

## Standard 2

### Healthy Weight

**Identify opportunities for families to improve eating habits and/or safe levels of activity to promote healthy weight gain and improve maternal and child health outcomes.**

#### **Why is this Standard important?**

Women are encouraged to achieve and maintain a healthy weight before becoming pregnant. This may reduce a woman's risk of complications during pregnancy, increase chances of a healthy infant birth weight, and improve the long term health of both mother and infant.

#### **Help women achieve healthy weight gain during pregnancy:**

##### **Weight Gain Guidelines**

During pregnancy, pregnant women are encouraged to gain weight within the 2009 Institute of Medicine (IOM) gestational weight gain guidelines. These recommendations are based on a woman's pre-pregnancy weight.

Women that gain more than the recommended range may have a harder time returning to their pre-pregnancy weight and may be at increased risk of complications during their pregnancy. Women that do not gain enough weight during pregnancy have a greater risk of premature delivery and an infant with a low birth weight. Women should make regular visits to their health care provider to monitor their progress. If women are advised that they are gaining too quickly or too slowly, they can change the amount they are eating to get on track.

##### **Gaining too quickly?**

- The best way to eat fewer calories is to decrease the amount of "extras" being eaten.
- "Extras" are added sugars and solid fats in foods like soft drinks, desserts, fried foods, cheese, whole milk, and fatty meats. Look for choices that are low-fat, fat-free, unsweetened, or with no-added-sugars. They have fewer "extras."
- Alcohol is also considered an "extra," but women should not drink at all while pregnant.

##### **Gaining too slowly?**

- Women that are not gaining weight, or gaining too slowly, need to eat more calories. They can do this by eating a little more from each food group.
- "Extras" have little nutritional value and are not the best source to get more calories.

## **Physical Activity during Pregnancy**

Regular physical activity is beneficial for a woman's overall health during pregnancy and should be encouraged. Being moderately active keeps women fit without increasing the risk of early pregnancy loss, preterm delivery, or low birth weight.

### **How much activity?**

Unless a woman has medical reasons to avoid physical activity during pregnancy, she can begin or continue moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity during her pregnancy and after the baby is born.

### **Points to remember:**

- Healthy women who are not already highly active or doing vigorous-intensity activity should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity during the week and during the postpartum period.
- Women who already engage in vigorous-intensity activities or who are highly active can continue physical activity during pregnancy and the postpartum period.
- When beginning physical activity during pregnancy, women should increase the amount gradually over time.
- The effects of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity during pregnancy have not been studied carefully. There is no basis for recommending that women should begin vigorous-intensity activity during pregnancy.
- Women who are pregnant should be under the care of a health care provider with whom they can discuss how to adjust amounts of physical activity during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

### **Activities to Limit**

#### **During pregnancy women should avoid:**

- Doing activities that involve lying on their back after the first trimester
- Doing activities with high risk of falling or abdominal trauma, including contact or collision sports such as horseback riding, soccer, basketball, and downhill skiing