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Thinking of having a baby?: Weight Management and Pregnancy

Obesity and Pregnancy:

How to optimise your health before Pregnancy

Obesity is when you are very overweight and your body mass index, or BMI, is greater than 30. BMI is a measure of your weight in relation to your height. **To work out your BMI: divide your weight in kilograms (kg) by your height in metres (m) then divide the answer by your height again to get your BMI.** You can see your doctor if you are thinking of having a baby in order to take measures to control your weight before you become pregnant. If you are already overweight you will be monitored and given advice by your midwife and doctor team. Don't try to lose weight during your pregnancy, as this may not be safe.

Here is a brief overview of the risks:

With obesity, there is a higher chance of the following conditions during pregnancy; diabetes, high blood pressure, blood clots, congenital abnormalities, delayed wound healing, pre-eclampsia (which is a disorder of high blood pressure and can affect your organs such as the kidneys). Also you may have a larger baby and less choice about where and how you give birth, for example, there may be restrictions on home births, the use of birthing pools and types of pain relief that can be given. Being overweight can also lead to subsequent obesity and diabetes of your baby later in life. By following the advice below and overleaf, these risks can be minimised:

Weight loss programmes are **NOT** recommended once you are pregnant as they may harm the health of your unborn child. Good sources of information and advice about diet and physical activity for women before, during and after pregnancy include: 'The pregnancy book', 'Birth to five' and the 'Eat well' website. Losing 5-10% of your weight before pregnancy would have significant health benefits and could increase your chances of getting pregnant.

Keep active! During pregnancy, moderate-intensity physical activity will not harm you or your unborn child. At least 30 minutes per day of moderate intensity exercise is recommended. The aim is to stay fit, rather than to reach peak fitness. If you have not exercised routinely before then you should begin with no more than 15 minutes of continuous exercise, three times a week, increasing gradually to daily 30-minute sessions. If you previously exercised regularly before pregnancy, you should be able to continue with no adverse effects and there are lots of support groups in the area.

Local Voluntary Services

Service	Description	Contact Details
Anna Freud Centre	Collection of services for families. Social Care.	0207 794 2313
Bikur Cholem	Orthodox Jewish MH Support Network/Services	020 8800 7575
Bump Buddies	Shoreditch Trust based support network	http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/bump-buddies/
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services	GP Referral
Children's Centre	Children's day care and activity centres.	https://www.learningtrust.co.uk/ChildcarePlay/Pages/Children'sCentresandNurses.aspx
CMHT Adult Mental Health	Community Mental Health	GP Referral
CYPS	Children and Young People's Service	GP Referral
Derman	Turkish/Kurdish support service	020 7613 5944
Ezer Leylolds	Orthodox Jewish family support group	020 8800 2488
First Steps	CAMHS Service	020 7683 4611
Hackney Wellbeing	Centre for Better Health	020 8985 3570
Mind	Mental Health Charity	020 8985 4239
Netmums	Online Support Network/Services	https://www.netmums.com/hackney
Off Centre	Young People's MH Service Hackney	020 8986 4016
Orbit	Drug and Alcohol Support for Mothers	020 7749 9850

Support and advice:

However, as has been discussed there are many local voluntary services to contact in order to get help with weight loss and other dietary and exercise based queries. Please see the Hackney iCARE database for local classes in your area, as well as the organisations in the table overleaf for any further advice.

<https://www.hackneyicare.org.uk/kb5/hackney/asch/home.page>



Diet advice:

Carbohydrates and Fibre

- base your meal choices on starchy foods such as potatoes, bread, rice and pasta, choosing wholegrain where possible
- eat fibre-rich foods such as oats, beans, peas, lentils, grains, seeds, fruit and vegetables, as well as wholegrain bread and brown rice and pasta
- eat breakfast and watch the portion size of meals and snacks, and how often you are eating

Fruit and Vegetables

- eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day, in place of foods higher in fat and calories. If you are under 18 years old or receiving benefits, you may be eligible for Healthy Start vouchers which give you money towards fruit and vegetables

Calorie Intake

- eat a low-fat diet and avoid increasing your fat and/or calorie intake
- eat as little as possible of fried food; drinks and confectionery high in added sugars (such as cakes, pastries and fizzy drinks); and other food high in fat and sugar (such as some take-away and fast foods)
- there is no need to 'eat for two' or to drink full-fat milk. Your energy needs do not change in the first 6 months of pregnancy and they increase only slightly in the last 3 months (and then only by around 200 calories per day)

Exercise

- make activities such as walking, cycling, swimming, aerobics and gardening part of everyday life and build activity into daily life – for example, by taking the stairs instead of the lift or taking a walk at lunchtime. Minimise sedentary activities, such as sitting for long periods watching television or at a computer– try to walk, cycle or use another mode of transport involving physical activity. There are lots of pregnancy exercise classes at Netmums websites and local gyms.