

It is strongly recommended that you are seen by the dietitian if your BMI is less than 18 or 30 or more. Ask your midwife about the service available.

Pregnancy is a great time for learning about healthy eating, as the whole family, as well as you and your baby, can all benefit from the changes! One of the most important things we can do for our children is to give them a healthy start in life.

Exercise in pregnancy

It is important to be as active as possible during pregnancy and you can exercise safely without risk to you or your baby. Gentle exercise, such as swimming, yoga and walking, can improve muscle tone and strength and can also relieve tiredness, lower back pain and reduce varicose veins and swollen ankles.



During pregnancy you should avoid contact sports where there is a risk of being hit in the abdomen, such as kick-boxing, martial arts or squash. If you are uncertain about what exercise is safe for you and your baby, please discuss this with your doctor or midwife.

There is a helpful information leaflet about exercise in pregnancy on the "Information for patients" section on the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website www.rcog.org.uk

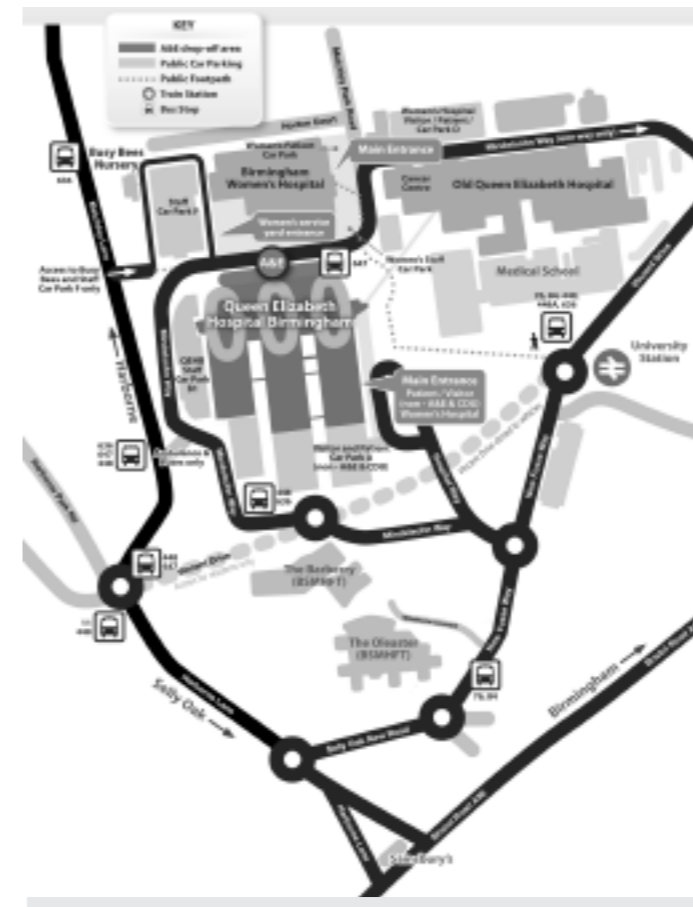
After the baby is born

After the pregnancy you should try to get your weight into the healthy range. It is important to remember that you do need extra energy for breast feeding, so you must consider this if you do decide to try to lose weight or if you are underweight.

You can get help and advice about losing weight and healthy eating from your health visitor, GP or practice nurse.

In some areas of Birmingham there are free weight loss groups for new mothers, called "Size Down". You can get information about these by calling 0121 446 1021 (Birmingham Community Nutrition & Dietetic Dept) or from your Health Visitor or local Children's Centre.

You can reduce the chance of complications in future pregnancies by trying to get your weight into the healthy range before you try for another baby.



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Authors:
P Jordan, M Revel-Maton, P Clarke

Birmingham Women's **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TG
Tel: 0121 472 1377 Fax: 0121 627 2602

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Pregnancy & Your Weight



Congratulations on being pregnant. We hope your pregnancy will be healthy and enjoyable.

Eating a healthy diet is especially important in pregnancy as the unborn baby has to get everything it needs to grow and develop from its mother

Many women's weight will be higher or lower than the healthy range when they become pregnant and this can affect the pregnancy as well as the woman's general health.

A patient information leaflet

What is a healthy weight ?

This depends on how tall you are, and we will use a calculation that tells us about your weight in relation to your height. This measurement is called Body Mass Index (BMI) and it is calculated by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared.

www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/healthyweight/BMIcalculator

BMI	Healthy range	18.5 to 25
	Underweight	less than 18.5
	Overweight	More than 25

For the purposes of pregnancy we believe that there are increased risks of certain complications if the BMI is less than 18 or more than 35.

Your height in cm

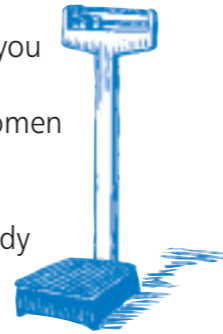
Your weight in kg

Your BMI

Weight gain in pregnancy

It is important to accept that you are going to put weight on in pregnancy, although some women may be concerned about this.

The normal changes in the body during pregnancy and the growing baby can add up to an average weight gain of around 11kg (24 lb).



The table below shows the **recommended** weight gain for the whole pregnancy based on your BMI. You should expect most of the weight gain to happen after the 20th week of pregnancy.

BMI at beginning of pregnancy	Recommended total weight gain
18 or less	12.5 - 18 kg (28 - 40 lbs)
19-25	11.5 - 16 kg (26 - 36 lbs)
26-29	7.0 - 11.5 kg (15 - 25 lbs)
30 or more	5.0 - 9.0 kg (11 - 20 lbs)

The more weight you put on above the recommended amount in pregnancy, the more weight you will be left carrying after the birth of the baby.

It is not recommended that you try to diet during pregnancy but you should try to eat healthily and be as active as you can.

We can give you more information about how to have a healthy diet and exercise safely in pregnancy.

There is a helpful section on the Food Standards Agency "Eat well, be well" website, called "When you are Pregnant"

www.eatwell.gov.uk/agesandstages/pregnancy



What are the problems with being underweight in pregnancy?

If you have a low BMI in pregnancy you have an increased **chance** of the following problems:

- Having a low birth weight (small) baby
- Premature birth
- Anaemia (low amount of iron in the blood)

What are the problems with being overweight in pregnancy?

If you have a high BMI in pregnancy (especially if it is higher than 35), you have an increased chance of the following problems:

- High blood pressure
- Pre-eclampsia
- Diabetes (some women can become diabetic just during pregnancy)
- Anaesthetic complications
- Having a big baby
- Blood clots in the legs or lungs (especially in the few weeks after the birth)

Although the chance of these problems is increased, it is important to remember that most women have normal, healthy babies and pregnancies.

When you see a midwife or doctor during the pregnancy, they will be checking you and the baby to try to detect whether any of these complications are developing. If you are worried, speak to the midwife or doctor and they will be able to explain things in more detail.

Our plan for your care

If your BMI is 18 or less, or 35 or more

- You will be booked for your care with a Consultant at the hospital because of the increased chance of certain complications.
- You may be seen by a midwife when you attend for your appointments. She will be able to discuss your care with the doctors, or ask them to see you, if she is concerned about any problems
- You will not need to come to the hospital every time but may have many of your appointments locally with your community midwife.
- Ask if you would like to be weighed when you attend for your antenatal checks

You can get further help and advice about your weight and healthy eating from:

- Midwives
- Children's Centre Staff
- Health Information (by hospital entrance)