



Healthy Beginnings

Healthy eating when you are pregnant with more than one baby

Pregnancy is an exciting time, even more so if you are carrying more than one baby. Now is a time to be sure you are eating well. This handout includes information about the special nutrient needs for women who are pregnant with more than one baby. For a great resource on healthy eating during your pregnancy see [The Healthy Eating for a Healthy Baby](#) booklet produced by the Best Start Resource Centre.

Healthy eating during your pregnancy will help:

- Your babies grow and develop
- You gain the right amount of weight
- You and your family develop healthy eating habits

Weight gain

Weight gain is a normal part of pregnancy and is important for the health of your babies. You should expect that you will gain more weight than someone pregnant with a single baby because you are carrying extra maternal tissues and fetal weight. Gaining the right amount of weight is important because women carrying more than one baby are at higher risk of giving birth early and having low-birth weight babies. Adequate weight gain in the first and second trimesters of a multiple pregnancy is important to have higher birth weight babies at delivery and less chance of preterm labour.

How much weight should you gain?

This depends on what you weighed before you were pregnant. Begin by calculating your Body Mass Index (BMI) using your pre-pregnancy weight. Follow this [link](#) or use an online BMI calculator to find out what your BMI was. (BMI is equal to your weight in kilograms divided by your height in metres squared). Then use the chart below to see how much weight gain is recommended for you.

BMI	Total weight gain (twins)
Less than 18.5	Ask your health care provider
18.5-24.9	37-54 lbs (17-25 kg)
25.0-29.9	31-50 lbs (14-23 kg)
30.0 and over	25-42 lbs (11-19 kg)

There is not much information available on weight gain when expecting more than two babies. For triplet pregnancies, a minimum weight gain of 36 pounds (16.3 kilograms) by 24 weeks and a total weight gain of at least 50 pounds (23 kilograms) is often recommended. If you are expecting more than two babies talk to your health care provider.

It is important to gain weight between 20 to 28 weeks because this time period has the most impact on the birth weight of your babies. It is best to gain weight slowly and steadily. See your health care provider right away if you gain or lose weight suddenly.

Getting enough calories and nutrients

Pregnant women need extra calories and nutrients to support their babies' growth and development. You will need even more calories and nutrients because you are expecting more than one baby.

Tips for eating well

- Follow [Canada's Food Guide](#) and eat a little more food every day from the food groups.
- Before bed, include a snack with protein to help you maintain your blood sugars in the night. Why not try peanut butter on toast, yogurt and granola with nuts, or cereal and milk.
- Select foods with little or no added sugar or sodium (salt).

As your babies grow larger, you may find that you are not able to eat regular sized meals. Eat small amounts of food frequently, so you have 6 or more smaller meals/snacks throughout the day. If you cannot consume enough nutrients through food alone, consider speaking to a Registered Dietitian for more ideas and tips. Registered Dietitians can be reached by calling EatRight Ontario toll-free at 1-877-510-5102 or by email by visiting www.eatrightontario.ca.



Registered Dietitian services are also part of [Family Health Teams](#) in Peterborough, a referral can be obtained through your Family Doctor.

A Registered Dietitian may recommend adding a nutritional supplement such as Ensure®, Boost®, or a similar store brand.

Vitamin and mineral supplements

In addition to a healthy diet, take a multivitamin containing at least 400 micrograms (0.4 milligrams) of folic acid and 16 to 20 milligrams of iron daily. Be sure to find a multivitamin that contains vitamin B12. Women carrying more than one baby may need more iron and folic acid, but no specific amounts have been set. Talk to your health care provider about finding a prenatal multivitamin supplement that is right for you.

Sample menu for a woman pregnant with more than one baby

Breakfast

2 slices whole grain toast
2 tablespoons peanut butter
1 hard-boiled egg
1/2 cup orange juice

Snack

1 small bran muffin
1 small pear
1/4 cup almonds

Lunch

Salmon salad sandwich
(½ can salmon with 1 tbsp mayonnaise, 3 slices of avocado on 2 slices of whole grain bread)
½ cup baby carrots
1 apple
1 cup milk

Snack

¾ cup yogurt
1 banana
1/2 whole grain pita with 2 tbsp of hummus

Dinner

1 small grilled chicken breast
1 cup brown rice
1 cup cooked mixed vegetables
1 cup green leafy salad with 1 tbsp of dressing
1 cup milk

Snack

1 ½ cup whole grain cereal
1 cup milk
½ cup berries

Baby-building nutrients

Certain nutrients (omega-3 fats, iron, calcium, vitamin D, folate) are more important when you are pregnant. Find out how to get the nutrients you need in [Healthy Eating for a Healthy Baby](#).

To speak to a Registered Dietitian at no cost, contact EatRight Ontario at 1-877-510-5102 or www.eatrightontario.ca

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