335 Multi-fetal Gestation

Definition/Cut-off Value

More than one (> 1) fetus in a current pregnancy (Pregnant Women) or the most recent pregnancy (Breastfeeding and Non-Breastfeeding Women).

Participant Category and Priority Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding Women</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Breastfeeding Women</td>
<td>III, IV, V or VI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justification

Multi-fetal gestations are associated with low birth weight, fetal growth restriction, placental and cord abnormalities, preeclampsia, anemia, shorter gestation and an increased risk of infant mortality. Twin births account for 16% of all low birth weight infants. The risk of pregnancy complications is greater in women carrying twins and increases markedly as the number of fetuses increases (1, 2).

For twin gestations, the 2009 IOM recommendations provide provisional guidelines: normal weight women should gain 37-54 pounds; overweight women, 31-50 pounds; and obese women, 25-42 pounds (3). There was insufficient information for the IOM committee to develop even provisional guidelines for underweight women with multiple fetuses. A consistent rate of weight gain is advisable. A gain of 1.5 pounds per week during the second and third trimesters has been associated with a reduced risk of preterm and low-birth weight delivery in twin pregnancy (2). In triplet pregnancies the overall gain should be around 50 pounds with a steady rate of gain of approximately 1.5 pounds per week throughout the pregnancy (2). Education by the WIC nutritionist should address a steady rate of weight gain that is higher than for singleton pregnancies.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women with twins have greater requirements for all nutrients than women with only one infant. Postpartum, non-breastfeeding women delivering twins are at greater nutritional risk than similar women delivering only one infant. All three groups of women would benefit greatly from the nutritional supplementation provided by the WIC Program.

References

Additional References


