

# 312 History of Low Birth Weight

## Definition/Cut-off Value

History of low birth weight is defined as the birth of an infant weighing  $\leq 5$  lb. 8 oz. ( $\leq 2500$  grams) for the following:

Category	Pregnancy
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.