

[IMAGE]

The Smart Way to Avoid Excess Weight Gain During Pregnancy

By Editorial Staff

As we've mentioned several times in recent issues of *To Your Health*, excessive gestational weight gain can play a significant role in health outcomes – for both mother and child – both during pregnancy and following birth. How can you ensure a healthy pregnancy that avoids excess weight gain? Here's the best way to do it; let's call it your *prenatal weight maintenance plan*.

According to a large research review of more than 100 clinical trials and involving nearly 35,000 expectant mothers, "structured diet and physical activity–based lifestyle interventions" during pregnancy "were associated with reduced [gestational weight gain – GWG] and with maternal and neonatal benefits. Structured diet interventions appeared to have greater implications for GWG than physical activity alone or mixed interventions. Diet was associated with improved maternal and neonatal outcomes, whereas physical activity was associated with improved adverse maternal outcomes."

In terms of specific health benefits, the research analysis also showed that structured diet and physical activity interventions reduced the risk of gestational diabetes, pregnancy-related hypertensive disorders and adverse maternal outcomes. These interventions were also associated with an overall pattern of more natural births (fewer Cesarean sections). For the child, diet / physical activity interventions reduced the risk that the baby would require neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) admission and reduced total adverse neonatal outcomes. Findings appear in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

The moral to the story: A structured diet and physical activity intervention to avoid excess weight gain during pregnancy is what mother and child need! Make sure your health care team is on board with how to ensure a healthy pregnancy and delivery for both you and your baby.

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