

# Fasting in pregnancy linked to lower birth weight

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Fasting during pregnancy is associated with lower birth weight; however,

dietary composition outside of fasting hours modifies this association, according to a study published online Feb. 15 in *PLOS ONE*.

Fabienne Pradella, Ph.D., from Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz, Germany, and colleagues surveyed 326 Muslims who delivered their babies in Mainz. Participants who were pregnant during Ramadan reported on fasting, dietary composition, and sleep schedules.

The researchers observed an association for fasting during [pregnancy](#) with lower birth weight, especially for fasting during the first trimester (−352.92 g). No direct associations were seen for dietary composition or altered [sleep](#) with birth weight. However, the fasting-[birth weight](#) association was modified by dietary composition outside of fasting hours, with the association no longer observed for women switching to [high-fat diets](#).

"Additional research is needed to assess the roles of specific (macro)nutrients and food groups, based on which specific recommendations for dietary choices for pregnant Muslims wishing to fast during Ramadan can be developed. This also includes measurements of caloric intakes during Ramadan," the authors write. "Our study highlights that research on culture-specific habits and traditions is pivotal in order to promote a healthy start to life for all children."

**More information:** Fabienne Pradella et al, Ramadan during pregnancy and neonatal health—Fasting, dietary composition and sleep patterns, *PLOS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0281051](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0281051)

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