

Healthy Weight Gain in Pregnancy

LMC Quick Reference Guide

As Lead Maternity Carers have the most in-depth and consistent contact with a woman during her pregnancy, they play a pivotal role in supporting healthy weight gain.

1. Calculate BMI

- BMI must be calculated from a **measured** height and a **measured** weight.
This is important as women tend to underestimate their weight and overestimate their height.
- BMI should be calculated from a pre-pregnancy weight, or an early pregnancy weight (ideally <10 weeks gestation).
- BMI is calculated as: BMI = Weight (kg) / Height² (m²). NB Height² is the same as (height [m] × height [m])

| | | Pre-pregnancy or early pregnancy (< 10 weeks) weight (kg) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| | | 44 | 46 | 48 | 50 | 52 | 54 | 56 | 58 | 60 | 62 | 64 | 66 | 68 | 70 | 72 | 74 | 76 | 78 | 80 | 82 | 84 | 86 | 88 | 90 | 92 | 94 | 96 | 98 | 100 | 102 | 104 | 106 | 108 | 110 | 112 | 114 | 116 | 118 | 120 | >120 |
| Height (m) | 1.98 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | |
| | 1.96 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | |
| | 1.94 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 |
| | 1.92 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 33 |
| | 1.90 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | | |
| | 1.88 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 34 | |
| | 1.86 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 |
| | 1.84 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 35 |
| | 1.82 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 36 | |
| | 1.80 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 37 |
| | 1.78 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 38 | |
| | 1.76 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 39 |
| | 1.74 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| | 1.72 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 40 | 41 |
| | 1.70 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 |
| | 1.68 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 40 | 41 | 41 | 42 | 43 |
| | 1.66 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 44 | |
| | 1.64 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 45 |
| | 1.62 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 46 |
| | 1.60 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 47 |
| | 1.58 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 46 | 47 | 48 | |
| 1.56 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 48 | 49 | | |
| 1.54 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 51 | |
| 1.52 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 52 | |
| 1.50 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 53 | | |
| 1.48 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | |
| 1.46 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 56 | |
| 1.44 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 58 | | |
| 1.42 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 60 | |
| 1.40 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 61 | |

Pre-pregnancy or early pregnancy (< 10 weeks) weight (kg) ■ Underweight ■ Healthy weight ■ Overweight ■ Obese

2. Inform women of their recommended weight gain

Match BMI in the table below to establish recommended weight gain

| BMI | Recommended weight gain (kg) |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Underweight <18.5 | 13–18 |
| Healthy weight 18.5–24.9 | 11–16 |
| Overweight 25–29.9 | 7–11 |
| Obese >30 | 5–9 |

Reference: Institute of Medicine. Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines. Washington, DC; 2009

3. Examples of healthy weight gain tips that you could discuss with pregnant women

- Pregnancy is not about 'eating for two.' In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, you can eat the same amount as you usually would. It is important you eat nutritious food.
- After the 12th week, and if you are a healthy weight, the extra food you need each day is about the same as a wholegrain peanut butter sandwich and a banana. If you are overweight or obese, the extra food you need is the same as one slice of wholegrain bread or two apples.
- Drink water rather than sweetened drinks, fizzy drinks or fruit juices.
- Drink low-fat trim (green top) or calcium-extra (yellow top) or light blue top milk instead of full-fat (blue or silver top) milk.
- Eat wholegrain bread instead of white bread.
- Eat a healthy breakfast every day, such as wheat biscuits or porridge with low-fat milk or two slices of wholegrain toast.
- Have at least four servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit every day. Buy vegetables and fruits that are in season, or buy frozen vegetables to help reduce cost, waste and preparation time.
- Prepare and eat meals at home. Have takeaways no more than once a week.
- Choose healthy snacks such as unsweetened low-fat yoghurt, fruit, cheese and crackers, a small bowl of cereal, home-made popcorn or a small wholegrain sandwich.
- Aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five or more days a week, for example, brisk walking or swimming (or as advised by your doctor, midwife or physiotherapist).

4. Ensure correct supplementation

- Folic acid: 800 mcg subsidised tablet per day until the end of the 12th week of pregnancy.
- Iodine: 150 mcg subsidised tablet per day while pregnant and breastfeeding.

5. Tracking weight gain

- A woman should aim to weigh herself every four weeks. Ideally on the same set of scales each time as each set of scales can be different. If they don't have scales you should offer to weigh them.
- If weight gain is too high, or too low, firstly, discuss possible reasons for this, and offer healthy weight gain tips if appropriate. If required, consider referral to a dietitian.

Rate of weight gain

- 0.5–2 kg is the average weight gain in the first trimester.

| BMI | Average rate of gain: 2nd and 3rd trimester (kg/wk) |
|---------------|---|
| Underweight | 0.5 |
| Normal weight | 0.4 |
| Overweight | 0.3 |
| Obese | 0.2 |

Reference: Institute of Medicine. *Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines*. Washington, DC; 2009

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