

# Healthy weight gain during pregnancy

## Making your own weight tracker

**1. How do I start?** In the box that is shaded dark green on the next page, write your weight before you fell pregnant with this baby.

**2. What goes in the boxes above?** In the box above where you wrote your weight, write a weight that is one kilogram heavier. Moving upwards, fill the boxes to the top, adding one kilo each time. For example, if you weighed 70 kilograms (kg) before you fell pregnant, then in the box above where you wrote your weight, you would write 71, then in the box above that, 72, then 73, until you filled the column to the top.

**3. How do I find where I am now?** The pregnancy weeks are lined up along the bottom of the page. Run your finger along the bottom until you find the week of your pregnancy. If you were at week 15 you would circle this number. Weigh yourself in light clothes and no shoes. Now, run your finger up the line where you have written all of the weights. Can you find your weight now? Circle this number.

**4. How do I fill in my first weight check?** Put your finger on each of the numbers you have circled. Use your left hand on the weights and your right hand on the weeks. At the same time move your left finger along the line and run your right finger up the page until they meet. Put a cross (X) where they meet.

**5. How do I use this?** Try to weigh yourself in the same clothes every few weeks. Find the week you are in and your current weight in the weight column. Put another cross (X) where the lines meet. Once you have a few crosses on the weight checker join them with a line.

## Why monitor pregnancy weight gain?

Women who gain weight outside their recommended range are more likely to have longer hospital stays, caesarean sections, high blood pressure, and gestational diabetes. See the box inset on the tracker for the recommended weight gain ranges.

## How can women monitor their weight changes during pregnancy?

Use the Mater Mothers' Hospitals' personalised Pregnancy Weight Tracker to help women check their progress. Get them to look at the weight tracker every few weeks and to compare their crosses with the shaded zone they should be in.

### Are crosses below the shading? They may not be gaining enough weight. What should women do?

It is important for these women to have three meals a day, and also have between-meal snacks, such as morning tea, afternoon tea and supper. Good snacks include fruit toast, dried fruit, nuts and seeds, yoghurt, muesli bars, cheese and crackers and milk drinks (i.e. Milo and milk, milkshakes).

### Are crosses above the shading? They may be gaining weight too quickly. What should women do?

Gaining too much weight when pregnant can increase blood pressure, increase the risk of gestational diabetes, as well as making it hard to lose weight after birth. To ensure a healthy weight gain, women should limit foods that are high in fat and sugar. Make sure women aren't 'eating for two'. Regular exercise, on most days, is also important.

## To help manage weight gain during pregnancy, women can:

- choose fruit over biscuits, cakes, chips, chocolate or lollies
- drink water (not soft drink or cordial) and limit fruit juice to one serve a day
- use minimal fat in cooking and trim fat from meat and skin from chicken before cooking
- choose low fat milk, yogurt, and cheese in place of full fat products
- limit high fat take-away foods (or opt for salad alternatives)
- limit intake of desserts and puddings
- minimise snacking.

## What services do Mater dietitians offer?

Ongoing contact is important for sustained healthy behaviour change, so Mater dietitians offer a comprehensive service to women who are delivering at Mater Mothers' Hospitals.

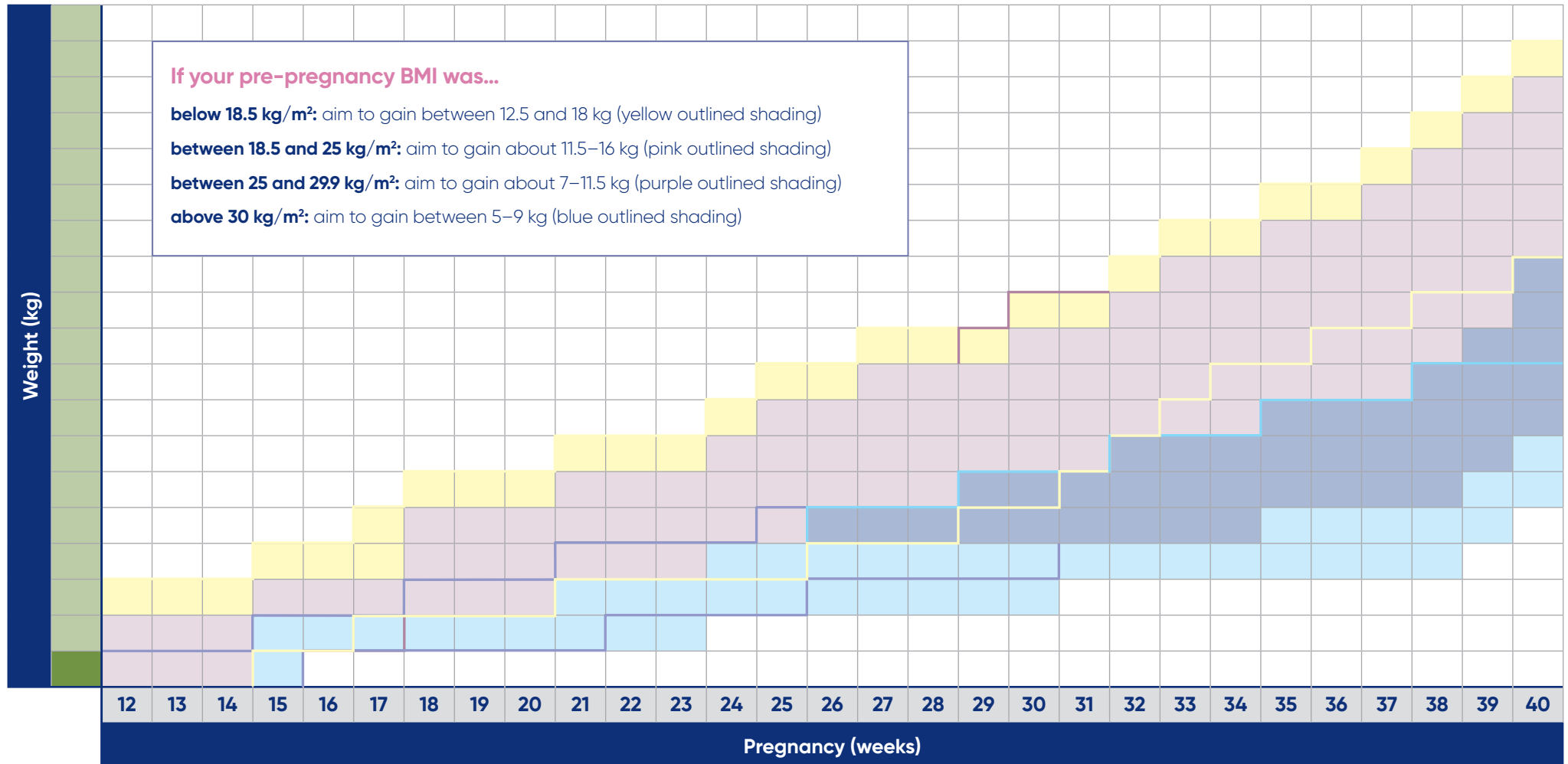
Part of our service is the Healthy Start to Pregnancy workshop; a one hour class designed to assist women follow healthier lifestyle behaviours during pregnancy, through increasing personal empowerment. This is reinforced by phone or face-to-face appointments to support and guide women's healthy lifestyle changes. Mater Health and Wellness offers specialist appointments with a maternal health dietitian for women attending Mater Mothers' Hospital or who wish to access private nutrition and dietetic services. We also offer private Optimal Pregnancy Nutrition classes.

## How can women book into the classes?

Bookings are essential. Interested women can phone 07 3163 6000 for more information on how to book. Please visit [www.matermothers.org.au/diet](http://www.matermothers.org.au/diet) for nutrition videos and articles.

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Follow the steps on the previous page to make your own Pregnancy Weight Tracker



Adapted from original design by Shelley Wilkinson and Dr Yvette Miller, UQ, Caboolture mums and little ones, Queensland Health, 2006 ©

Reference: Institute of Medicine (2009). Weight gain during pregnancy: Re-examining the guidelines. Accessed on 2 June 2009. [www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/48191/68004.aspx](http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/48191/68004.aspx)