

The importance of healthy weight before and during pregnancy.

Did you know that keeping your weight under control during pregnancy protects your baby from developing diabetes later in life?



Recent figures for England show that around 22% of pregnant women are obese (which means having a Body Mass Index of 30 or above). Complications for women who are obese include higher risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes. Babies whose mothers are obese are more likely to be born prematurely and become obese and diabetic themselves later in life. We've spoken to two experts in this field to get more information, advice and top tips.



Claire King, Consultant in Public Health at Cumbria County Council, shares the following advice and tips: *"It's important to try and achieve a healthy weight, eat a healthy diet and be as active as possible before becoming pregnant. An online resource called Tommy's has produced an excellent 'Planning for Pregnancy' digital tool, that takes women through a questionnaire and then uses their answers to provide tailored information on what they can do before pregnancy to have a healthy pregnancy and baby. It also provides supportive email follow-up with tips and advice."* Take a read: www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/planning-pregnancy/planning-for-pregnancy-tool

"It's not just advice for potential mums either, as research now shows that the health of the father before pregnancy also impacts on a baby's wellbeing. I recommend potential dads-to-be check out the 'Live Well' pages on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/live-well/ Ultimately, it'll also be easier to make healthier choices if you're encouraging each other!"

The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology recommend that for women who have not previously exercised routinely, 15 minutes of continuous exercise, three times per week, increasing gradually to 30 minute sessions every day, is recommended. Suitable exercises include swimming, walking and pregnancy yoga.



Dr Laura Hipple, Associate Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at NCUH said: *"Here in Cumbria we are seeing a significant increase in the number of pregnant women being diagnosed with gestational diabetes, often linked to obesity. I see first-hand the worry and stress this can cause women and their families. We want to see all pregnant women being able to enjoy their pregnancies. I strongly recommend that anyone thinking of trying for a family, or women who are pregnant already, try to achieve a healthy weight by eating a healthy diet and being physically active."*

If you're pregnant and would like more information, please speak to your midwife.

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