

## ***Weight Loss During Pregnancy May Be Safe for Obese Women***

**Historically, obstetricians have been cautious when advising pregnant women on exercise and weight loss.** The consensus is that physical activities performed prior to pregnancy are safely continued during pregnancy, and that moderate weight gain ensures healthy birth weight and fewer risks for complications. **Currently, "normal weight" women are encouraged to gain between 25 and 35 pounds during pregnancy** , while obese women should gain ~13 pounds. A recent study suggests that obese women may not need to gain any weight and that weight loss may actually enhance the health of the newborn.

Researchers studied 96 obese pregnant women with gestational diabetes mellitus. **The women were divided into two groups: diet only and diet plus exercise.** Both programs were designed to produce moderate calorie restriction with the goal of minimizing weight gain. **The exercise group was given a recommendation for activity at 60% Vo2 Max or the equivalent of a brisk walk.**

In the end **the women who either lost or maintained baseline bodyweight were less likely to have a macrosomic newborn (overweight baby)** . Also, there were no additional pregnancy complications, and fetal growth was not impaired in the weight loss groups.

Reuters Health **interviewed the authors of the study who suggest that preventing weight gain during pregnancy in obese women** could provide greater long-term health benefits. They suggest that pregnancy may be an opportune time to make lifestyle changes but **women are advised to consult their physician and a nutritionist before attempting to implement such a program.**

*Artal, R. et al. (2007) A Lifestyle Intervention of Weight-Gain Restriction: Diet and Exercise in Obese Women with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus. Journal of Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism. 32(3): 596â€"601*