



# Information for patients

## Introduction

This information leaflet gives you information and guidance about your health during pregnancy and other services that can also offer support during your pregnancy and after the birth of your baby.

## Healthy Weight

You will have your height and weight measured at the beginning of your pregnancy at your initial appointment with the midwife. From the measurement your Body Mass Index (BMI) will be calculated and this will then help to determine the best type of care to suit you.

Classification	BMI (kg / m <sup>2</sup> )
Healthy weight	18.5–24.9
Overweight	25–29.9
Obesity I	30–34.9
Obesity II	35–39.9
Obesity III	40 or more

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

We want to support you to get the most from the maternity team caring for you and to help you to reduce any risks to you and your baby's health during pregnancy and afterwards.

If you do have an increased BMI you may be at risk of pregnancy complications occurring for you and for your baby.

These include:

- Increased risk of miscarriage
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes in pregnancy
- Shoulder dystocia (baby's shoulder becoming stuck at delivery)
- Failed epidural or spinal anaesthesia
- Thrombosis (blood clot)
- Inefficient labour which could lead to an increased risk of having caesarean section and excessive bleeding after baby is born
- Wound infection

For baby the risk factors include:

- High birth weight
- Poor health at birth due to difficulties during pregnancy, labour or the birth
- Long-term weight problems for the child

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Whilst it is important that you do not try to diet and set out to lose weight during your pregnancy there are some very useful changes to your everyday routine and what you eat, which can mean that your baby's growth follows a healthy pattern. This also means that you do not gain excessive weight, which can be very difficult to lose once your baby is born.

You may decide to access additional support from a Weight Management programme and you can discuss this with your Midwife or GP who will offer advice regarding this.

If your BMI is 40 or above you will be referred to an anaesthetist who will need to explain some difficulties associated with being overweight in pregnancy, which could be a factor in an emergency situation.

We do understand that it can be difficult to talk to someone about your weight. We want to support you with clear advice and to help you feel your best at this important time in your life.

All the staff will be sensitive towards you and your personal situation and please be assured of our discretion at all times.

## Physical Activity

Unless you have been advised by your doctor not to exercise for a very particular reason, exercise to keep fit and healthy during pregnancy is important for every woman, for your well-being and that of your baby. It also means that your body can be more prepared for the physical demands of labour, birth and the early days as a new mother with your baby.

Ask your midwife for more information about exercise sessions in your area, which are suitable for pregnant women.

## Healthy Start

Healthy Start entitles you to free weekly vouchers to spend on milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins. To qualify for Healthy Start vouchers you must be at least 10 weeks pregnant and you or your family receives:

- Income Support, or
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance, or
- Income related Employment & Support Allowance, or
- Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) & has a family income of £16,190 or less
- You also qualify if you are under 18 years of age and pregnant, even if you are not receiving any of the above benefits or tax credits. For more information on Healthy Start scheme [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

It is recommended that all women take a supplement of folic acid until the end of your 12th week of pregnancy. To ensure you have sufficient supply of Vitamin D for you and your baby, it is recommended that you take a multivitamin supplement suitable for pregnant women throughout the whole of your pregnancy. You will find this in your Healthy Start vitamins that

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are issued to you by the midwife at your initial appointment for further supplies of these discuss access to them with your Midwife.

### Smoking

Protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is one of the best things you can do to give your child a healthy start in life. It's never too late to stop smoking.

When you see the midwife at your antenatal appointments you will be asked to undertake a carbon monoxide reading test at each appointment regardless of whether you smoke or not. If you do smoke you will be referred to the local Stop Smoking Services and even if you have not smoked within the last year a referral is still made so support can still be offered and the Stop Smoking Service will contact you and discuss your options.

There are a variety of ways to help you stop smoking including 1:1 appointments, home visits, telephone support & information by post.

Other family members can also be supported to stop at the same time and this support continues after the baby is born.

The Hospital Trust has a strict Non-Smoking Policy and smoking is not allowed anywhere within the Hospital grounds.

### Alcohol and Drugs

All can affect your baby's growth and development and can cause miscarriage and stillbirth. For more information about drugs and alcohol visit NHS Choices.

### Sexual Health

Sexual health is an important part of your health and your baby's health. As part of your antenatal care you will be offered routine tests for your health. These will include tests to detect Hepatitis B, Syphilis and HIV. Chlamydia screening will also be offered on a routine urine sample.

However there are other sexually transmitted infections (STI) that are not normally tested for but that can affect you and your baby's health and may cause you discharge or pain and discomfort. Therefore it's important to discuss with your midwife if you are concerned re any symptoms you may have so a confidential sexual health check- up can be arranged. Discuss this with your GP or Midwife.

### Dental Care and Free Prescriptions

All pregnant women get free prescriptions and Free **NHS** dental care only during pregnancy and for one year afterwards. Your midwife will complete a medical exemption form for you so you are entitled to this. It is important to see a Dentist if you are not already registered with one.

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## Any Comments, Compliments, Concerns or Complaints

If you have any other concerns please talk to your nurse, therapist or doctor. Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are available on 03033 306518 (Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Goole). You can also contact [nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

As a Trust we value equality of access to our information and services, therefore alternative formats available on request at [nlg-tr.interpreters@nhs.net](mailto:nlg-tr.interpreters@nhs.net)

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