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Premature Baby Weight Gain & Weight Chart

DEBOLINA RAJA ON JULY 28, 2015



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Has your baby been born earlier than the due date and is now a premature baby? Are you worried about his weight and the general weight gain that should happen in the first year? Do you want to make sure that his weight gain is on the right track and are you looking for more information on how you can help?

If your answers to the above queries are 'yes', consider reading our post below. Here, we look at how you can achieve your premature baby weight gain and how much weight should a premature baby gain each week

Understanding The Weight Of Premature Baby:

If your baby was born after spending less than 37 weeks in your womb, it means you have a premature baby. In such a case, your baby's nutritional needs will be different to babies who are born full-term, who have spent anything between 38 and 42 weeks in the womb.

In most cases, your premature baby will first be kept in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) to help the doctors observe your little one. It does not mean that your baby is not doing well. It is just a precautionary measure that will allow the doctors to keep a track of your baby's nutrition and to see if your baby is developing properly.

Most full-term babies will weigh around six pounds at the time of birth. However, if your baby was born premature, the birth weight will vary depending on how early your baby was born. Some premature babies are born with a birth weight as low as two pounds while some are born with almost the same birth weight as that of a full-term baby.

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Please note: The measurements given here are averages, and healthy babies may be larger or smaller.

Gestational Age (weeks)	Average Weight (grams)	Average Weight (ounces)	Average Length (centimeters)	Average Length (inches)	Average Head Circumference (centimeters)	Average Head Circumference (inches)
23	584	20.6	29.9	11.8	20.9	8.2
24	651	23.0	31.1	12.2	21.8	8.6
25	737	26.0	32.3	12.7	22.7	8.9
26	827	29.2	33.6	13.2	23.6	9.3
27	936	33.0	35	13.8	24.5	9.6
28	1061	37.4	36.5	14.4	25.5	10.0
29	1204	42.5	38	15.0	26.5	10.4
30	1373	48.4	39.5	15.6	27.5	10.8
31	1546	54.5	41	16.1	28.4	11.2
32	1731	61.1	42.3	16.7	29.3	11.5
33	1956	69.0	43.7	17.2	30.2	11.9
34	2187	77.1	45	17.7	31.1	12.2
35	2413	85.1	46.2	18.2	31.9	12.6
36	2664	94.0	47.4	18.7	32.7	12.9
37	2937	103.6	48.5	19.1	33.3	13.1
38	3173	111.9	49.5	19.5	33.7	13.3
39	3338	117.7	50.2	19.8	34	13.4
40	3454	121.8	50.8	20.0	34.3	13.5
41	3530	124.5	51.3	20.2	34.5	13.6

[Read: [Premature Baby Growth Chart](#)]

How Much Weight Will Your Premature Baby Gain?

Your premature baby's weight gain will depend on a lot of factors, the main factor being how premature your baby is. Here are a few tips that can help you understand your premature baby's weight gain better:

- Your premature baby will start gaining some weight in a few days after the birth.
- If your baby was born too early and is very small, the weight gain could be as little as about five gm a day. If your baby was born larger and closer to the due date, the weight gain could be as high as 20 gm each day.
- Depending on the hospital or medical care facility where your premature baby is being observed, the discharge rules will have specific weight gain criteria prior to discharge. Some hospitals have a pre-set weight number that your premature baby should reach, before being allowed to go home. Some hospitals monitor your premature baby's weight gain pattern on a daily basis. If it corresponds to their criteria of a healthy weight gain, your premature baby may be allowed to go home.

How Will You Feed Your Premature Baby In The Initial Weeks?

If your baby was born earlier than 34 weeks, feeding could often be a cause of concern. It can be especially difficult for you to feed your baby from the breast or even by using a bottle. At such an age, your premature baby will still not develop enough to be able to breathe, suck and swallow properly. It can cause a risk of choking and can be dangerous for your little one.

Your baby's doctor will first assess your baby's condition and then decide on the best form of feeding for the initial days if your baby cannot breastfeed yet. Here are some feeding options that your baby's doctor can suggest:

1. Intravenous (IV) Lines:

The IV lines will help to place the nutrition directly in your premature baby's bloodstream.

- The IV lines method will be used if your premature baby has an immature digestive system. It will also be used in case your baby is still not able to suck, breathe and swallow on his own or in a normal way.
- If your premature baby is being treated for any other health complications, the doctor may recommend the method of feeding.
- The IV line will be placed in the arm, leg or scalp of your baby.

[Read: [Parenting Tips For Baby Care](#)]

2. Umbilical Catheter:

Using the umbilical catheter is a painless method that will not cause any distress to your premature baby.

- Doctors will use a surgical procedure to place a tube inside a vessel of your baby's umbilical cord.
- Even though it is a painless method, there are certain risks associated with this method. Your premature baby will be more prone to blood clots and infections while being on the umbilical catheter.
- To avoid any chances of a risk, the doctor will recommend the method only in the most critical case and if there is no other option. The doctor can also recommend the method if your premature baby has to be fed using an external method of feeding over a period of weeks. In such a case, it will be the safest and easiest way for your premature baby to receive the required amount of nutrition.

3. Oral And Nasal Feeding:

In the oral and nasal feeding method, the health care provider will use a narrow and flexible tube to provide the required nutrition for your premature baby.

- The tube will be threaded through your baby's nose (for the nasal feeding method) or the mouth (for the oral feeding method).
- The oral and nasal feeding method will be used for your baby if the doctors feel that your premature baby is still not ready to digest your breast milk or even formula milk.
- Your baby should be able to suck the breath and swallow normally. Once that happens, the doctor will give the go-ahead to use the method of feeding.

[Read: [Sleeping Guide For Premature Baby](#)]

4. Central Line:

The central line feeding system is sometimes also referred to as the PICC Line.

- It is a type of IV line that will be inserted into your baby's vein. The most common area where it is done is in the vein of the arm, as it is larger than the other veins.
- The line will help to deliver the required nutrients to your premature baby.

Once your baby develops a natural reflex to sucking, breathing and swallowing, and the respiratory system is stable, your doctor may allow you to try and breastfeed your little one. Do speak to your doctor about any breastfeeding concerns you may have.

Hope you liked our information on premature baby growth chart. Was your baby born prematurely? How did you feed your baby initially and how was the weight gain?

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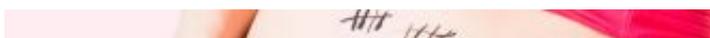
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