



Weigh
to a healthy
pregnancy

Welcome to the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy programme

The Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy programme aims to help pregnant women with a high BMI to manage weight gain safely during pregnancy. As part of this programme, we will offer you extra support from a midwife, dietitian and physiotherapist and we will encourage you to record your weight on a weekly basis at home. As well as helping you to control your weight gain throughout your pregnancy, we hope that once your baby is born you will be able to maintain a healthier lifestyle.

You will naturally put on weight in pregnancy as your baby grows, but we will help you keep within the healthy range, as this will improve your health and your baby's, both now and in the future. We don't want you to try to lose weight by dieting; we just want you to look after yourself and your baby by eating healthily and keeping active. By making healthy changes, you will feel better and will help your baby to have a great environment in which to grow.

Why weight matters

Many people in Northern Ireland struggle with their weight, and making changes to eat a healthier diet and become more physically active is something that we all need to do. It is recommended that you maintain a healthy BMI. This stands for Body Mass Index (see page 4) and is a calculation based on your weight and height measurements that health professionals use to work out whether you are a healthy weight.

Having a BMI over 30 can put you at increased risk of pregnancy complications, such as gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia. These conditions can also create problems for your baby, including increased risk of being born prematurely and of being stillborn. With some extra support from the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team, you will be helped to reduce your risks and find out about eating well, what physical activity is recommended and how making changes will help you stay within the recommended amount of weight gain during pregnancy. This will also help you reduce your weight after your baby is born.

Pregnancy weight gain recommendations

If your BMI is very high (over 30), it is recommended that you make any necessary lifestyle changes to help ensure your pregnancy weight gain is within Institute of Medicine guidelines as seen in the table below.

BMI category	Total pregnancy weight gain
18.5–24.9 (healthy)	25–35lbs (11.5–16kg)
25–29.9 (overweight)	15–25lbs (7–11.5 kg)
30 + (very overweight)	11–20lbs (5–9 kg)

*See: www.pha.site/acog-weight-gain

How the *Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy* programme works

After your booking visit, a midwife or dietitian from the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team will see you or contact you by phone and explain what we can do to help.

You will be asked to record your weight every week during your pregnancy and for 10 weeks after your baby is born. Your Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy midwife or dietitian will ask about your weight when they see you or speak with you on the phone. This allows both you and your Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team to see your progress to help ensure your weight gain remains within the recommendations above.

The Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team will remain in contact with you (either face-to-face or by telephone) on a 4–6 week basis throughout your whole pregnancy.

Between 16–18 weeks of pregnancy you will be contacted by the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy dietitian and offered an appointment to see how we can help and what information might be helpful to you.

From 20 weeks of pregnancy onwards, your Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy midwife or dietitian will discuss with you how often you would like to see her and if you prefer

a telephone call or text or to see her face to face. This is usually every four weeks, so she can offer support and answer any questions you may have.

We can also arrange for you to meet with the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team in a small group with other pregnant women who are having Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy support. You will be very welcome to bring your partner, your mum or a friend to any contacts with the team or group sessions.

If you would like to see a physiotherapist because of any problems with backache, urinary control or pelvic pain we can arrange for you to see the physiotherapist linked to the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team.

Your physiotherapist will also be able to provide you with information on the type of exercise suitable for you.

You will be offered a further appointment with your midwife or dietitian between 24–32 weeks, this can be either face-to-face or by phone/text.

At around 36–40 weeks, the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy midwife will make contact with you to discuss any worries you may have before your baby is born.

Finally, when your baby is 6–10 weeks old, you will be offered an appointment to see your dietitian and discuss options for ongoing support.

What other mums think

The Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy programme has been running for a number of years now and many women have benefited by making healthy changes and being able to keep their pregnancy weight gain to within the recommended guidelines.

'They were great and I knew I could ring them at any time.'

'I didn't want people to scold me for putting on weight while I was pregnant, but they explained to me that it wouldn't be like that and that made me feel a lot more comfortable about it.'

'...she gave me healthier options and that was fantastic.'

'She asked me about what I felt my triggers were for eating... she also talked about emotional eating... so it was good to chat about those things.'

'The group interaction was the best and the physio was excellent... she did fitness tests and it did make you feel you were doing OK.'



Making changes – your personal goal plan

It can take time to develop healthy habits. It helps if you start with realistic changes and then treat yourself to a reward for your success. Some people find it helpful to write down what they want to achieve. This can be your personal plan. You don't need to show it to anyone unless you want to.

Goal	When and how long will I do it?	My reward will be	What could stop me doing it?	What will help me do it?	How did I get on? What helped?
Example: I will eat less crisps and replace with fruit	Start on Monday and keep going for two weeks	Going to the cinema	Not bringing fruit to work	Preparing a healthy snack to take on the go	
Example: I will swim more	Fridays – twice a week for month	A manicure	Not making time to get to the pool	Going to the pool straight after work	

Please record your weekly weight here

(Recommended total pregnancy weight gain for women with a high BMI is 5–9 kgs or 11–20lbs)

Number of weeks pregnant	Date	Your weight in stones and lbs or kilos
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		

Number of weeks pregnant	Date	Your weight in stones and lbs or kilos
32		
33		
34		
35		
36		
37		
38		
39		
40		
41		
Weeks after the birth		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

The Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy team

Your dietitian

Name

Telephone number

Your midwives

Names

Telephone numbers

Your physiotherapist

Name

Telephone number

Find out more about a healthy lifestyle in pregnancy

Tommy's is a UK organisation that funds research into pregnancy problems and it also provides very useful pregnancy health information to expectant and new parents. You can visit the Tommy's website to find out more about how to stay healthy during your pregnancy.

For information on eating well, see www.tommys.org/healthy-eating-tips

For information on weight management in pregnancy,
see www.tommys.org/overweight

For information on how to boost your health through exercise, see
www.tommys.org/all-about-exercise-pregnancy



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:

