

Core messages to promote a healthier weight for women of childbearing age and those planning a pregnancy

Why is a healthier weight important?

What happens before and during pregnancy impacts on a child's physical and emotional health all the way through to adulthood. Research shows that women who are obese when they become pregnant face an increased risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Babies born to women with obesity are at a higher risk of future obesity.



Daily supplements:

- 400 micrograms daily of folic acid before and during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- Do not take supplements containing vitamin A or eat liver or liver products.
- At risk individuals such as people with dark skin from African, African-Caribbean and south Asian backgrounds or people who get little or no sun exposure are advised to take a supplement of vitamin D.



Every cigarette is harmful to both mother and baby. Stopping smoking completely will help immediately, removing harmful gases such as carbon monoxide and other damaging chemicals. Offer a referral to a local stop smoking service. The safest approach for women planning a pregnancy is not to drink alcohol at all.



Eat healthier – Promote the Eatwell Guide. Foods and drinks high in fat, salt and sugar should be eaten infrequently.



Encourage women and partners to plan pregnancies to achieve a healthier weight before and between subsequent pregnancies. Ensure access to contraceptive advice and for individuals with excess weight gain, offer a referral to a local weight management service.



Undertake **strengthening activities** in major muscle groups on at least **two days a week**. Accumulate at least **150 minutes moderate intensity**, 75 minutes vigorous intensity activity, shorter amounts vigorous intensity activity or a combination each week. Minimise long periods on inactivity.



Core antenatal healthy weight management messages to promote during pregnancy

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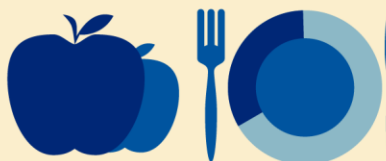
Obese women may also experience reduced choices about where and how they give birth.



Measure BMI - Measure and record weight and height at the first contact with the pregnant woman, being sensitive to any concerns expressed about her weight. Do not weigh repeatedly. Only weigh again if clinical management can be influenced or if nutrition is a concern.



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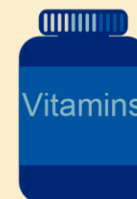


Eat for you, not for two.

Only in the last 3 months of pregnancy do a woman's energy needs increase by around 200 calories a day. **Promote the Eatwell guide.** Dieting is not recommended during pregnancy.



Be active - Recommended physical activity levels should also be achieved during pregnancy, with activity types reflecting pre-pregnancy activity (i.e. not vigorous if previously inactive).



Daily supplements:

- 400 micrograms daily of folic acid before and during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- Do not take supplements containing vitamin A or eat liver or liver products.
- Promote the Healthy Start Scheme to those who are eligible.
- At risk individuals such as people with dark skin from African, African-Caribbean and south Asian backgrounds or people who get little or no sun exposure are advised to take a supplement of vitamin D.



Core messages to promote a healthier weight from birth to six months

Why is a healthier weight important?

Research shows that children who stay a healthy weight and lead a healthy lifestyle tend to be fitter, healthier, have better attendance in school, and, be more self-confident.

They are also much less likely to have weight-related health problems in later life.



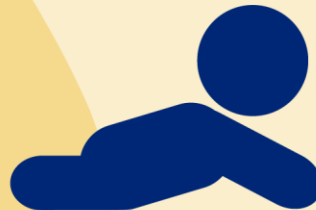
Ensure babies are weighed at birth and in the first week. Healthy babies should usually be weighed at 8, 12 and 16 weeks. If there is concern, weigh more often, but no more than once a month. Record all growth measurements in the parent-or carer- held Personal Child Health Record.



Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for around the first 6 months. Before six months, if individuals feel that their baby is not satisfied with their usual milk feeds, **encourage additional milk feeds rather than giving solids too early.**



From birth to 6 months, all breastfed babies should be given a daily supplement of vitamin D (8.5 to 10mcg). But if your baby is having more than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day, they do not need a supplement because formula is already fortified with vitamin D.



Babies need to **be active from birth** in a variety of ways, including **at least 30 minutes tummy time** across the day and interactive floor-based activity (e.g. crawling).



Parents should take their child to the **dentist when the first tooth erupts**

Parents should be advised to brush teeth with a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste.



Core messages to promote a healthier weight from six months to aged four

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Infants should be active as per guidelines from birth. From 1-year old children should spend **at least 180 minutes** across day in a variety of activities indoors and outdoors. From 3 years this should include at least 60 minutes moderate-to-vigorous activity.



From six months onwards, encourage drinking from a free-flow cup, instead of a bottle. Many fruit and juice drinks (including baby and toddler ones) are high in sugar and should be avoided (to prevent tooth decay). Water is a much healthier option.



Breast or formula milk should be your baby's main drink until one years old. Continue offering usual milk feeds alongside solid foods from 6 months to one year. There's no need to offer toddler milks, growing-up milks or goodnight milks.



How much an infant eats depends on their appetite. Signals for when they might be full include, turning their head away from the food or clamping their mouth shut.



At around six months old babies will need to start solid foods – introduce a range of flavours and textures from the start. Ensure salt or sugar is not added to food or drinks.



If weight is a concern, parents/carers can assess the BMI centile of an individual child from age 2 years using the NHS Choices Healthy Weight Calculator.



All children aged six months to five years should be given **daily vitamin supplements containing vitamins A, C and D.** Promote the Healthy Start scheme for those eligible.



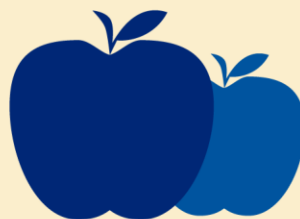
Core messages to promote a healthier weight for school age children

Why is a healthier weight important?

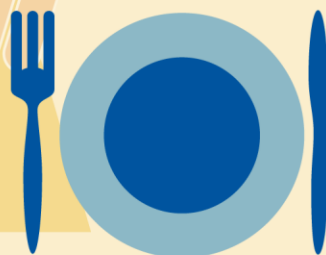
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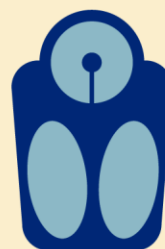
Encourage families to **prepare healthy meals at home**. Recommend reading food labels, using healthier ingredients, and controlling how much sugar, fat and salt is used.



Promote the Eatwell Guide to support individuals to get the **healthy balanced diet**. Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar should be consumed infrequently and in small amounts.



Ensure **portion sizes** are appropriate. When buying package snacks promote snacks with no more than 100 kcals, and two a day maximum.



For those children above the 91st BMI centile, offer to make a referral to a **local weight management service**.



Children and young people (5-18 years) should engage in **at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity activity per day** averaged across the week. They should do a variety of activities across the week to develop movement, fitness and strength. They should minimise long periods of not moving.



Children, young people and their parents/carers should be made aware that drinking alcohol, even at age 15 or older, can be hazardous to health. An **alcohol-free childhood is the healthiest and best option**.



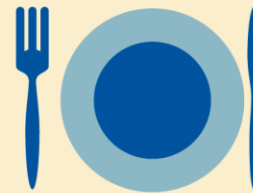
Core messages to promote a healthier weight for parents and carers

How can parents/ carers support children and young people to achieve a healthier weight?

One of the most powerful ways to encourage children and young people to eat a healthy balanced diet and be active is to advise parents/carers to lead by example and be positive role models. Any changes to a child's diet and lifestyle are much more likely to be accepted if they involve the whole family.



Eat healthier - Promote the Eatwell Guide. Foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugars should be eaten infrequently.



Healthier weight - Individuals with excess weight or who are at particular risk of obesity can be supported by a health and care professional. Offer to make a referral to a local weight management service.



Be active - Undertake **strengthening activities** in major muscle groups on at least **two days a week**. Accumulate at least **150 minutes moderate intensity**, 75 minutes vigorous intensity activity, shorter amounts vigorous intensity activity or a combination each week. Minimise long periods of inactivity.



Oral health - Women are entitled to free NHS dental treatment during pregnancy and before the baby is one year old. NHS dental treatment is free for individuals 18 or under 19 years and in qualifying full-time education.



Mental health - Encourage parents and carers to be aware of their emotional wellbeing, knowing when they should seek help and have support systems in place can help prevent issues becoming more serious.



Sleep - Advise individuals about sleep hygiene (including having a healthy bedtime routine, avoiding caffeine and reducing activity before sleep).



Smoking and alcohol - Offer a referral to a local stop smoking service. The safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all. For those who do drink recommend no more than 14 units per week.