

If you are overweight at the start of pregnancy, gaining too much weight during pregnancy may put you and your baby at risk of health problems. These problems can affect your pregnancy, labour and you and your baby's health throughout life. Pregnancy provides you with the opportunity to make changes regarding your lifestyle, with immediate and long-term effects for you and your family. This is especially important if your BMI is more than 30.

In view of your increased BMI you will be attending a Consultant clinic as you are unsuitable for low risk midwifery led care. You may be able to have modified shared care with you GP and the hospital consultant. You may also be referred to other hospital specialist if there are any underlying medical problems.

If required, a referral may be made to a dietician whom you can attend as an outpatient.

With a BMI over 35 you will be unsuitable for birth in a Midwifery Led Unit as this is used by low risk pregnant women. The most appropriate place for birth is the Labour Ward.

With a BMI over 40 a referral will be made for you to see an anaesthetist who will check your spine and neck to assess suitability for anaesthesia if an epidural/spinal/general anaesthetic is required.

### **For more information**

[www.tommys.org](http://www.tommys.org) - free booklet 'Managing your weight in pregnancy'

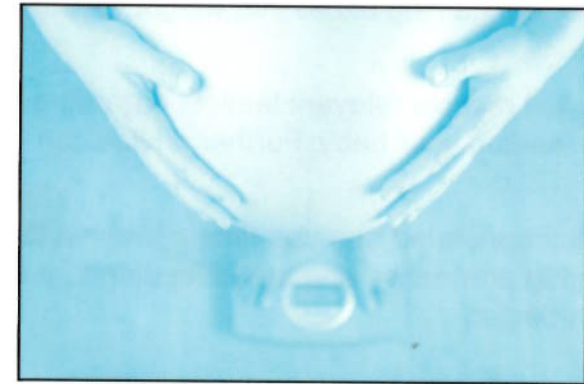
[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/pregnancy.pdf](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/pregnancy.pdf) - British Dietetic Association for lots of information and links to useful dietary advice

[www.nhs.uk/pregnancy](http://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy)

[www.babycentre.co.uk](http://www.babycentre.co.uk)

[www.eatingforpregnancy.org.uk](http://www.eatingforpregnancy.org.uk)

## **Being Overweight and Pregnant**



## **Achieving a Healthy Pregnancy and Safe Birth**

## Obesity in pregnancy

Pregnancy is generally a happy period in a woman's life, full of excitement but also some worries. Women are inundated with information about healthy lifestyle to achieve the best possible outcome for her and her baby.

Weight gain in pregnancy can be a very sensitive issue for a lot of women. Although it is generally acceptable to gain 25-35lbs during pregnancy, women who are already overweight are putting themselves and their baby at a possible risk of various complications during pregnancy and birth.

Pre pregnancy weight loss is the optimal aim, but weight loss is not advisable whilst pregnant. You can still help by maintaining your current weight or not gaining excessive weight, through dietary and healthy lifestyle.

At booking you will receive relevant leaflets regarding nutrition, exercising and feeding your baby. Further advice can be found in [The Pregnancy Book](#).

It will also be recommended that you take a Vitamin D/Calcium supplement during pregnancy and breastfeeding that will be prescribed by a doctor.

### Pregnancy weight gain

- 7-9lbs of baby
- 2lbs of placenta
- 2lbs of amniotic fluid
- 4-5lbs of increased blood volume
- 2lbs uterine enlargement
- 2-4lbs of fluid in maternal tissues
- 1lb of breast enlargement to prepare for breastfeeding
- Any remaining pounds are a general deposit of fat.

Your Body Mass Index (BMI) is an indicator of body fat based on height and weight. Your BMI will be calculated at your booking appointment.

### BMI = weight (kg)/ Height (m)

BMI Less than 24.9 - Normal

BMI 25-29.9 - Overweight

BMI 30-35 - Obese

BMI 35 -40 - Severely obese

BMI over 40 - Morbidly obese

## Risks

Obesity has been recognised as a risk factor for developing complications in pregnancy and childbirth (CEMACH, 2007) such as

### MUM

- High blood pressure
- Pre-eclampsia
- Diabetes - a random blood sugar will be taken at 12 & 28 weeks
- Backache, pelvic and joint pains
- Blood clot
- Preterm labour
- Higher risk of failed induction
- Higher risk of caesarean section
- Wound infections
- Anaesthetic problems.

### BABY

- Poor ultrasound images - unable to see fetal structures
- Increased birth weight - that can lead to:-
  - Difficult delivery of shoulders
  - Obesity in childhood
  - IUD (intrauterine death).