

131 Low Maternal Weight Gain

Definition/Cut-off Value

Low maternal weight gain is defined as follows:

1. A low rate of weight gain, such that in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters, for singleton pregnancies (1):

Prepregnancy Weight Classification	BMI	Total Weight Gain (lbs.)/Week
Underweight	< 18.5	< 1
Normal Weight	18.5 to 24.9	< 0.8
Overweight	25.0 to 29.9	< 0.5
Obese	≥ 30.0	< 0.4
Multi-fetal Pregnancies	See Justification for more information.	

Note: A BMI table is attached to assist in determining weight classifications. Also, until research supports the use of different BMI cut-offs to determine weight categories for adolescent pregnancies, the same BMI cut-offs will be used for all women, regardless of age, when determining WIC eligibility. (See Justification for a more detailed explanation.)

2. Low weight gain at any point in pregnancy, such that using an Institute of Medicine (IOM)-based weight gain grid, a pregnant woman's weight plots at any point beneath the bottom line of the appropriate weight gain range for her respective prepregnancy weight category (1), as follows:

Prepregnancy Weight Classification	BMI	Total Weight Gain Range (lbs.)
Underweight	< 18.5	28-40
Normal Weight	18.5 to 24.9	25-35
Overweight	25.0 to 29.9	15-25
Obese	≥ 30.0	11-20
Multi-fetal Pregnancies	See Justification for more information.	

Note: A BMI table is attached to assist in determining weight classifications. Also, until research supports the use of different BMI cut-offs to determine weight categories for adolescent pregnancies, the same BMI cut-offs will be used for all women, regardless of age, when determining WIC eligibility. (See Justification for a more detailed explanation.)

Participant Category and Priority Level

Category	Priority
Pregnant	1

Justification

Maternal weight gain during the 2nd and 3rd trimesters is an important determinant of fetal growth. Low maternal weight gain is associated with an increased risk of small for gestational age (SGA) infants, especially in underweight and normal-weight women (1). In addition, low maternal weight gain is associated with failure to initiate breastfeeding and preterm birth among underweight and to a lesser extent normal weight women (1).

The 2009 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report: *Weight Gain During Pregnancy: Reexamining the Guidelines* (1) updated the pregnancy weight categories to conform to the categories developed by the World Health Organization and adopted by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in 1998 (2). The reexamination of the guidelines consisted of a review of the determinants of a wide range of short-and long-term consequences of variation in weight gain during pregnancy for both the mother and her infant. The IOM prenatal weight gain recommendations based on prepregnancy weight status categories are associated with improved maternal and child health outcomes (1).

Included in the 2009 IOM guidelines is the recommendation that the BMI weight categories used for adult women be used for pregnant adolescents as well. More research is needed to determine whether special categories are needed for adolescents. It is recognized that the IOM cut-offs for defining weight categories will classify some adolescents differently than the CDC BMI-for-age charts. For the purpose of WIC eligibility determination, the IOM cut-offs will be used for all women regardless of age. However, due to the lack of research on relevant BMI cut-offs for pregnant and postpartum adolescents, professionals should use all of the tools available to them to assess these applicants' anthropometric status and tailor nutrition counseling accordingly.

For twin gestations, the 2009 IOM recommendations provide provisional guidelines: normal-weight women should gain 37-54 pounds; overweight women, 31-50 pounds; and obese women, 25-42 pounds. There was insufficient information for the IOM committee to develop even provisional guidelines for underweight women with multiple fetuses (1). A consistent rate of weight gain is advisable. A gain of 1.5 pounds per week during the second and third trimesters has been associated with a reduced risk of preterm and low-birth weight delivery in twin pregnancy (3). In triplet pregnancies the overall gain should be around 50 pounds with a steady rate of gain of approximately 1.5 pounds per week throughout the pregnancy (3). For WIC eligibility determinations, multi-fetal pregnancies are considered a nutrition risk in and of themselves (Risk #335, Multi-Fetal Gestation), aside from the weight gain issue.

The supplemental foods, nutrition education, and counseling related to the weight gain guidelines provided by the WIC Program may improve maternal weight status and infant outcomes (4).

References

1. Institute of Medicine. *Weight gain during pregnancy: reexamining the guidelines* (Prepublication Copy). National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.; 2009. www.nap.edu. Accessed June 2009.

2. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institutes of Health (NIH). Clinical guidelines on the identification, evaluation, and treatment of overweight and obesity in adults. NIH Publication No. 98-4083, 1998. www.nhlbi.nih.gov. Accessed June 2009.
3. Brown JE and Carlson M. Nutrition and multifetal pregnancy. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2000; 100:343-348.
4. Institute of Medicine. WIC nutrition risk criteria: a scientific assessment. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.; 1996.

Additional References

1. Brown JE, Schloesser PT. Pregnancy weight status, prenatal weight gain, and the outcome of term twin gestation. *Am. J. Obstet. Gynecol.* 1990; 162:182-6.
2. Parker JD, Abrams B. Prenatal weight gain advice: an examination of the recent prenatal weight gain recommendations of the Institute of Medicine. *Obstet Gynecol*, 1992; 79:664-9.
3. Siega-Riz AM, Adair LS, Hobel CJ. Institute of Medicine maternal weight gain recommendations and pregnancy outcomes in a predominately Hispanic population. *Obstet Gynecol*, 1994; 84:565-73.
4. Sutor CW, editor. Maternal weight gain: a report of an expert work group. Arlington, Virginia: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health; 1997. Sponsored by Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
5. Williams RL, Creasy RK, Cunningham GC, Hawes WE, Norris FD, Tashiro M. Fetal growth and perinatal viability in California. *Obstet.Gynecol.* 1982; 59:624-32.

Clarification

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a trimester as a term of three months in the prenatal gestation period with the specific trimesters defined as follows in weeks:

- First Trimester: 0-13 weeks
- Second Trimester: 14-26 weeks
- Third Trimester: 27-40 weeks

Further, CDC begins the calculation of weeks starting with the first day of the last menstrual period. If that date is not available, CDC estimates that date from the estimated date of confinement (EDC). This definition is used in interpreting CDC's Prenatal Nutrition Surveillance System data, comprised primarily of data on pregnant women participating in the WIC Program.

(BMI) Table for Determining Weight Classification for Women (1)

Height (Inches)	Underweight BMI < 18.5	Normal Weight BMI 18.5-24.9	Overweight BMI 25.0-29.9	Obese BMI ≥ 30.0
58"	< 89 lbs	89-118 lbs	119-142 lbs	> 142 lbs
59"	< 92 lbs	92-123 lbs	124-147 lbs	> 147 lbs
60"	< 95 lbs	95-127 lbs	128-152 lbs	> 152 lbs
61"	< 98 lbs	98-131 lbs	132-157 lbs	> 157 lbs
62"	< 101 lbs	101-135 lbs	136-163 lbs	> 163 lbs
63"	< 105 lbs	105-140 lbs	141-168 lbs	> 168 lbs
64"	< 108 lbs	108-144 lbs	145-173 lbs	> 173 lbs
65"	< 111 lbs	111-149 lbs	150-179 lbs	> 179 lbs
66"	< 115 lbs	115-154 lbs	155-185 lbs	> 185 lbs
67"	< 118 lbs	118-158 lbs	159-190 lbs	> 190 lbs
68"	< 122 lbs	122-163 lbs	164-196 lbs	> 196 lbs
69"	< 125 lbs	125-168 lbs	169-202 lbs	> 202 lbs
70"	< 129 lbs	129-173 lbs	174-208 lbs	> 208 lbs
71"	< 133 lbs	133-178 lbs	179-214 lbs	> 214 lbs
72"	< 137 lbs	137-183 lbs	184-220 lbs	> 220 lbs

(1) Adapted from the Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIH Publication No. 98-4083.