

This leaflet provides information about your choice of care in pregnancy. If you want more information in other languages please contact a midwife on 01384 456111.

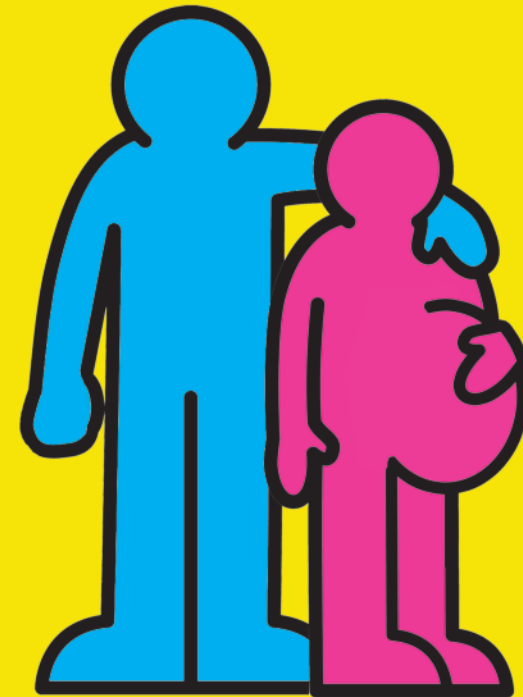
Available in larger print and audio version
call 01384 244418

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pregnancy and your weight



Congratulations on being pregnant. We hope your pregnancy will be healthy and enjoyable.

Eating a healthy diet and being physically active is especially important in pregnancy as your unborn baby has to get everything it needs to grow and develop from you.

Many women's weight will be higher or lower than the health range when they become pregnant, and this can affect the pregnancy as well as the woman's general health.

What is a healthy weight?

This depends on how tall you are. We use a calculation that tells us about your weight in relation to your height. This measurement is called Body Mass Index (BMI) and it is calculated from your weight in kilograms and your height in meters squared.

Weight status	BMI
Healthy range	18.5 to 25
Underweight	Less than 18.5
Overweight	More than 25

www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/healthyweight/bmicalculator/

For the purposes of pregnancy, there are increased risks of certain complications if the BMI is less than 18 or more than 30.

Your height in cm _____ Your weight in kg _____

Your BMI _____

For more information on BMI visit
www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/healthyweight/bmicalculator/

Weight gain in pregnancy

It is important to accept that you are going to put some weight on in pregnancy, although this is normal you may be concerned about this.

The normal changes in the body during pregnancy, plus the growing baby can add an average weight gain of around 11kg (24lb).

The table below shows the **recommended** weight gain for the whole pregnancy based on your BMI. You should expect most of the weight gain to happen after the 20th week of pregnancy:

BMI at beginning of pregnancy	Recommended total weight gain
18 or less	12.5 – 18 kg (28 – 40 lbs)
19-25	11.5 – 16kg (26 – 36 lbs)
26-29	7.0 – 11.5 kg (15 – 25 lbs)
30 or more	7.0 kg (15 lbs)

The more weight you put on above the recommended amount in pregnancy, the more weight you will be left carrying after the birth of the baby. Importantly, excess weight gain also increases risks to both you and your baby during the pregnancy and the birth.

It is not recommended that you try to diet during pregnancy, but you should try to eat healthily and be as active as you can.

We can give you more information about how to eat healthy and exercise safely in pregnancy and if eligible you can be referred to the Maternal & Early Years Service. For more information about this service ask your midwife.

There is a helpful section on the Food Standards Agency “Eat well, be well” website, called “When you are Pregnant”.

www.eatwell.gov.uk/agesandstages/pregnancy



What are the problems with being underweight in pregnancy?

If you have a very low BMI in pregnancy, you have an increased chance of the following problems:

- Having a low birth weight (small) baby
- Premature birth
- Anaemia (low amount of iron in the blood)

What are the problems with being overweight in pregnancy?

If you have a high BMI in pregnancy (especially if it is higher than 30), you have an increased chance of the following problems:

- High blood pressure
- Pre-eclampsia
- Diabetes (some women can become diabetic just during pregnancy)
- Anaesthetic complications
- Having an abnormally big baby
- Blood clots in the legs or lungs (especially in the few weeks after the birth)

Although the chance of these problems is increased, it is important to remember that most women with a low or high BMI have normal, healthy babies and pregnancies.

When you see a midwife or doctor during the pregnancy, they will be checking you and the baby to try to detect whether any of these complications are developing. If you are worried, speak to the midwife or doctor and they will be able to explain things in more detail.

Our plan for your care

If your BMI is 18 or less, or 35 or more

- You will be referred for an opinion from a doctor at the hospital because of the increased chance of certain complications.
- You will not need to come to the hospital for every antenatal appointment and will probably have many of your appointments locally with your community midwife.

You can get further help and advice about your weight and healthy eating from:

- Midwives
- Children’s Centre Staff
- NHS Dudley’s Weight Management Team
- NHS Dudley’s Food & Nutrition Team
- NHS Dudley’s Physical Activity Team

Please ask if you would like to be weighed when you attend for your antenatal checks. If your BMI is over 30 you may be eligible to access the Maternal & Early Years Service who will support you at home to avoid gaining an excessive amount of weight during your pregnancy and help you to lose weight once you have had your baby.

Pregnancy is a great time for learning about healthy eating and being physically active as a whole family, this way your baby will benefit from the changes! One of the most important things we can do for our children is to give them a healthy start in life.

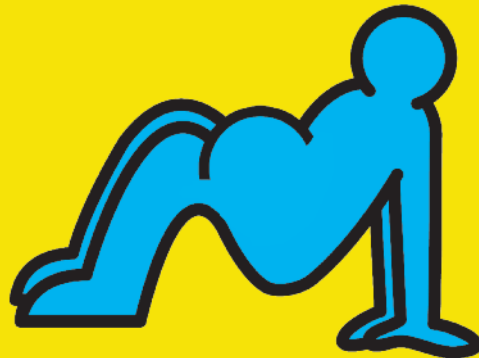
Exercise in Pregnancy

It is important to be as active as possible during pregnancy and you can exercise safely without risk to you or your baby. Gentle exercise, such as swimming, yoga and walking, can improve muscle tone and strength and can also relieve tiredness, lower back pain and reduce varicose veins and swollen ankles.

Staying fit during pregnancy helps women cope better with the physical demands of pregnancy by offsetting constipation, tiredness and circulation problems. It can help you through your labour by building muscle tone, strength and stamina and can also improve your mood and self-image; it can even help you sleep more soundly!

During pregnancy you should avoid contact sports where there is a risk of being hit in the abdomen, such as kick-boxing, martial arts or squash. If you are uncertain about what exercise is safe for you and your baby, please discuss this with your doctor or midwife. You can also get support & advice on physical activity from the Maternal & Early Years Service and if eligible, discounted leisure passes from NHS Dudley's Physical Activity Team.

There is a helpful information leaflet about exercise in pregnancy on the "Information for patients" section on the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website: www.rcog.org.uk



After the baby is born

After the pregnancy, you should try to get your weight into the healthy range. It is important to remember that you do need extra energy for breastfeeding, so you must consider this if you do decide to try to lose weight or if you are underweight. This extra energy should be calorie intake from healthy food such as fruit and vegetables.

You can get help and advice about losing weight and healthy eating from your health visitor, GP, practice nurse and NHS Dudley's Weight Management Team. Or if you BMI is over 30 you may be eligible to receive a home visit from the Maternal & Early Years Service who will support you to lose weight having had your baby and offer help, information and support on breastfeeding and weaning.

You can reduce the chance of complications in future pregnancies by trying to get your weight into the healthy range before you try for another baby and by being active with your baby you are giving them the best start to life!

The following services are available to help you lose or manage your weight (eligibility criteria apply):

Weight Watchers
Slimming World
Slimmers Kitchen
Shapes
Get Cooking!
Exercise on Referral

Please contact the Weight Management Team on 01384 366 601 for more information on any of the above services.

