

CMACE/RCOG Joint Guideline management of women with obesity in pregnancy

Maternal obesity has become one of the most commonly occurring risk factors in obstetric practice. Obesity in pregnancy is usually defined as a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 kg/m or more at the first antenatal consultation. BMI is a simple index of weight-for-height and is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by the square of their height in metres (kg/m²). There are three different classes of obesity: BMI 30.0–34.9 (Class I); BMI 35.0–39.9 (Class 2); and BMI 40 and over (Class 3 or morbid obesity), which recognise the continuous relationship between BMI and morbidity and mortality.

While the majority of the recommendations within this guideline pertain to women with a BMI 30, some recommendations are specific to women in the higher classes of obesity only. Obese women with a BMI below the threshold specified may also benefit from the particular recommendation; however, the chosen BMI cut-offs reflect careful consideration given to the balance of medical intervention versus risk, differences in local prevalence of maternal obesity, and resource implications for local healthcare organisations. Local maternity services may wish to implement these standards for all women with maternal obesity after consideration of these issues.

The recommendations cover interventions prior to conception, during and after pregnancy.

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Target group

Health professionals

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