
Postpartum Belly Fat: What Should You Eat to Get Rid of It

Post partum weight loss is not just about regaining body shape. As weight gain increases risk of acquiring diabetes and heart disease. Also starting next pregnancy with more weight increase risk for poor pregnancy outcomes. Obesity is also linked with reduced initiation for breastfeeding.

A study suggest that about 20% new mothers keep or even gain post partum weight.

After giving birth to the baby, losing weight and getting rid to stretch marks is quite a task for some women. But in order to lose post partum belly fat, an overall reduction in body fat is needed and not just the belly. So it is never advised to restrict food intake as it affects both mother and infant's health during lactation period.

Growth uncertainty earlier in life leaves women permanently at the risk of obesity and its complicaions.

Desirable Weight Gain During Pregnancy

Weight gain during pregnancy varies from women to women and it is important to keep an eye on that. But skipping diets and meals durings pregnancy. Baby grows everyday and thus you need to maintain a healthy balanced diet. Pregnant women need extra food every day and lactating women need an extra meal every day. By eating a proper diet, wait gain can be maintained.

Weight gain recommendations during pregnancy is based on prepregnancy weight and vary according to the women's height, weight, metabolic rate, BMI.

Pre pregnancy weight

Recommended Total gain

Kg Pound

BMI

BMI 19.8 to 26.0 11.5-18.0 25-35

BMI >26 to 29 7.0-11.5 15-25

Institute of medicine, nutrition during pregnancy. 1990 BMI (Body mass index)= weight in Kg divided by height in meters squared

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breastfeeding.

After pregnancy women undergoes various changes like recovery of genital organs, endocrine and nutritional functions.

Weight loss is most evident physical change; 0.6-0.8 Kg/month for first 6 months. However, many women may retain or gain weight on years after pregnancy. Getting rid of maternal weight after delivery depends on:

Balancing energy and nutrient resources

Meal frequency

Physical activity

Lifestyle, sleep

Breastfeeding pattern

Obesity seems to increase in parallel with reduced sleeping hours which is obvious in taking care of child. Family members and father should take the responsibility to ensure that she is getting sufficient rest to conserve her energy. Lifestyle changes such as regular physical activity (exercise, yoga), healthy eating which are used in traditional weight loss programs may be problematic for new mothers because of time restrictions and changes in priorities with the baby. Thus, a routine plan for strategy to achieve healthy weight should be planned accordingly. Mother's attitude also plays a significant role in making weight control regime a success. In a study, Manning-Dathen and Allen postulate that in our weight-conscious society, women choose to breastfeed in the hope of losing weight; and if that does not occur as fast as expected, then women might feel frustrated, perhaps resulting in adverse emotional consequences for the baby and mother herself.

Energy rich, low calorie foods to get rid of post partum fats:

- Avocados
- Nuts
- Coconut milk
- Oatmeal
- Lentils
- Eggs
- Broccoli
- Yogurt
- Figs
- Pinto beans
- pistachio

Quick tips to get rid of postpartum weight:

- eat more colourful vegetables (yellow red bell pepper, spinach, etc)
- Drink more water. Never keep your body dehydrated

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- Get sufficient sleep
 - Daily workout for at least 20-30 minutes
 - Do meditation as mental relaxations is must
 - Lastly, think positive.

Lactation and Diet

Pregnancy and lactation are the period of nutritional vulnerability. However, the threat of malnutrition begins in the uterus and continues throughout the life cycle. During lactation the energy stores needs to be established, conserved and replenished as the energy and nutrient requirements comes from mother's diet or her own body stores (which may lead to maternal depletion).

Deficiency of micronutrients affects the quality of breastmilk. Such deficiencies can be overcome by improving mother's diet before, during and between the cycles of pregnancy and lactation.

Breastfeeding has important health benefits for both as it has preventive role in development of obesity. It must last for at least 6 months.

While maintaining nutritional requirements for adequate breastfeeding, mother should lose weight to return to her pre-pregnancy weight.

Regardless of diet composition, the total calories intake plays an important role in retaining weight.

Additional 500Kcal/day is recommended during first 6 months after delivery and 400Kcal/day for following 6 months.

Golden Rules of food safety during pregnancy:

- COLD HOT
- Fridge should be set below 5°C
- Don't eat food that is meant to be in fridge but left out
- Defrost and marinate food in fridge especially meat
- Cook food to at least 60°C
- Avoid microwaving in plastic containers
- Check for no pink left in cooked meat
- Reheat food from fridge until steaming hot

Clean Label:

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly before starting to prepare or before eating anything
- Keep benches, kitchen, tablewares etc clean
- Avoid eating food prepared from someone suffering from diarrhoea etc
- Separate raw and cooked food
- Don't use food past the 'use by' date
- Don't use packed food after expiry date

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- Follow storage and cooking instructions
 - Ask for information about unpackaged food
 - Check ingredients for packaged food items

Diet During Pregnancy

Dietary requirements during pregnancy must include foods rich in:

- Folate (vitamin B9)
- Iron
- Vitamins
- Omega3
- DHA
- Proteins
- Healthy fats
- Complex carbohydrates
- Calcium
- Probiotics
- Caffeine intake should be limited to 200mg per day during pregnancy.

What to Completely Avoid During Pregnancy and Lactation:

- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Addictive drug(other than prescribed)
- Raw meat, fish
- unpasteurized dairy products
- substances which have contamination risk of listeria and salmonella

Not taking proper nutrients during pregnancy may lead to serious complications like miscarriage, still birth, premature birth, birth defects etc.

- Maternal nutrition effects
- On maternal health
- On foetal and infant health
- Increased risk of maternal complications and death
- Anaemia
- Lethargy, weakness and lower productivity
- Increased risk of infections
- Acquiring diabetes, hyper/hypo thyroidism etc
- Cretinism(stunted physical and mental growth due to congenital thyroid deficiency)
- Birth defects
- Increased risk of infections
- Low birth weight
- Premature birth and infant mortality
- Brain damage and lower potential

Before planning pregnancy an adequate balanced diet should be consumed to achieve a

desirable condition for better outcomes. Overweight and obesity at all ages, present a difficult challenge for maternal and child health.

Weight loss is relevant for women who gained excessive weight during pregnancy and critical in those who were overweight or obese during their pregnancy.

Workload during pregnancy should be reduced and rest should be ensured to conserve her energy. Along with a balanced nutrient rich diet, she should be free from mental and emotional stress.

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