

Before pregnancy	<p>Most women who are overweight have a straightforward pregnancy/birth and have healthy babies. However, if you are overweight or obese, the best way to protect yours and your baby's health is to lose weight before you become pregnant.</p> <p>A Body Mass Index (BMI) - see definition overleaf - of 18.5-24.9 is considered a healthy weight, a BMI of 25-29.9 is considered overweight and a person with a BMI of 30 or above is considered to be obese. If you are trying for a baby (or there may be a chance of you getting pregnant) and have a BMI of 30 or above, the best advice is to try and achieve a healthy weight before you get pregnant.</p> <p>By reaching a healthy weight, you increase your chances of conceiving naturally and reduce your risk of the problems associated with being overweight in pregnancy such as miscarriage and gestational diabetes. Speak to a Healthcare Professional, or visit the websites over the page, for advice on healthy weight.</p>
During pregnancy	<p>The best advice we can give you is to eat healthily and be active during your pregnancy, as it will benefit both you and your baby.</p> <p>Trying to lose weight by dieting during pregnancy is not recommended. If you are overweight, by making healthy changes to what you eat, you may not gain any weight during pregnancy and you may even lose a small amount. This is not harmful. Midwives can offer lots of positive support and advice to pregnant women around healthy eating – don't be afraid to ask.</p> <p>If you are not used to being active you should begin with about 15 minutes of continuous 'moderate' activity, three times per week, increasing gradually to 150 minutes. Moderate means being active to a level where you feel warmer and slightly out of breath. Some examples of healthy activity include swimming, walking and housework.</p>
After pregnancy	<p>The best advice we can give you is to continue to eat healthily and be as active as possible.</p> <p>When you're feeling tired, being active may seem like the last thing you want to do. But regular activity can relax you, keep you fit and help you feel more energetic. It can also help your body recover after childbirth.</p> <p>If you had a straightforward birth, you can start gentle exercise as soon as you feel up to it. This could include walking, gentle stretches, pelvic floor and tummy exercises. It's usually a good idea to wait until after your 6-week postnatal check before you start any high-impact exercise, such as running. If you had any complications during delivery or a caesarean, your recovery time will be longer. Talk to your midwife, health visitor or GP for advice.</p> <p>How you choose to feed your baby is your choice. It is recommended that a baby is exclusively breastfed for 6 months. It is possible to breast feed whatever your weight. Breastfeeding increases the chance of you and your baby becoming a healthy weight. It is recommended that you start weaning your baby from 6 months old. The change4life website has lots of tips for how to do this.</p>

***"Our vision is for all families in North Cumbria to be valued, happy and healthy.
We all want the very best for our families"***

Further Information on:

Healthy Weight before, during and after pregnancy

What is BMI?	BMI is your body mass index, which is a measure of your weight in relation to your height. To calculate your BMI visit the website here .
What are the risks of high BMI in pregnancy?	Having an underweight or overweight BMI can affect your fertility, cause health problems during pregnancy and affect your child's future health. Most women who are overweight or obese have a straightforward pregnancy and birth and have healthy babies. However, with a higher BMI, there is an increased risk of thrombosis, gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, induction of labour, caesarean birth, anaesthetic complications, wound infections and mental health problems.
What is thrombosis?	Thrombosis is a blood clot in your legs or in your lungs which can be life threatening. Pregnancy itself increases your risk of developing thrombosis. If you are overweight or obese the risk is increased further. Try not to worry, your risk for thrombosis will be assessed at your first antenatal appointment.
What is gestational diabetes?	Diabetes is where your body struggles to deal with the sugar in your diet. Diabetes that is first diagnosed in pregnancy is known as gestational diabetes. If your BMI is 30 or above you are three times more likely to develop gestational diabetes compared with women with a BMI under 25. You may be offered a test for gestational diabetes during your pregnancy.
What do I do if I feel I may be suffering from mental health problems?	Research suggests that some women who are overweight or obese may find it difficult to maintain mental wellbeing during pregnancy. As this is common, all pregnant women are asked some questions about their mental health at their appointments with the midwife. Support is available if you need it. If you have any problems after the birth of your baby, don't hesitate to ask for advice from your midwife, GP or health visitor.
What are the risks to the baby?	Most women who are overweight or obese have healthy babies, but for some, it can increase the risk of problems for the baby, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spina bifida • Heavier babies (who are more likely to experience an unhealthy weight themselves as they get older) • Stillbirth If you are overweight or obese then it can be more difficult to examine your baby by scan and you may also need extra scans during your pregnancy to check on your baby's growth. If you become pregnant with a BMI of 30 or above you should take 5mg folic acid daily for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. This higher dose is only available on prescription from a doctor.
What can partners and wider family do to help?	If there's a chance you could become pregnant, or are trying to become pregnant, and want to lose weight, family and friends can help you to eat more healthily and be active. If your partner is overweight, they may also want to try and achieve a healthy BMI. All parents and carers are role models. Research shows that parents who are overweight or obese are more likely to have overweight or obese children. You are more likely to achieve and maintain a healthy weight if your family and friends encourage you. It's not always easy to choose healthy options, but making simple changes can help. The Change4life website offers lots of advice. Also, if you are referred to a weight management programme you may want to ask your partner, friend or family member to attend with you for support.
Links to further information and advice:	<p>Before Pregnancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS guide to 'Planning Your Pregnancy' • Tommy's 'Are you Ready' Planning for Pregnancy Tool <p>During Pregnancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS guide to overweight and pregnancy • Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists – Being Overweight in pregnancy and birth <p>After Pregnancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat Well Guide: