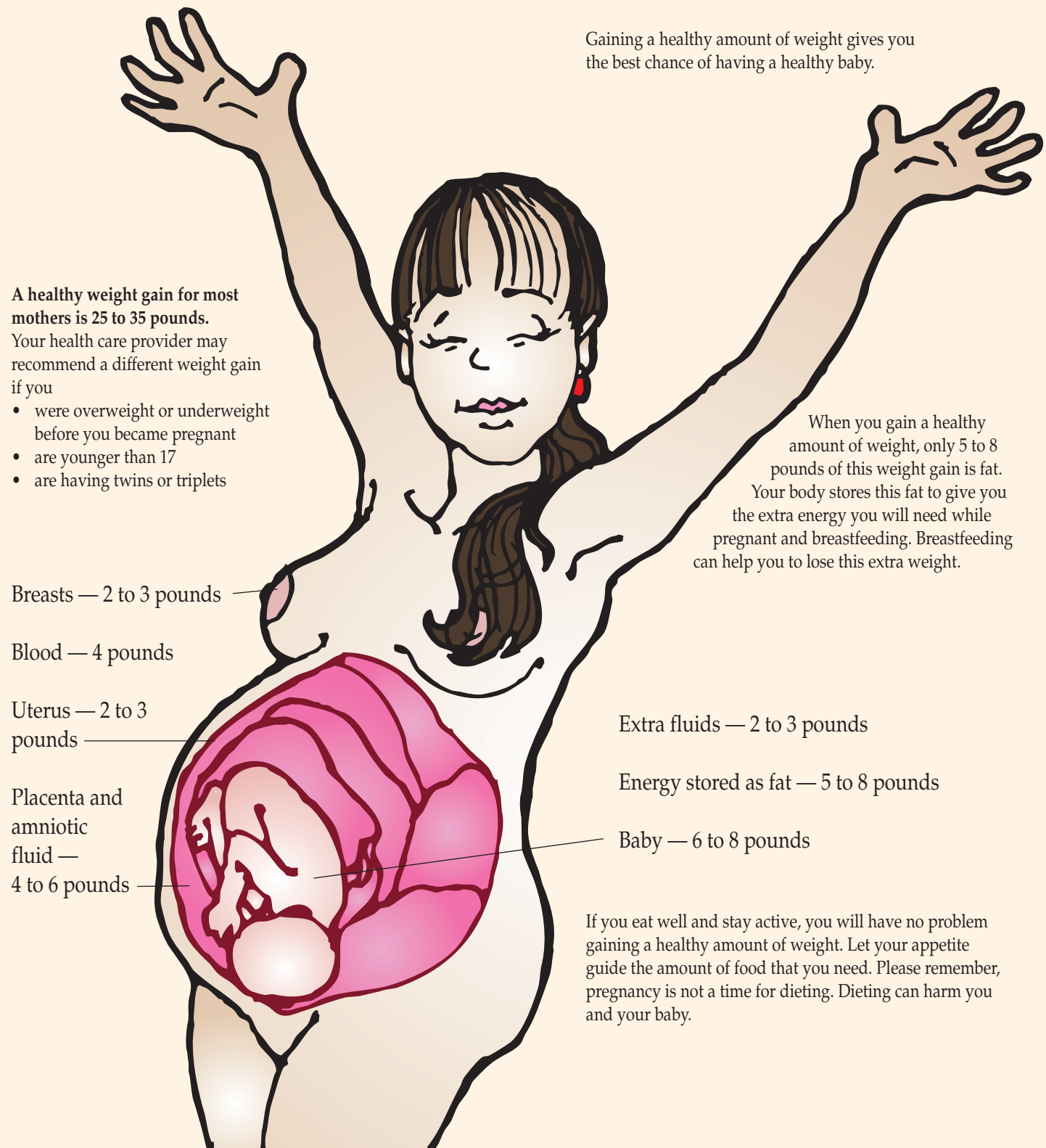


## Gain a healthy amount of weight



Gaining a healthy amount of weight gives you the best chance of having a healthy baby.

A healthy weight gain for most mothers is 25 to 35 pounds. Your health care provider may recommend a different weight gain if you

- were overweight or underweight before you became pregnant
- are younger than 17
- are having twins or triplets

Breasts — 2 to 3 pounds

Blood — 4 pounds

Uterus — 2 to 3 pounds

Placenta and amniotic fluid — 4 to 6 pounds

When you gain a healthy amount of weight, only 5 to 8 pounds of this weight gain is fat. Your body stores this fat to give you the extra energy you will need while pregnant and breastfeeding. Breastfeeding can help you to lose this extra weight.

Extra fluids — 2 to 3 pounds

Energy stored as fat — 5 to 8 pounds

Baby — 6 to 8 pounds

If you eat well and stay active, you will have no problem gaining a healthy amount of weight. Let your appetite guide the amount of food that you need. Please remember, pregnancy is not a time for dieting. Dieting can harm you and your baby.

## Limit or Avoid Some Foods and Drinks

### Limit or avoid artificial sweeteners

Limit the artificial sweetener aspartame during pregnancy. While studies suggest it is not a health risk, it is found in foods and drinks that may not offer nourishment for you or your baby. Nutrient-dense foods are a better choice.

Avoid the artificial sweeteners saccharin and cyclamates during pregnancy. These may harm your baby.

### Avoid alcohol

Drinking alcohol is not recommended at any time during pregnancy. There are no known safe amounts of alcohol. Alcohol can harm your baby's brain and nervous system.

### Limit caffeine

Caffeine is in many foods and drinks including coffee, tea, colas, and chocolate. During pregnancy, limit caffeine to no more than 300 mg a day to keep your baby safe. This means no more than 3 cups of instant coffee or 2 cups of brewed coffee each day. These beverages often replace healthier options in the diet. Limit these drinks so you have plenty of room for healthier choices each day.

**What can I drink instead?**  
It is best to drink milk, fortified soy beverage, fruit and vegetable juices, and water. Some herbal teas are safe to drink during pregnancy and others are not. Speak to your health care provider.



### Watch out for some kinds of fish

Canada's Food Guide recommends that you eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week. The nutrients in fish are particularly good for children, pregnant women, and women who may become pregnant. However, some types of fish can have high levels of mercury, which can harm your growing baby.

If you are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are breastfeeding, have **no more than 2 Food Guide Servings each month** of fresh or frozen tuna, swordfish, marlin, orange roughy, escolar, or shark.

Have **no more than 4 Food Guide Servings each week** of canned albacore tuna.

You do not need to limit the amount of canned light tuna you eat. Canned light tuna contains less mercury than albacore tuna.

You can find the latest information on mercury in fish at [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/mercuryandfish](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/mercuryandfish)

### Handle food safely

Take extra care to handle food safely when you are pregnant. Illnesses from poor food handling can harm you and your unborn baby.

Unpasteurized milk, soft cheeses, and pâtés may cause Listeria infection, a food-borne illness. Avoid these during pregnancy. Deli meats carry a lower risk of Listeria, but you may choose to avoid them during pregnancy. Avoid raw hot dogs—make sure that they are fully cooked. Avoid prepared refrigerated foods, such as smoked fish, unless they are re-cooked to steaming hot to kill bacteria.





#### Food safety tips

- Wash your hands before you prepare or eat foods.
- Wash all surfaces where food is prepared, especially after cutting raw meats and fish.
- Eat fully cooked meat and fish.
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables, even those with skin or peel.

# Healthy Eating During Pregnancy



## Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

Food group	Food Guide Serving	Food Guide Servings per day		Builds a healthy baby
		Women age 14 to 18	Women age 19 to 50	
<b>Vegetables and Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 medium size fresh vegetable or fruit</li> <li>125 mL (½ cup) fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables or fruit</li> <li>250 mL (1 cup) raw leafy vegetables</li> <li>125 mL (½ cup) vegetable or fruit juice</li> </ul>	7	7 to 8	 <b>Brains &amp; Nerves</b>
<b>Grain Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 slice of bread (35g)</li> <li>½ bagel (45g)</li> <li>½ pita or ½ tortilla (35g)</li> <li>½ cup cooked rice, bulgur, or quinoa</li> <li>½ cup cooked pasta or couscous</li> <li>175 mL (¾ cup) hot cereal</li> <li>30 g (1 ounce) cold cereal</li> </ul>	6	6 to 7	 <b>Growth</b>
<b>Milk and Alternatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>250 mL (1 cup) milk or powdered milk mixed according to package directions</li> <li>250 mL (1 cup) fortified soy beverage</li> <li>175 mL (¾ cup) yogurt or kefir</li> <li>50 g (1 ½ ounces) cheese</li> </ul>	3 to 4	2	 <b>Bones</b>
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75 g (½ cup) cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, or lean meat</li> <li>175 mL (¾ cup) cooked legumes—like split peas, beans or lentils</li> <li>2 eggs</li> <li>175 mL (¾ cup) tofu</li> <li>2 tablespoons peanut or other nut butter</li> </ul>	2	2	 <b>Muscle &amp; Blood</b>

**EVERY DAY:** Eat foods from all four food groups and take a multivitamin that contains 400 mcg (0.4mg) of folic acid and 16–20 mg of iron. Check with your health care provider to find out what multivitamin is right for you.

### Oils and Fats

Include a small amount—30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tablespoons)—of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine, and mayonnaise.

- Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive, and soybean.
- Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- Limit butter, hard margarine, lard, and shortening.

## Get the Nutrients and Calories You Need to Build a Healthy Baby

Pregnancy is a good time to enjoy eating healthy foods. The best way to get all the vitamins and minerals you need is to eat a variety of foods from each food group. Take extra care to get the nutrients and calories you need to build a healthy baby.

### • Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D keep your bones strong and build strong bones and teeth for your baby. Fortified milk and alternatives are a good source of calcium and vitamin D.

### • Iron

Iron helps build healthy blood for you and your baby. Meat, whole grains, leafy green vegetables, and nuts and seeds are good sources of iron.

During pregnancy your body needs extra iron. Your multivitamin should contain 16–20 mg of iron.

### • Folate/Folic Acid

Folate/folic acid helps build healthy blood and tissues for you and your baby. It reduces the risk of birth defects that affect the baby's brain and spine. Whole grains and leafy green vegetables are a good source of this vitamin.

If you are of childbearing age, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you need extra folic acid. Check your multivitamin to be sure it has 400 mcg (0.4 mg) of folic acid.

### • Extra Calories

Women need extra calories during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. These extra calories ensure that the mother gains enough weight to support the baby's growth and development. Pregnant women need about 350 extra calories each day during the 2nd trimester and 450 extra calories each day during the 3rd trimester.

The best way to get these extra calories is to eat a little more food every day from the food groups of your choice. The extra food you eat should total about 2 to 3 Food Guide Servings.

### • Multivitamin Supplements

All women of childbearing age and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding need a multivitamin containing 400 mcg (0.4 mg) of folic acid every day. During pregnancy, your multivitamin should also contain 16–20 mg of iron.

Some women may need even more iron or folic acid. Talk with your health care provider to find the multivitamin that is right for you or if you have any questions about healthy eating.

## Make Each Food Guide Serving Count!

- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar, or salt.
- Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar, or salt.
- Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk.
- Have 500 mL (2 cups) of milk every day to be sure you get enough vitamin D.
- Select lower fat milk alternatives.
- Have meat alternatives—like beans, lentils, and tofu—often.
- Select lean meat and alternatives and prepare them with little or no added fat or salt.



## Plan to breastfeed

Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed a baby. It gives your baby the best start to a lifetime of healthy eating. Breast milk is all your baby needs for the first 6 months of life. Breastfeeding can continue to 2 years and beyond.

Breastfeeding protects babies from infections, asthma, and some chronic diseases. It can also help you lose weight and protect you from breast cancer. For breastfeeding support, contact La Leche League Canada at [www.lalecheleague-canada.ca](http://www.lalecheleague-canada.ca) or your local Public Health Services office.

## For more information

Contact a Public Health Services office near you.

Amherst	667-3319
	or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish	863-2743
Bridgewater	543-0850
Dartmouth	481-5800
New Glasgow	752-5151
Sydney	563-2400
Truro	893-5820
Wolfville	542-6310
Yarmouth	742-7141

*This pamphlet was developed in cooperation with the IWK Health Centre. The text and graphics for "healthy weight gain" and "building a healthy baby" have been adapted with permission from Best Start and Nutrition Resource Centres.*

Public Health Services  


[www.gov.ns.ca/hpp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp)

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