

New weight gain guidelines established for pregnant women

NEW GUIDELINES FOR HOW MUCH WEIGHT a woman should gain during pregnancy have been established by a national team of physicians and health care professionals, including Anna Maria Siega-Riz, PhD, UNC epidemiology and nutrition professor and associate chair of the Department of Epidemiology. Siega-Riz was one of four team members who presented the new guidelines at a news conference May 28, 2009, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.



Dr. Anna Maria Siega-Riz

“This work has important implications for the lives of women, given that in any one year, approximately four million women give birth,” Siega-Riz says.

The team, established by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, updated recommendations the Institute of Medicine made in 1990. The new guidelines reflect changing U.S. demographics, particularly the surge in the number of Americans who are overweight or obese. Healthy American women at a normal weight for their height should gain 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy, the guidelines state. Underweight women should gain more, 28 to 40 pounds, and overweight women should gain less, 15 to 25 pounds. These ranges match the 1990 guidelines, but the report also specifies a new range for obese women (BMI greater than 30) which limits the recommended gain between 11 and 20 pounds. ■