



# Every Baby Matters

## **Guidelines for good nutrition in the Bradford district. Weight management before, during and after pregnancy NICE public health guidance 27 – July 2010**

These are useful and clear national guidelines on weight management before, during and after pregnancy which should be used by all those supporting or working with these groups.

The guidance is for NHS and other commissioners, managers and professionals who have a direct or indirect role in, and responsibility for, women who are pregnant or who are planning a pregnancy and mothers who have had a baby in the last 2 years. This includes those working in local authorities, education and the wider public, private, voluntary and community sectors. There are recommendations about roles, actions and responsibilities of different professionals and organisations and links to other related guidance.

There are also recommendations on the skills and competencies required by those involved with weight management before, during and after pregnancy.

Some key principles are replicated below for quick reference. The guidelines can be viewed and downloaded from <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH27>

### Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight

Women will be more likely to achieve and maintain a healthy weight before, during and after pregnancy if they<sup>1</sup>:

- base meals 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 at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day, in place of foods higher in fat and calories
- eat a low-fat diet and avoid increasing their 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)
- eat breakfast
- watch the portion size of meals and snacks, and how often they are eating
- 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

<sup>1</sup> The first nine criteria in this list are an edited extract from a recommendation in 'Obesity'. NICE clinical guideline 43. The last criterion is from a recommendation in 'Physical activity in the workplace'. NICE public health guidance 13.

- minimise sedentary activities, such as sitting for long periods watching television, at a computer or playing video games
- walk, cycle or use another mode of transport involving physical activity.

### **Effective weight-loss programmes:**

- address the reasons why someone might find it difficult to lose weight
- are tailored to individual needs and choices
- are sensitive to the person's weight concerns<sup>2</sup>
- are based on a balanced, healthy diet<sup>2</sup>
- encourage regular physical activity<sup>2</sup>
- expect people to lose no more than 0.5–1 kg (1–2 lb) a week<sup>2</sup>
- identify and address barriers to change.

Weight loss programmes are not recommended during pregnancy as they may harm the health of the unborn child.

Reputable sources of information and advice about diet and physical activity for women before, during and after pregnancy include: 'The pregnancy book'<sup>3</sup>, 'Birth to five'<sup>4</sup> and the 'Livewell' website<sup>5</sup>.

### **Changing behaviour**

Evidence-based behaviour change advice includes:

- understanding the short, medium and longer-term consequences of women's health-related behaviour
- helping women to feel positive about the benefits of health-enhancing behaviours and changing their behaviours
- recognising how women's social contexts and relationships may affect their behaviour
- helping plan women's changes in terms of easy steps over time
- identifying and planning situations that might undermine the changes women are trying to make and plan explicit 'if-then' coping strategies to prevent relapse<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>This is an edited extract from a recommendation that appears in 'Obesity'. NICE clinical guideline 43.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Health (2009) The pregnancy book. London: Department of Health.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Health (2009) Birth to five. London: Department of Health.

<sup>5</sup>[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx)

<sup>6</sup>This is an edited extract from a recommendation that appears in 'Behaviour change'. NICE public health guidance 6.