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History of Low Birth Weight

**Definition/
cut-off value**

Birth of an infant weighing ≤ 5 lb. 8 oz (≤ 2500 grams)

Pregnant Women: any history of low birth weight

Breastfeeding/Non-Breastfeeding: most recent pregnancy

**Participant
category and
priority level**

Category

Priority

Pregnant Women

I

Breastfeeding Women

I

Non-Breastfeeding Women

III, IV, V, or VI

Justification

A woman's history of a delivery of a low birth weight (LBW) baby is the most reliable predictor for LBW in her subsequent pregnancy (1). The risk for LBW is 2-5 times higher than average among women who have had previous LBW deliveries and increases with the number of previous LBW deliveries (1). This is true for histories in which the LBW was due to premature birth, fetal growth restriction (FGR) or a combination of these factors. The extent to which nutritional interventions (dietary supplementation and counsel) can decrease risk for repeat LBW, depends upon the relative degree to which poor nutrition was implicated in each woman's previous poor pregnancy outcome. Nutritional deficiencies and excesses have been shown to result in LBW and pregnancy loss. The pregnant woman's weight gain is one of the most important correlates of birth weight and of FGR (2, 3).

References

1. Institute of Medicine, Committee to Study the Prevention of Low Birth Weight. Preventing low birth weight. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.; 1985.
 2. Institute of Medicine. Nutrition during pregnancy. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.; 1990.
 3. Kramer MS. Intrauterine growth and gestational duration determinants. Pediatrics 1987;80:502-11.
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