

Weighing Your Baby during the Pandemic

Does it matter what type of scale you use to weigh your baby?

Yes, it does, depending upon how old your baby is and why you are weighing your baby. There is a big difference between the “sensitivity of scales” – how accurate a scale is and what it can tell you about your baby’s weight gain.

What does this mean, and when does it matter?

If your baby is over a month old, feeding well, appears to be thriving, and you have no concerns, it may be okay to use your home adult scale to get a general idea of what your baby weighs. Weigh yourself on the scale, then weigh yourself again holding your naked baby, and you will get a pretty good idea how much your baby weighs.

If your baby is under a month old, or you have any concerns about whether your baby is gaining well, a home adult scale may not be accurate enough. Even the fanciest home adult scales may only claim to be accurate to ½ of a pound (8 ounces or 240 grams). This is not a big deal if you weigh 125 pounds. But if your baby weighs only 7 pounds, this means the scale may indicate a weight that may be off by 8 ounces. In the first month, babies are only gaining about 1 ounce a day. If you are trying to assess weight gain in a young baby, an adult scale may just not be sensitive enough.

You may be able to purchase a baby scale for less than \$100 that is sensitive to .1 ounce (or 3 grams). While some of these scales are very good, **they are getting harder and harder to find.** If you decide to purchase a scale for home use, be aware that some are more sensitive than others. It is important to know how accurate a scale is and whether it meets the needs of your baby.

MilkWorks has 28 scales for rent that are sensitive to either 2 or 3 grams. They cost ~\$1,000 and are sensitive enough to weigh your baby before and after breastfeeding to assess how much milk your baby removes, and to monitor your baby’s weight gain, even in the early days.

What else can a parent use to weigh their baby?

Postal and kitchen scales can be very accurate! If you have one, you can put a large bowl with a towel in it onto the scale. “Tare,” or “zero out,” the bowl and towel and then place your baby inside of the bowl to see what your baby weighs. Make sure that you place the scale and bowl on a safe surface just in case your baby wiggles the bowl off the scale!

Copyright March 2020

MilkWorks



Community
Breastfeeding
Center

5930 S. 58th Street
(in the Trade Center)
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 423-6402

10818 Elm Street
Rockbrook Village
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 502-0617

For additional
information:
www.milkworks.org