

Managing Your Weight in Your Pregnancy



**Information for pregnant women who have a
body mass index (BMI) of 30 or over**

I need to manage my weight - where do I start?

Eating well during pregnancy is important both for you and your baby. It is a great time to make some positive lifestyle changes.

Weight loss is **not** recommended during pregnancy, however it is important that you do not gain too much weight as this may put you and your baby at risk of health problems. Weight gain will vary from woman to woman so be guided by your midwife.

The most effective way to achieve an appropriate weight gain in pregnancy is by making a few permanent changes to what you eat and drink and by leading a more active lifestyle.

First things first – what's on your plate?

Keep a food diary- write down everything you eat and drink over a few days, including a weekend. You can get a copy of a food diary at www.nhsforthvalley.com/weight or just write it down on a notepad. Be aware of how much you eat; the way your food is cooked and when you eat.

Making changes

Look at your food diary- what changes can you make? Think about reducing foods high in fat and sugar first. For example if you eat two packets of crisps a day, cut this down to one; grill rather than fry; or if you have fizzy drinks buy diet versions. Make changes gradually to avoid feeling deprived and be realistic.



Some healthy tips.....

- Eat regular meals- always have breakfast, lunch and tea
- You may feel hungrier than normal or feel that eating little and often suits you better as your pregnancy progresses. A small snack between meals is fine if you have reduced the size of your meal and it is healthy.
- Aim to eat 5 portions of fruit & vegetables daily
- Starchy foods such as potatoes, noodles, bread, rice and pasta are not fattening, they are filling, especially the wholegrain varieties
- Milk and dairy foods are important during pregnancy to ensure you are getting enough calcium so don't cut back on them, just choose low fat varieties
- Drink plenty of fluid to keep you hydrated helping to prevent constipation. **Avoid** too many high caffeine drinks such as tea, coffee, cola and energy drinks.
- It is recommended that you do NOT drink alcohol when you are pregnant
- See your Ready Steady Baby book for more healthy eating tips.

Should I be eating for two?

No. It is only in the last 3 months of pregnancy that there is a small increase in your energy requirements of about 200kcal a day- the equivalent of 2 small slices of bread with spread!



If you are feeling hungry try out these snack ideas.....

- Small bowl of cereal with semi-skimmed milk
- Slice of toast with a small banana
- Low fat yogurt - try adding fruit
- 2 oatcakes with reduced fat cheese spread
- Portion of fresh or dried fruit



What about vitamins?

Folic Acid

Women who have a BMI of 30 or more should take a supplement of 5 milligrams folic acid daily until 12 weeks pregnant - this should be prescribed by your GP. This is to prevent a neural tube defect (NTD) ie spina bifida. Women with a BMI of 30 or more have a higher risk of having a baby with a NTD.

Vitamin D

It is recommended that **ALL pregnant and breastfeeding** women take a supplement of 10 micrograms vitamin D daily. This is to prevent rickets (softening of the bones) in your baby.

If you are eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme you will get free Healthy Start vitamins which contain the right amount of vitamin D for you. You can also buy Healthy Start vitamins or an alternative supplement at most chemists. Your midwife can give you a Healthy Start Application form to see if you qualify.



Keep Active!

Being active during pregnancy can help you manage your weight, improve posture and muscle tone, release tension and can have positive effects on your mood! It can also help you cope with labour and the delivery of your baby.

If you have never been very active then a good activity to get you started is walking or swimming. There may be antenatal aqua/ yoga classes available at your local leisure centre. However you must speak with your midwife before starting any new exercise regime. Remember if you have never been very active to build any activity up slowly. Making simple changes like taking the stairs rather than using the lift at work will help you be more active.

If you feel able, you are aiming to get up to 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity 5 times a week. Don't over do it- you should still be able to hold a conversation when exercising.



Ask your midwife for a copy of NHS Health Scotland, Keeping Active During and After Pregnancy.

Do you know that ...?

If you exercised regularly before you became pregnant you should be able to continue to take part, as long as you feel comfortable to do so.



What happens after your baby is born?

It is really important to keep up these positive lifestyle changes once your baby is born. Now is the time to start to lose weight!

You can start to slowly increase your activity level. Taking your baby out for a walk is a good place to start. However if you have had a complicated delivery or caesarean then you must speak with a doctor first.

For information on how to lose weight and keep it off for good go to:

www.nhsforthvalley.com/weight

This website also has downloadable resources, self monitoring tools, links to mobile apps and information on local exercise groups and activities.

You can also speak with your GP as there may be support available for you locally.



What else will help you to lose weight?

Breastfeeding has many benefits for baby including building up immunity to infection, reducing risk of asthma, allergy and diabetes. It also has many benefits to you, including reducing the risk of ovarian and breast cancer and helping you to lose weight. Breastfeeding uses the fat laid down in pregnancy for energy to produce milk- it uses 500kcal up every day! The longer you breastfeed, the more benefits for you and your baby and the more fat stores you will use up.

Speak to your midwife or health visitor about your local breastfeeding support group.



Write down a few changes and remember to try to include one that will keep you active throughout your pregnancy!

My changes:

1.

2.

3.

Useful contacts and other support

www.readysteadybaby.org.uk/
www.healthystart.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk/Livewell/pregnancy
www.nhsforthvalley.com/weight

Breastfeeding:

www.feedgoodfactor.org.uk
www.bestbeginnings.info/
National Breastfeeding Helpline: 0300 100 0212

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