



# Managing your weight in Pregnancy

## Activities

Walking is probably the easiest way to try and fit some extra activity into your daily routine, however, here are some further suggestions to help you get more active. Try and walk to the shops or walk your children (if you have any) to school. Avoid using lifts but take the stairs instead. Keep busy around the home by vacuuming and cleaning to your favourite tune and make it an impromptu workout.

If you have a garden, try and get outside and do some gentle gardening. Go for a gentle bike ride with your partner or family or just do some gentle stretching exercises to help you stay flexible.

Keep doing any activity that you were doing before you became pregnant as long as it still feels comfortable. Swimming is a great activity as the water puts less stress and strain on your joints and supports you during exercise.

Any kind of activity or movement is more beneficial than just sitting still so avoid sitting or standing for long periods. If you weren't very active before pregnancy now is a good time to start. Start by doing 15 minutes of moderate exercise 3 times a week and gradually build that up to 30 minutes of moderate exercise between 4 to 7 times a week. Moderate exercise is anything that increases your heart rate but you are still able to hold a conversation. Try and keep this level of activity up until birth and continue after your baby is born.

## Eating for a healthy pregnancy

Obesity poses a risk to you and your baby's health during pregnancy and after birth. The higher your BMI, the higher your risk. This information is about how you can minimize the risks to you and your baby in this pregnancy, and in future pregnancies. Losing even a small amount of weight can reduce your risks.

You do not need to go on a special diet during your pregnancy, but you do need to eat a well balanced healthy diet in order to provide your baby with all the essential nutrients. It is important to think about the amount you eat. You should eat in moderation, avoid skipping meals and eat regularly. If you need to snack choose healthy options.

By working closely with your health care professionals, the risks to you and your baby can be reduced. Referral to a dietician about specialist advice on healthy eating may be advised, and you should aim to

- Eat breakfast on a daily basis
- Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables daily, in place of foods higher in sugar and fat
- Base meals on starchy foods such as rice, bread, pasta or potatoes and choose wholegrain where possible
- Eat fibre rich foods such as beans, lentils grains, fruit and vegetables and choose wholegrain bread, rice and pasta
- Eat a low-fat diet and try and keep fried food to a minimum as well as sweets and other food high in sugar and fat
- Watch portion sizes, it is not necessary to 'eat for two'
- Choose healthy options for snacks

## Eating a balanced diet in pregnancy

Getting the correct balance of different food types is important to help the growth and development of your baby. The eatwell plate – below - shows the different types of food we need to eat – and in what proportions – to have a well balanced and healthy diet.



**Carbohydrates** should make up the main part of every meal as they are packed with energy and a good source of fibre

**Fruit and Vegetables** – aim to eat at least 5 portions a day. These are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre

**Protein rich foods** – aim for 1-2 portions a day, choose lean options for meat and avoid liver and pate.

**Milk and dairy** – aim for 1-2 servings a day and choose low fat options where possible. Good source of calcium

**Foods and drinks** high in fat and sugar – eat sparingly. These provide very few essential nutrients. Keep for very occasional treats

## Keeping Active

Keeping physically active is great for both your baby and yourself. You can help prepare your body for pregnancy and labour by staying active and keeping yourself strong and healthy. Exercise does not have to be an organised physical activity like aquanatal but involves all our daily activities including walking. There are many small changes you can make to your life even if you have not been very active prior to pregnancy which can help improve your health and the health of your baby.

### Benefits of being active

- You feel good, sleep better and generally have more energy
- Your muscles become stronger so you will have fewer aches and pains
- It will help improve your blood sugar control and may help prevent you getting gestational diabetes
- Your stamina will improve which will help when you are in labour
- Recovery after birth will be quicker
- You are more likely to find it easier to lose those extra pounds after your baby is born

**It is important however, to be aware that there are some situations when you should ask your doctor or midwife for advice especially if:**

- you have any serious medical conditions
- you have had any pregnancy complications
- you have had any vaginal bleeding or have a low placenta
- you have high blood pressure

## Healthier takeaways

This section is designed to give you information about making healthier choices when getting a takeaway. Most takeaways are high in saturated fats and sugar. We would therefore recommend that you keep them for special occasions as they are usually larger portion sizes than you would normally have and are often expensive compared to homemade meals.

**Burgers and chips:** Ask for them without cheese and/or mayonnaise. Choose extra salad and try chicken, fish or vegetable burgers. Avoid chips or cook oven chips at home.

**Pizza:** Avoid asking for extra cheese and cheese crusts. Go for healthier toppings like mushrooms, peppers or chicken instead of pepperoni or salami.

**Indian:** Swap cream based sauces for sauces based on tomato, onion or yoghurt. Choose chapati rather than naan bread and side dishes of lentils or vegetables. Share a main dish between two.

**Chinese:** Choose boiled rice dishes and go for a dish that includes vegetables. Avoid deep fried dishes like spring rolls and battered food.

**Kebabs or fish and chips:** These dishes contain very high levels of salt and fat.

**All of the above foods contain high levels of fat, salt and sugar and should be kept as VERY occasional food.**

Instead of...	Try.....
Fizzy drinks Squashes, cordials, juice drinks containing sugar Whole milk	Water Fruit or herbal tea Sugar-free flavoured water Sugar-free or low calorie (diet) fizzy drinks Sugar-free (or no added sugar) squash or cordials Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Sugar (white or brown)	Cutting down the amount you use Lower calorie sugar Artificial sweeteners
Butter, jam, marmalade or honey on toast	Lower-fat spread, reduced-sugar jam, sliced banana on toast
Cake or biscuits	Currant bun (no icing) or fruit loaf, oatcakes, wholegrain cereal bar or fruit
Tinned fruit in syrup	Tinned fruit in juice, fresh or frozen fruit
Breakfast cereals coated in sugar or honey	Traditional porridge oats or wholegrain cereals without sugar or honey coating, low sugar muesli or shredded wheat
Sausages, burgers, nuggets, kebabs, pies or other processed meats	A lean cut of meat or chicken Fish (oily or white) Beans and pulses (eg reduced salt and sugar baked beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils)

Instead of...	Try.....
Takeaway or fast food chips	New boiled potatoes, baked potatoes, oven chips made at home
Full fat mince	Lean mince, with fat strained off when cooking
Streaky bacon or smoked bacon	Un-smoked back bacon with fat trimmed off
Full fat cheese (eg cheddar)	Half fat or reduced fat cheese Edam or cottage cheese
Creamy or cheesy sauce	Tomato or vegetable based sauces
Butter on bread	Lower fat spread on bread. Look for ones labeled 'low in saturated fats' or high in monounsaturates or polyunsaturates
Butter,lard or ghee in cooking	Vegetable, olive or rapeseed oil
Cream or coconut cream	Reduced fat yoghurt, reduced fat crème fraiche
Icecream	Frozen low fat yoghurt
Speciality coffees (eg latte, cappuccino) made with full fat milk Hot chocolate, instant malt drinks	Decaffeinated coffees made with skimmed milk (known as skinny) or fruit/herbal tea
Instead of...	Try.....
Chocolate and sweets	Cereal bar based on oats (but not brands with loads of fat or sugar)
Crisps	Small bag of unsalted nuts or mixed fruit and nuts

Biscuits, cookies, buns, cakes, sweet pastries and doughnuts	Oatcakes or rye crisp bread, with lower-fat spread, fruit loaf or bun (no icing), plain semi-sweet biscuit e.g. rich tea, plain digestive or fruit oat biscuit
Full fat yoghurts	Fresh fruit e.g. banana, apple, grapes, pear, orange, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, blueberries, peach, pineapple, plum; raw chopped vegetables, low-fat yoghurt

**Making smart choices about snacks can help you feel fuller for longer so you will feel the need to snack less between meals.**

#### **Some important points to remember!**

- **Women think that in pregnancy fruit juice is a good option, but be** aware that you should have no more than one full glass per day as it is high in natural sugars. Fresh fruit juices with pulp are the best options and try and avoid those with added sugar or those that are 'made from concentrate'.

Studies have shown that people who skip breakfast are more likely to have problems controlling their weight than those who regularly eat breakfast. Our bodies have been fasting overnight and if we don't eat we are more likely to feel tired and hungry and are therefore more likely to overeat later