



Healthy weight during pregnancy



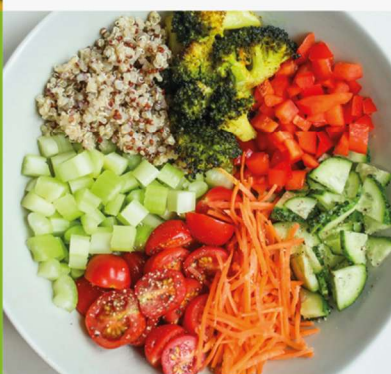
Health



Wellness



Nutrition



Support

Introduction

Nutrition plays an important role during pregnancy and our nutritional needs change at different stage. This booklet is part of a series to provide support at each stage of the journey.

Please be aware these booklets are given as guidance. Nutritional advice can be subject to change and any advice given by your midwife or a medical health professional should always be followed.

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Healthy weight during pregnancy

Carrying additional body fat is linked to an increased risk of a range of health conditions. So, if you are thinking about becoming pregnant and feel like your eating habits could be improved, this is a great time to start thinking about your diet.

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight will increase your chances of getting pregnant, reduce the risk of any complications during pregnancy, and lower the risk of miscarriage or stillbirth.

During pregnancy, the food and drink you eat will have a huge impact on you and your growing baby's health, both at birth and into adulthood. Once you are pregnant, this is not the time to lose weight. You should focus on looking after your health and your baby's development by eating healthily and keeping active. This can not only help you feel better but can also help you manage your pregnancy weight.

Nutrition plays an important role during pregnancy and nutritional needs change at each stage. Again, pregnancy is not the time to diet or restrict food as you may miss out on all the nutrients you and your baby need. 'Fad' and 'crash' diets often severely restrict your intake of some or all food groups and this can harm the development of your baby.

It's important you focus on healthy eating rather than reducing your weight. After you give birth, you can discuss with your midwife or GP about accessing support on how to lose weight effectively.

Weight gain in pregnancy

Weight gain during pregnancy is to be expected. Your body needs the additional weight to support the growing baby and ensure your baby is born at a good birthweight. This gives them the best chance of feeding well, and growing and developing normally.

The amount of weight gained in pregnancy will vary quite a lot from person to person. Some of this weight gain is due to increased body fat, which is important to protect your baby and prepare for breastfeeding. There is also the weight of the baby, placenta, amniotic fluid (the protective fluid around your baby) and the extra fluid in your blood. All these changes are important for your baby's health.

Most of this weight gain in pregnancy occurs in the second and third trimesters (week 14 onwards), with a small amount of weight gain in the first trimester (weeks 1-13). The most important thing to focus on is not gaining too much weight and not gaining weight too fast, as this can increase your risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Because everyone is different, there is not set amount of weight you should expect to gain. If you are concerned and would like more support, please peak to your midwife.

Key healthy eating advice

During pregnancy you should try to:

- aim for around 2,000 kilocalories per day
- eat a wide range of plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, nuts, seed and pulses
- eat two portions of oily fish (e.g. salmon, sardines or mackerel) per week
- Reduce your intake of saturated fat, added sugars and salt

Physical activity during pregnancy

Being active during pregnancy is another way to help manage weight, and you should try to remain as active as possible for the duration of your pregnancy. This will help use up any excess energy the body has supporting a healthy weight. It will also help improve metabolism, muscle and bone strength, and circulation for the mother and growing baby.

There is no specific form of exercise or activity you need to take part in, and anything that promotes an increase in heart rate and movement can be beneficial.

Popular exercise classes include Pilates, yoga and aqua aerobics. However, care should be taken with contact sports, or activities where there is a risk of a bump or fall, particularly to the abdominal area.

If you are finding it difficult to be more active, try standing and moving around your home or office more regularly though the day, as even simply avoiding prolonged periods of sitting down will help.

The Foodwise in Pregnancy app

The Foodwise in Pregnancy app has useful information on eating well, keeping active and achieving health weight gain in pregnancy. There are six sections to work through at your own pace, including interactive games, quizzes and tools. It also features:

- Tips and advice for achieving a healthy diet
- Practical ideas for keeping active
- Recipes, shopping tips and a meal planner
- Step-by-step exercises ideal for pregnancy

The app is free to download for iPhone and Android. Just search 'Foodwise in Pregnancy' in your usual app store.

Find out more

For all other information on healthy eating during pregnancy, speak to your midwife who will be able to advise you further, or visit the links below:

First Steps Nutrition Trust

www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years

Wigan Council Ante Natal Support

www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Health-Social-Care/Children-and-young-people/Health-and-wellbeing/Early-Years.aspx

NHS Ante Natal Support

www.wvl.nhs.uk/antenatal-information

Family Hubs

www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Education/Family-Hubs/index.aspx

If you would like to learn more or require more information and support, please get in touch!

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