



**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 BMI over 38 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 provide you with special weighing scales for you to use at home for weekly weight tracking. 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](http://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 provided with a set of weighing scales for use during your pregnancy and for 10 weeks after your baby is born. Every time you use the scales and 'upload', your weight information will be available for your Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy midwife or dietitian to see. 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 is now offered to all pregnant women in Northern Ireland with a BMI over 38. The 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.'***

***'It was brilliant the way they phoned and everything and the way the results went through from the scales, I thought it was really great.'***

***'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?
<b>Example:</b> 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	
<b>Example:</b> I will swim more	Fridays – twice a week for month	A new lip gloss	Not making time to get to the pool	Going to the pool straight after work	

## 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](http://www.tommys.org/healthy-eating-tips)

For information on weight management in pregnancy,  
see [www.tommys.org/overweight](http://www.tommys.org/overweight)

For information on how to boost your health through exercise, see  
[www.tommys.org/all-about-exercise-pregnancy](http://www.tommys.org/all-about-exercise-pregnancy)



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