

## Post-Partum Weight Loss

Most women will not return to their pre-pregnancy weight right after their baby is born. Some women lose the weight within a few weeks, others will take longer.

### Breastfeeding Women

Women are often told that they will lose their pregnancy weight much more easily if they breastfeed. However, it will probably be a healthy, slow, steady weight loss.

A breastfeeding woman needs 400 to 700 calories more each day to produce milk for her baby. These calories come from two places. One is the mother's fat stores of 2 to 4 kilograms (5 to 10 pounds) that were built-up during pregnancy. This will provide 200-300 calories per day. The rest of the needed energy (350 to 400 calories) must come from the mother's daily food intake.

### What About Moms Who Are Not Breastfeeding?

Both the nutrient and energy needs of non-breastfeeding mothers return to pre-pregnancy levels. Canada's Food Guide provides 1,800 calories daily if the minimum serving number and sizes are followed. Eat well, keep active! Taking the baby for a walk can be an enjoyable break from indoors.

### Losing Weight While Breastfeeding

It is important NOT to diet while breastfeeding. A gradual weight loss of about a kilogram per month (2 pounds) can occur during breast-feeding, until the mom is approximately 4.5 kilograms (10 pounds) above her normal weight. These extra pounds will often stay while breastfeeding, but are lost once the baby is weaned.

#### Recommended Food Plan

	<u>Daily Servings</u>
Vegetables & Fruit	7 - 8
Grain Products	6 - 7
Milk & Alternatives	2
Meat & Alternatives	2

Plus 2-3 more servings from any of the four food groups each day.



## Too Thin Is Not Good Either

Strict weight loss programs are not recommended for any woman after pregnancy. Time and a high quality diet are necessary for the body to get back to normal after childbirth. Healthy eating and weight maintenance are very important between pregnancies. Underweight women tend to have higher rates of cardiac/respiratory problems and anemia when they give birth. They are more likely to deliver premature infants who may weigh less than babies born to a woman who has a healthy weight. A healthy weight is just as important between pregnancies as it is during pregnancy.

## Beware of Fad Diets in the Post-Partum Period

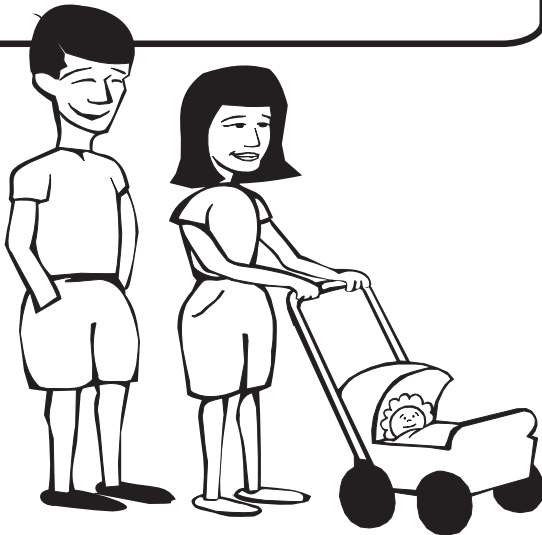
After pregnancy and childbirth, the body's reserves of nutrients are low. Healthy eating is particularly important for building up stores. Fad diets will not do this as they often lack important nutrients. Diets that promise quick and easy weight loss should not be trusted. Unfortunately, in addition to being a waste of money, many of these diets may be harmful or dangerous.

Diets that are considered potential health risks:

- ☐ eliminate foods from one or more food groups.
- ☐ recommend a loss of more than 1 kilogram (2-3 pounds) per week.
- ☐ suggest supplements and appetite control pills.
- ☐ are short-term and do not include exercise.

### Patience is the Key!

It is much better to lose extra weight gradually. Give yourself time to get back to what you weighed before you became pregnant. Enjoy your new baby rather than worrying too much about those extra pounds.



Dehydration, kidney damage, fatigue, nausea, vitamin or mineral deficiency, amenorrhea and headaches are only a few of the side effects that these diets can have. Most of the weight lost while on these diets is from water loss. Once off the diet, most people regain all the weight.

## Enjoy Active Living With Your New Family!

Exercise is just as important as healthy eating. If you were not physically active prior to pregnancy, now is a good time to start a program. Begin with simple activities such as walking and biking, and gradually establish a routine of regular exercise.