

MOTHERS AND BABIES

Make Your Pregnancy A Healthy One

(NAPSA)—Congratulations! You're pregnant! Now, let's get down to business. According to the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC), everything you do in the next nine months, from what you eat to what you drink to how physically active you are and what you weigh, has the potential to affect your child's current and future growth.

In fact, a new report by NWHRC explores the growing body of research that finds conditions in utero (i.e., while you're pregnant) have the potential to affect your child's health even decades down the road.

For instance, one study found that women who drink during pregnancy could increase their child's risk of alcohol addiction later in life, even with just one drinking binge. Other studies suggest significant correlations between a mother's nutrition during pregnancy and her child's risk for being overweight and developing diabetes and heart disease later in life.

The message? Eat right today and prevent future health problems for your child.

There are two components to "eating right" when you're pregnant. One is the type of food you're eating, and the other is how much weight you gain.

For many women, pregnancy is the first time in their lives when gaining weight is a good thing—but don't go overboard. You do not need to consume any more calories than your normal daily intake during your first trimester. After the first 12 weeks, you may consume up to 300 extra calories per day.

If you are of normal weight when you get pregnant, you



WEIGHTY ANSWER: If you are of normal weight when you get pregnant, you should gain between 25 and 35 pounds.

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Doctors strongly suggest, however, that if you are overweight, to try and lose some weight before you get pregnant. Women who are overweight have a higher risk of emergency cesarean, gestational diabetes, high blood pressure and miscarriage. There is also a greater risk of delivery complications.

Your health care professional will help you determine where you fall on the weight scale during your first prenatal visit.

As always, talk to your health care professional about any special dietary concerns (if you're vegetarian or vegan, for example).

For a copy of the report or a free pregnancy planner, visit the National Women's Health Resource Center Web site at www.healthywomen.org.