

# Food and activity support for a healthy pregnancy

Information for patients



Leeds  
Maternity Care

## Introduction

Being healthy before, during and after pregnancy is very important for your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. This leaflet provides links and additional support to help you lead a healthy lifestyle in pregnancy and beyond. Being healthy before and during pregnancy gives your baby the best start in life and helps to reduce pregnancy complications.

## Eatwell guide

Eating a balanced and healthy diet before you become pregnant and during your pregnancy ensures your baby has access to the energy and nutrients they need to grow and develop well. The link below provides more information on eating well and will help you to make healthy food choices.



<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

## Vitamin Supplements

Eating a healthy, varied diet in pregnancy will help a person get most of the vitamins and minerals they require. However, it is recommended that all pregnant people:

- Take folic acid before they become pregnant and for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The usual dose to take is 400 micrograms daily and can be found in all pregnancy multi-vitamin tablets. Some people may be advised to take a higher prescribed dose of folic acid (5 milligrams daily) if they have certain risk factors. Taking folic acid helps to reduce the risk of problems in the baby's development in the early weeks of pregnancy. A GP or midwife can advise on the dose required for your individual circumstances.

- Take a vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms daily throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding. This will ensure a baby has enough vitamin D for the first few months of life and contribute to healthy strong bone development. Again this is found in all pregnancy multi-vitamin preparations. You may be advised to take a higher supplement of vitamin D in pregnancy if you are particularly at risk of low levels, and may require it in combination with calcium supplement if you have a higher chance of developing pre-eclampsia.

## Maintaining an active lifestyle

Being physically active in pregnancy is considered safe and healthy with benefits for both you and your baby. The more active and fit you are during pregnancy, the easier it will be for you to adapt to your changing shape as pregnancy progresses. There is some evidence that active women are less likely to experience problems in later pregnancy and labour. Keeping up normal daily physical activity or exercise for as long as you feel comfortable is considered safe. If you are new to being active, start gently and build up slowly. You may want to consider avoiding contact sports during pregnancy to prevent falls and bumps.

**The following info-graphics provide advice and ideas on being active in pregnancy and after childbirth:**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1054538/physical-activity-for-pregnant-women.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1054538/physical-activity-for-pregnant-women.pdf)



[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1054567/postpartum\\_infographic.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1054567/postpartum_infographic.pdf)



## Healthy weight

Most women who are overweight have a straightforward pregnancy and birth and have healthy babies. However, being overweight or obese does increase the risk of complications to both you and your baby. The support on offer within this leaflet you are reading and health professionals who work with you can help you to reduce some of these risks. Further information can also be found through the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) website link below.



<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/being-overweight-pregnancy-after-birth/>

## Start 4 life

The start4life website is an excellent trusted NHS resource for help and advice during pregnancy, birth and parenthood. Here you can find evidence-based information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle in pregnancy and beyond, as well as infant feeding. You can sign up for email tips and advice sent straight to your inbox to support you throughout pregnancy and parenthood.



<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/>

## Tommy's

Tommy's provides reliable information for parents-to-be. Tommy's is a pregnancy charity that fund vital research into improving pregnancy safety. Here you will find a supportive pregnancy hub with lots of information on all aspects of pregnancy and birth. There is a section in the pregnancy hub on optimizing preconception health (your health before becoming pregnant) and healthy eating and physical activity during pregnancy.



<https://www.tommys.org/>

## Baby buddy app

Baby buddy is a free phone app for parents and parents-to-be. Baby Buddy covers everything from pregnancy up until your baby is a few months old. It is available to download for free on smart phones via the app stores and will provide you with valuable information and support on the go.



<https://familyinformation.leeds.gov.uk/families/baby-buddy>

## Healthy start

Healthy start vouchers are available for some pregnant people and children under the age of four. Healthy start vouchers can be used to purchase milk and fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables. Vouchers can also be exchanged for multi-vitamins. The website below has further information on the scheme and you can also speak to your midwife for more information.



<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

## Henry

Henry is an award winning programme that supports families to give children the very best start in life. HENRY practitioners will support you to make positive lifestyle changes that will benefit the physical, dietary and emotional wellbeing of your whole family. Programmes are free for families with children under five years old and take place in Leeds. You can access this programme by contacting your local children's centre or health visitor.



<https://www.henry.org.uk/>

## Leeds girls can

Leeds Girls Can is available to help you identify safe and fun ways to enjoy being active in Leeds before, during and after pregnancy.

<https://active.leeds.gov.uk/leedsgirlscan>



## Leeds mental wellbeing service

Looking after our mental wellbeing is very important too. Mental wellbeing has a big impact on healthy lifestyle choices and the motivation to lead a healthy and physically active life. The Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service provides support and therapies for mental wellbeing concerns- such as anxiety, stress and depression. The service offers a wide range of support, including group and individual sessions, online classes, one-off sessions and instant online resources. You can find out more and self-refer through the website.

<https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home/>



## Future family planning



Preconception health is a person's health before they become pregnant. Having preconception care can improve your chances of getting pregnant, and the health and wellbeing of yourself and your baby. Unplanned pregnancies are at a greater risk of preterm birth and low-birth-weight babies. If you are considering having a baby in the future, it is important to discuss this with your GP or local family planning clinic to see how you can improve your preconception health. Good preconception health includes considering taking folic acid and vitamin D supplementation, and may include making some changes to your diet and lifestyle and discussing any current medications with a doctor to ensure they are safe in pregnancy. The Tommy's website offers an excellent tool to support with pregnancy planning.

<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/planning-pregnancy/planning-for-pregnancy-tool>



## What did you think of your care?

Scan the QR code or visit [bit.ly/nhsleedsfft](https://bit.ly/nhsleedsfft)

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