

Supporting you to have a healthy pregnancy



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Eating well

Eating healthily while you're pregnant means that your baby eats healthily too. Pregnancy is a good time to think about what you're eating. What you eat now will help your baby to grow healthily and give them the best start in life and help you to feel your best.

People used to say you had to 'eat for two' while you are pregnant, but we know now that you only have to eat for you! Your baby will take everything they need from your body and will grow well without you needing any extra calories. In the last three months you may need a little extra, but only 200 calories, that's the same as a slice of wholemeal toast with chopped banana!

Getting the balance right

You don't need to go on a special diet, but it's important to eat a variety of different foods every day to get the right balance of nutrients that you and your baby need. The Eatwell Guide divides the foods and drinks we consume into five main groups. The proportions shown are representative of your food consumption over the period of a day or even a week, not necessarily each meal time.

Try to choose a variety of different foods from each of the groups to help you get the wide range of nutrients your body needs to stay healthy and work properly. If you have special dietary requirements or medical needs, you might want to check with a registered Dietitian on how to adapt the Eatwell Guide to meet your individual needs.

For further information, the Vegan Eatwell Guide can be found at **www.vegansociety.com** and the Vegetarian Eatwell Guide can be found **www.vegsoc.org**

Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	4	3.5g	1.5g	24g	0.8g
Carbohydrate	13%	4%	1%	3%	15%
Fat					
Salt					

Typical values (in solid) per 100g (kJ/100kcal)

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars



Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.











Eat less often and in small amounts


Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Food group	What counts?	Why it is good for you
Fruit and vegetables	All fruit and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, tinned (check for those in juice rather than syrup) dried, juice and smoothies.	Fruit and vegetables are full of essential vitamins and minerals as well as fibre which helps digestion and can prevent constipation.
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, cereals, oats, tortilla wraps, bagels, pitta breads and crackers.	Starchy foods are important for energy, vitamins and fibre!
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, nuts, peanut butter, houmous, seeds, Quorn and Tofu.	<p>These foods provide protein which is vital for your baby's growth.</p> <p>These foods also contain lots of iron. Iron makes red blood cells for both you and your baby. Red blood cells carry oxygen around.</p>
Dairy and alternatives	Milk, yogurt, cheese, soya milk and almond milk (check dairy alternatives are fortified with added calcium and vitamins).	These foods contain calcium which helps build teeth and bones for your baby and looks after yours too.
Oils and spreads	Unsaturated fats e.g. Olive oil, vegetable oil, rapeseed oil and spreads.	Some fats are better for our health than others.
Foods and drinks that are high in fat and / or sugar	Sweets, biscuits, cakes, crisps, chocolate, sugar in tea, tomato ketchup and fizzy drinks	These foods provide very little nutrients and are not necessary for a healthy diet or the development of your baby.

and your baby?	How much?
	<p>Aim to have 5 servings every day. One serving of fresh fruit and vegetables is your own handful.</p> <p>A portion of dried fruit is approximately one heaped tablespoon.</p> <p>Limit juice and smoothies to no more than 150ml per day.</p> 
<p>They also help to fill you up without containing too many calories.</p>	<p>Base your meals around starchy carbohydrates, try to include with every meal. Choose wholegrain options such as oats, wholegrain bread and wholemeal pasta.</p> 
<p>your body to your organs and tissues, as well as to your baby.</p> <p>Omega-3 fats found in oily fish support healthy development of your baby during pregnancy and breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Aim to include protein rich foods in one to two meals a day. Choose lean meats and limit processed meats such as burgers and sausages.</p> <p>Try to have oily fish 1-2 times a week (see foods to avoid section).</p> 
	<p>Try to have three portions a day.</p> <p>Choose low-fat varieties such as low-fat cheese and skimmed / semi-skimmed milk, unless you are underweight.</p> 
<p>Swapping saturated fats e.g. butter and lard for unsaturated fats can help lower cholesterol.</p>	<p>Some fat is essential in a healthy, balanced diet. Most of the fat in the diet should come from unsaturated oils and spreads, but these are still high in calories so should only be eaten in small amounts.</p>
<p>However we all have them, so try to eat these foods less often and in small amounts.</p>	

Healthy food swaps

Swap this	For this	Benefits for you and your baby
200ml whole milk 	200ml skimmed milk 	Milk is a good source of calcium which is important for healthy bones. Swapping from whole milk to skimmed milk reduces the amount of fat, but the calcium content is higher!
60g Crunchy nut cornflakes 	2 x Weetabix with a handful chopped strawberries 	Swapping from Crunchy Nut to Weetabix reduces the free sugars by 20.3g! Weetabix is a source of wholegrain, keeping you fuller for longer. Wholegrains also have other essential vitamins and minerals and strawberries contribute towards your 5 a day.
Sweet chilli crisps 	Plain popcorn 	Swapping crisps for plain popcorn will reduce the amount of fat you are having. Popcorn is a wholegrain and a great source of fibre which makes it a more nutritious snack. Try to avoid toffee/high sugar version. You could even try making your own popcorn and add cinnamon!
Cola 500ml bottle 	Water 500ml bottle 	Cola and other soft / fizzy drinks can be very high in free sugars. High sugar intakes are associated with a greater risk of tooth decay and obesity. Water is the best option to keep you hydrated. If you still want that fizzy taste then you could try swapping to sparkling water flavoured with fresh fruit or no added sugar squash. Swapping cola for sparkling water reduces the sugar by 54g!

Swap this	For this	Benefits for you and your baby
<p>1 x Triple chocolate muffin</p> 	<p>1 x crumpet with tsp of nut butter</p> 	<p>Swapping a cake for a crumpet with nut butter will reduce the amount of free sugars and saturated fat you are having. Nut butters are a good source of protein and healthy fats!</p>
<p>Dairy milk 200g bar</p> 	<p>1 cup Highlights hot chocolate</p> 	<p>Having a low calorie hot chocolate drink will give you that chocolate taste that you want with fewer calories, free sugar and saturated fat.</p>

Have you ever wondered how much fat, sugar and salt are in your foods and drinks?

You can download the Change4Life Food Scanner app for free to find out what is in your food and drink to help you and your family make healthier food choices.



Foods to avoid

There are some foods that you shouldn't eat while you're pregnant as they can put your baby's health at risk, the table below shows which foods you should avoid and why.

Avoid...	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue cheeses, including Danish blue, Gorgonzola, Roquefort and Stilton Soft cheese with rinds, including Brie and Camembert Mould ripened soft goats cheese, including Chevré 	There is a risk that these cheeses could contain listeria (a harmful bacteria). Even a mild form of the illness in a pregnant woman can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth or severe illness in a newborn baby.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paté - All types 	All types of paté can contain listeria.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw or undercooked meat, especially sausages and mince. Be sure to cook meat thoroughly so there is no trace of pink or blood. 	Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a tiny parasite that lives in raw meat. It normally only causes mild illness in people with healthy immune systems, but it's risky during pregnancy because it may harm your baby.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liver and liver products, including pâté and sausages 	Liver has high levels of vitamin A, and too much of this can harm your baby.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain kinds of fish including shark, swordfish and marlin Tuna - no more than two steaks / four medium tins per week Oily fish - no more than two portions a week, such as salmon, trout, mackerel and herring 	<p>Tuna contains more mercury than other types of fish. The amount of mercury we get from food isn't harmful for most people, but could affect your baby's developing nervous system if you take in high levels when you're pregnant. Oily fish can contain pollutants like dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls.</p> <p>You can eat as much white fish and cooked shellfish as you like.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw or under cooked eggs 	Pregnant women can now safely eat raw or lightly cooked eggs that are produced under the British Lion Code of Practice

Top tips for eating well

1. Eat a rainbow of fruit and vegetables every day

Fruit and vegetables are full of different vitamins, minerals and fibre, which may help reduce the risk of heart disease, strokes and some cancers. By eating a rainbow of different colours you can make sure you are getting a good mixture of different nutrients that you and your baby need. Try adding a serving to each meal e.g. chopping strawberries onto your cereal, adding spinach to your sandwich and adding sweetcorn to your pasta sauce! Tinned fruit (check for those in juice rather than syrup) also counts towards your 5 a day, so have some in the cupboard in case you run out of fresh, it makes a great snack!

2. Base your meals around starchy carbohydrate foods

Starchy foods are important for your energy and they help to fill you up. Choose wholegrain foods when you can, they contain more fibre and they are digested slower, so they keep you fuller for longer! Try oats, wholewheat pasta, brown rice, wholegrain bread.

3. Be prepared

Plan what foods you are going to eat throughout the day and week. Make a shopping list and stick to it, this way you won't be picking up items you think you might need. Try not to shop when you are hungry as you are more likely to reach for convenience foods which are usually higher in fat and sugar. Batch cook some meals so you have something healthy you can heat up quickly and pack healthy snacks for work.

4. Don't skip meals

Skipping meals when pregnant means you and your baby are missing out on the nutrition you both need. Having a regular eating pattern has been shown to improve blood sugar levels, reduce likelihood of weight gain and curb hunger pangs. Try to eat something for breakfast, lunch and dinner each day. If you have morning sickness, try eating little and often instead.

5. Frozen fruit and vegetables

Frozen fruit and vegetables are often cheaper, easier to store and still full of nutrients which count towards your 5 a day. Try adding some frozen raspberries to your porridge or a smoothie, add a handful of frozen peppers to your bolognese or cook up some iron rich broccoli to have with your evening meal!

6. Eat breakfast

Breakfast helps top up the energy stores you have used up each night whilst your body repairs and renews itself. Apart from providing energy to kick-start your day, a healthy breakfast provides essential nutrients that your body and growing baby needs, such as fibre, vitamins and key minerals such as calcium and iron. If you can't face eating first thing, try to eat within two hours of getting up. Keep some healthy wholegrain cereal at work, or wholegrain toast, porridge, low-fat yoghurts, pure fruit juices, fresh fruit and smoothies with low-fat milk.

7. Try to bulk sauces out with extra veg or pulses

This will reduce the amount of meat that you need, saving you money, and will also increase the fibre and provide an extra portion of veg.

8. Cut back on takeaways

Preparing and cooking your own meals is generally cheaper than buying a takeaway or a ready meal, and because it's easier to control what goes in to your dish, it can be healthier.

9. Keep a supply of tinned fruit and vegetables in the cupboard

Tinned fruit and vegetables such as peas, sweetcorn or pears (check for those without added sugar or salt) are a good source of fibre and count towards your 5 a day. Tinned fruit in natural juice is useful as a tasty low-fat dessert or snack.

10. Feeling sick?

Eat little and often, choose starchy foods such as crackers or toast. Cold, bland and non-greasy foods are usually easier to tolerate when you're feeling sick. Stay hydrated by sipping on water throughout the day, try adding ice and slices of lemon or lime to make it a bit more interesting. In most cases sickness should have improved by 16-20 weeks.

Do I need supplements?

It's best to get vitamins and minerals from the foods you eat, but when you're pregnant two vitamin supplements are needed, this makes sure you and your baby get everything you need.

Folic acid

This vitamin can help stop your baby developing birth defects known as neural tube defects (NTDs). Food won't give you enough folic acid to protect your baby so it's important to take a folic acid supplement of 400 micrograms (µg) daily before pregnancy and throughout the first 12 weeks. If you didn't take folic acid before you conceived, you should start taking folic acid as soon as you find out that you are pregnant.

However, during the whole of pregnancy and breastfeeding, it is essential to eat a diet rich in folate (folate is the form of folic acid found naturally in foods) as requirements for the vitamin are

higher. Eat a diet rich in folates from foods containing the vitamin and from fortified foods.

Some women are at higher risk of having a pregnancy affected by an NTD. It is recommended that these women take a higher dose of 5 milligrams (mg) of folic acid daily before pregnancy and throughout the first 12 weeks. Women are at higher risk if:

- They or their partner have a neural tube defect
- They have had a previous pregnancy affected by a neural tube defect
- They or their partner have a family history of neural tube defects
- They have diabetes
- Have a BMI over 30kg/m²

If any of the above applies to you, talk to your GP as they can prescribe a higher dose of folic acid.

Foods rich in folate...

Spinach, kale, broccoli, beans, legumes, oranges, whole grain foods, poultry, shellfish and fortified foods such as cereals.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps your body to absorb calcium, it is essential for strong bones and teeth for both you and your baby. The main source of vitamin D is sunshine. You make vitamin D under your skin when you are outside in daylight from early April to the end of September. In the UK, even a healthy, well balanced diet, is unlikely to provide enough vitamin D. It is recommended that when you are pregnant and breastfeeding you should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (μg) of Vitamin D all year round. It is recommended that the whole family takes a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms (μg) of Vitamin D all year round.

Avoid Vitamin A

Too much vitamin A could harm your baby. Do not take vitamin A supplements, or any supplements containing vitamin A (retinol). If you want to take a multivitamin, make sure you choose one that is sold especially for pregnant women.

Healthy start vouchers

If you're at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old you may be eligible for Healthy Start Vouchers! With Healthy Start, you get free vouchers every week to spend on milk, plain fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins for you and your child.



Hydration

It is important to stay hydrated during pregnancy and when breastfeeding, especially if you are being sick or sweating lots.

Drinking enough fluid can help you to feel well and can help with common pregnancy symptoms such as constipation and tiredness. You should be drinking about 8 cups (1½ - 2 litres) every day. All drinks count towards your fluid intake, including tea and coffee, but be careful of those with added sugars.



The best drinks to have are:

- Water
- Sparkling water
- Fruit teas
- Skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
- Pure fruit juice (150ml – you could top up with sparkling water for a longer drink)
- Decaffeinated tea or coffee

Alcohol in pregnancy

What you drink your baby drinks too, so to avoid long term harm to your baby it is best to avoid alcohol. Your baby's liver isn't fully developed until towards the end of pregnancy so even a little bit of alcohol can affect them. It can stunt your baby's growth and can also cause learning difficulties and behavioural problems. It also increases your risk of having a miscarriage or your baby being born early.

Caffeine in pregnancy

Caffeine is found naturally in lots of foods and drinks, such as coffee, tea and chocolate. It's also added to some soft drinks, energy drinks, and cold and flu remedies.

High levels of caffeine during pregnancy can result in babies having a low birth weight, which can increase the risk of health problems in later life. Too much caffeine can also cause a miscarriage. You don't need to cut caffeine out completely, but you should limit how much you have to no more than 200mg a day.

Food / drink	Caffeine content
One mug of filter coffee	140mg
One mug of instant coffee	100mg
One can of energy drink	Up to 160mg
One mug of tea	75mg
One can of cola	40mg
One 50g bar of plain chocolate	Most products on the UK market contain less than 25mg
One 50g bar of milk chocolate	Most products on the UK market contain less than 10mg



BMI and pregnancy

BMI is a calculation to work out whether you are a healthy weight for your height. Your midwife will measure your height and weigh you to work out your BMI at your first antenatal visit. They do this to make sure you get the right type of care during your pregnancy. So if you are asked to step on the scales, don't feel that you are being judged they are looking after yours and your baby's best interests.

BMI classes:

- Less than 18.5 = underweight
- 18.5 to 24.9 = healthy weight
- 25 to 29.9 = overweight
- 30 to 39.9 = obese
- 40 = severely obese

Underweight in pregnancy

If your BMI was less than 18.5 before you became pregnant, you may be advised to gain more weight than someone who is in the normal range. Your midwife will be able to give you specific advice and may refer you to a dietitian to help you work on ways to eat well and gain a healthy amount of weight.

There are many reasons for having a low BMI, including:

- Not eating enough food. To be healthy, women should have around 2,000 calories a day through a healthy, balanced diet
- Over-exercising and not having enough food to replace the energy used in exercise.
- Being unwell. There might be a medical reason for your low weight, such as an overactive thyroid. If you think this might be the case, talk to your midwife or GP
- Loss of appetite, sometimes due to worry or stress
- Eating disorders. An eating disorder is when you have an unhealthy relationship with food. This can take over your life and make you ill. If you have an eating disorder (or have had one in the past) putting on weight may be difficult for you. It can be hard, but it's important to tell your doctor or midwife if this is the case.

Your midwife may recommend a multivitamin supplement that's suitable for pregnancy, including folic acid, vitamin D and iron, and eating healthy extra calories to put on weight.

If your diet or exercise routine is causing your low weight:

- Try to avoid high-calorie food and drinks full of saturated fat and sugar, such as cakes, sweets and sugary drinks. These foods have very little nutrition, which your baby needs to grow and develop well.
- Instead choose foods that are high in healthy fats, such as fish, chicken, nuts, avocados and unsaturated fats such as oils and spreads made from sunflower or olive oil.
- Eat more pasta, beans and wholegrain cereals and aim to eat three small meals and three healthy snacks every day.
- If you are exercising a lot, try to cut down a bit. It's still important to be active in pregnancy, but you don't need to do more than the recommended amount of 30 minutes a day.
- Try gentler activities such as swimming, walking, yoga or pilates.

Overweight in pregnancy

If your BMI is 30 or above, you will have additional plans of care put in place to support you and your growing baby through pregnancy.

Care during your pregnancy

BMI 30-34.9

If there are no other factors which may affect your pregnancy at the time of booking or which develop throughout your pregnancy, you will receive midwifery led care and be suitable for a community birth.

BMI of 35.0-39.9

You will be booked under consultant led care and if this is your first baby, you will be advised to give birth in a consultant led obstetric unit.

BMI of 40 or greater

You will be referred for an appointment with a consultant obstetrician during your 2nd trimester; if other factors are present which may affect your pregnancy, this may be required sooner. You will also be referred to the anaesthetic clinic during your 2nd trimester where an individual assessment and care plan will be made.

Additional tests if your BMI is over 30

Gestational Diabetes

If your BMI is 30 or greater you will be offered a glucose tolerance test (GTT) at 26 weeks as you are at an increased risk of developing diabetes in pregnancy (gestational diabetes) or sooner if you have any other factors which may suggest an earlier test would be beneficial

Venous thromboembolism (VTE)

You will have assessments carried out by your midwife at the beginning of your pregnancy, during any admission to hospital and after you have had your baby to assess if you are at a high risk of developing a VTE. Following these assessments, your midwife may recommend daily injections to help prevent you developing a blood clot.

Pre-eclampsia

If your BMI is 35 or greater, you have an increased risk of pre eclampsia. You will therefore have monitoring every 3 weeks by your community midwife between 24-32 weeks and every 2 weeks from 32 weeks until you have your baby.

Supplements

If your BMI is 30 or greater, you should take 5mgs of Folic Acid daily prior to conception and continue through your first trimester (12weeks). You should also take 10 micrograms of Vitamin D daily during the length of your pregnancy as there is an associated risk of vitamin D deficiency for both you and your baby.

Additional scans

You will receive additional scans of your baby during your pregnancy to ensure healthy growth and wellbeing. These will be approximately every 3 weeks from 28 weeks.

Where can I have my baby?

BMI 35

If you do not have any other factors which are affecting you or baby during this pregnancy, you may be suitable for a community birth either at home, or in one of the birth centres.

BMI 35-39.9

If this is your first pregnancy, you will be advised to receive care during your labour and birth on Delivery Suite. If this is your second or subsequent pregnancy you may be able to have your baby at Truro Birth Centre providing there are no other factors which would recommend care on Delivery Suite. In both instances, if you wish to go to Truro Birth Centre to have your baby, you will be referred to the Birth Centre at around 36 weeks for an individual assessment. It is therefore vital that you maintain a healthy lifestyle and eating plan during your pregnancy to be able to use these facilities. Healthy choices will prevent the risk of developing any additional complications which may prevent you from birthing at Truro Birth Centre.

BMI of 40 or greater

You will be advised to receive care in labour and birth within the obstetric unit (Delivery Suite) to ensure the safety of you and your baby. It will be recommended that you have a cannula put in when your labour starts and that you have the injection after your baby has been born to help with your placenta. Both of these recommendations are because you are at a higher risk of bleeding after your baby has been born

Keeping active

Keeping physically active is great for you and for your baby! Experts advise that, in most cases, physical activity is not only safe but also improves the health of both the baby and the mother.

Motherhood is the biggest workout of your life, but you can prepare your body for the challenges of pregnancy labour and birth by staying active and keeping yourself strong and healthy. If you weren't very active before your pregnancy, don't worry there are lots of small changes you can make to your lifestyle that can make a big difference to you and your baby's health.

Physical activity = any activity you do throughout the day, not just planned or organised exercise.

Benefits to you and the baby

- Exercise gives you more energy and makes you feel good. It leaves you feeling less tired and sleep will improve.
- It improves and strengthens muscles resulting in fewer aches and pains. You may also have less chance of getting varicose veins and swollen legs.
- It improves your blood sugar control which in turn could help prevent gestational diabetes.
- It will increase stamina which will help you and your baby through labour.
- It will help with your recovery after birth.
- It means you are less likely to gain unnecessary weight during pregnancy and are less likely to hang onto any extra weight after you have had the baby.
- It can reduce levels of anxiety and depression in pregnancy.
- Being active helps reduce constipation, which is a common pregnancy problem.
- The more active and fit you are during pregnancy, the easier it will be for you to adapt to your changing shape and weight gain.

How much should I do?

Experts recommend that pregnant women (like all healthy adults) should do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity everyday, but it is safe to do as much moderate activity as you like.

Moderate intensity exercise = anything that makes your breathing and heart rate and body temperature increase but where you can still able to hold a conversation.

If you weren't active before pregnancy, start slowly and talk to your health professional about it. For example, start off doing 15 minutes of activity without stopping three times a week and increase it to 30 minutes four times a week. If possible try to reach 30 minutes of activity everyday. Carry on being as active as possible, until the end of pregnancy – and beyond!

Top Tips

- Wear shoes that support your ankles.
- Wear a good supportive bra.
- Loose comfortable clothing can stop you getting too hot.
- Remember to drink plenty of water. Have a drink before you go out and take a bottle of water with you. This is especially important when the weather is warm.
- On hot days exercise in the morning or evening when it is cooler.
- If you have other children, try activities that they can join in with, such as playing in the park.
- Plan some activities that you can do indoors, we've given you some ideas on **page 27**.

“I never exercised before I found out I was pregnant but started walking and swimming throughout the pregnancy and felt amazing for it!”

Aimee, 8 months pregnant

Activity ideas

If you weren't active before you got pregnant, don't suddenly take up strenuous exercise. You can do most types of exercise in pregnancy, including walking, running, yoga and swimming.

Walking

Walking is probably the easiest way to fit activity into your already busy life and is suitable for everyone.

- Walk rather than catching the bus or driving short journeys. Popping to the shops or strolling through the park counts.
- If you have children, try to walk when taking them to school or playgroup. If this isn't possible try parking further away.
- If you have a dog, they won't mind going for an extra or a longer walk.
- Make it a family activity and go for a walk or bike ride with friends and family at the weekend or evening.

Cycling

If you like cycling you can carry on with this during pregnancy, but remember to always wear a helmet.

Swimming

Swimming in pregnancy is great as the water supports your bump, taking the strain.

Stretching

Gentle stretching will help you stay flexible, but be careful not to overstretch.

Running

If you were a runner or jogger before you got pregnant, it's safe and healthy to continue during your pregnancy as long as you feel okay. Your baby will not be harmed by the impact or the movement.

Home exercises

If you can't get out or you're short of time, there are plenty of exercises you can do at home around your daily activities. We have given you some ideas on page 27.

Remember that exercise doesn't have to be strenuous to be beneficial.

Organised or group activities

If you were active before pregnancy keep up that activity unless it becomes uncomfortable (and is not listed on the activities to avoid). If it is a regular class, just inform the instructor that you are pregnant.

If you like the idea of joining a class with other pregnant women, ask your midwife, leisure centre or children's centre what is going on in the area. Look out for these types of classes:

- **Aquanatal** – pregnancy exercises in the swimming pool. You don't normally have to be able to swim to join in.
- **Yoga** – not all yoga exercises are suitable for pregnancy so it is important to inform the instructor of your pregnancy. There are many pregnancy yoga groups which would be more suitable.
- **Pregnancy exercise** – some gyms/leisure centres offer special exercise classes for pregnant women.

What happens if I'm not very active in pregnancy?

If you are sedentary (not active) in pregnancy you're at risk of putting on too much weight. You are also at a higher risk of gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia and varicose veins and you are more likely to have physical complaints such as shortness of breath and lower back pain.

Remember!

Stay as active as you can - how you do it is up to you. Do something that you enjoy and ask a friend to join you. Try using your favourite music to motivate you and to help keep you active.

"I love swimming whilst pregnant especially towards the end when I'm feeling really heavy as the water makes me feel really light, it's lovely."

Rachel,
3 months pregnant

Activities to avoid

Don't exercise on your back after 16 weeks into your pregnancy, as the weight of your baby may press on major blood vessels and reduce the blood and oxygen flow to the baby.

It's best to avoid sports where your bump could be hit, such as football, hockey and martial arts. Activities where you risk falling, such as skiing or horse riding, are best avoided too.

Don't exercise ...

- To exhaustion.
- If it is very hot.
- When you feel unwell.
- If you have deep pelvic pain.
- If you have any vaginal bleeding.
- If you are getting lots of tightenings.
- If your doctor or midwife has told you to stop exercising.

Medical reasons to stop exercising in pregnancy

Whatever activity you're doing and whatever stage of your pregnancy you're at stop at once if:

- You are having trouble catching your breath.
- You feel dizzy.
- You have chest pain.
- Your heart is beating in an irregular way (palpitations).
- You can feel tightenings in your tummy.
- Your waters (the liquid around your baby) are leaking.
- You have any bleeding from your vagina.
- You feel pain around your tummy or pelvis.
- You are exhausted.
- You have a bad headache.

Even if you don't have any of these symptoms, if you feel unwell, uncomfortable or just 'not right' and you're worried, stop exercising and talk to your doctor or midwife.

Common Barriers

I feel tired...

Most pregnant women have times during pregnancy when they feel incredibly tired; many find that if they make a small effort they feel better for it. All activity counts including walking a short distance, once you have walked a short distance you might feel more energetic and walk a little further. However a short walk is better than nothing!

I have no time! Work and home commitments, working full time and then looking after my family and household.

Could you walk part of the way to work? Or walk to pick the children from school? How about a 10 minute walk in a coffee or lunch break? Remember that heavier household jobs, such as vacuuming and active play with children (or pets) also count as physical activity.

Exercise is uncomfortable as I have back ache and swollen feet.

Physical activity has been shown to improve muscle tone, reduce backache, and improve circulation which reduces swelling.

I am worried about having a miscarriage and don't want to take any extra risks by over exercising.

If you are over 14 weeks pregnant the risk of miscarriage is now very low. The exercises in this guide are unlikely to cause any problems and should make you feel better. There is a lot of evidence that babies whose mums are active are healthier than those whose mums are not active.

"You are definitely more tired when you're pregnant but when I'm feeling tired if I make an effort to go for a short walk I actually feel better. The fresh air and getting out doing something helps me feel better"

Lucy,
7 months pregnant

Exercises to do at home

In this section you'll find a number of exercises you can do in the home and will fit into fifteen minutes of your daily life, maybe even when you are watching the TV! If you are not very active they are great way to get started.

The exercises which are stated below can all be carried out in the comfort of your own home, outside or in a gym. If you don't have any dumbbells at home you can use other weighted items such as tins of beans or bottles of water.

If you feel you need more of a challenge, or the exercises feel too easy, go through them three times and/or reduce the rest time. You can also increase the difficulty of each exercise by doing more repetitions (for example 12 times instead of 10 times) or increasing the duration of each exercise (1 minute rather than 45 seconds). Add some walking or housework and you will really start to feel the benefits. If you are already active, these exercises are a great way to boost your activity levels and keep you flexible.



Ensure that you take care when carrying out the exercises and that you do not try to over exert yourself in the session by pushing yourself beyond your limits as this could result in injury.

Please note these home exercises are just a guide and that if you use them you will be doing so at your own risk.

Squats



Teaching points

1. Feet parallel
2. Slowly bend at the knees squatting down slowly
3. Keep the movement controlled and slow, bringing the thighs roughly parallel to the floor
4. Ensure that knees travel in line and behind the toes
5. Extend the knees and hips to the standing position

Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

This exercise can also be carried out squatting to a chair and then standing back up. Using a ball helps support the back and also engages the core.

Progression

This exercise can be made harder by taking away the use of a chair or performing a half squat.

Outer thigh



Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

This exercise can also be carried out whilst holding onto a chair instead of a wall. Ensure that you correct your posture so that you are still standing straight.

Progression

Carry out the multiple inner thigh movement with the same leg. For example; 10 movements with the left leg and then 10 with the right leg. Or introduce a theraband.

Teaching points

1. Ensure both feet are facing forwards one step away from the wall
2. Hands on the wall shoulder width and height
3. Bring the leg out to the side away from the centre of your body
4. Keeping the movement controlled and until a small stretch is felt
5. Avoid over stretching



Step Ups



Teaching points

1. Step up onto the step one foot at a time and land on the ball of your foot
2. Place both feet on the step and then slowly lower yourself back down to the floor and repeat leading with the opposite foot
3. This exercise can be done using the stairs

Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

The height of the step can be altered to make it easier or harder. Increase the height to make the step up harder. Instead of stepping right up onto the step, toe tap the step with alternate legs.

Progression

To make the exercise harder, add hand weights when carrying out the step up or raise the knee when at the top of the step.

Wall press



Teaching points

1. Ensure that your feet are shoulder width apart, two steps away from the wall
2. Place the hands on the wall shoulder width and shoulder height
3. Slowly lower yourself towards the wall until you are around a cm away and then slowly push yourself back up
4. Keep your hips and stomach muscles tucked in with your back straight

Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

To make this exercise easier stand closer to the wall in the starting position.

Progression

To make this exercise harder, start further away from the wall or use a kitchen work top to increase the wall press angle.

Lateral raise



Teaching points

1. Ensure that both feet are facing forwards.
2. Arms by the side of the body.
3. Slowly raise the arms to the side of the body at shoulder height to the count of 3.
4. Slowly return back to the starting position to the count of 3.

Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

This exercise can also be carried out seated. On a gym ball will also work your core.

Progression

To make this exercise harder, weights can be added to the side arm raise. A resistance band can also be added, ensure that the band is under the foot with equal lengths.

Side lunge



Teaching points

1. Step out to the side with one leg
2. Raise both arms out to the side at the same time
3. Bring back to the starting position and then step out with the other leg raising both arms
4. Bring the arms no higher than shoulder height, without locking the elbows

Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

To make this exercise easier, only raise one arm at a time. This exercise can also be carried out in the seated position.

Progression

To make this exercise harder increase the speed in which you do the exercise.

Superman



Teaching points

1. Step out to the side with one leg
2. Raise both arms out to the side at the same time
3. Bring back to the starting position and then step out with the other leg raising both arms
4. Bring the arms no higher than shoulder height, without locking the elbows

Alternative/ Progression

Alternative

To make this exercise easier, only raise one arm at a time. This exercise can also be carried out in the seated position.

Progression

To make this exercise harder increase the speed in which you do the exercise.

Exercising with a gym ball

A gym ball can be used throughout pregnancy and also after pregnancy. There are many benefits of using the ball.

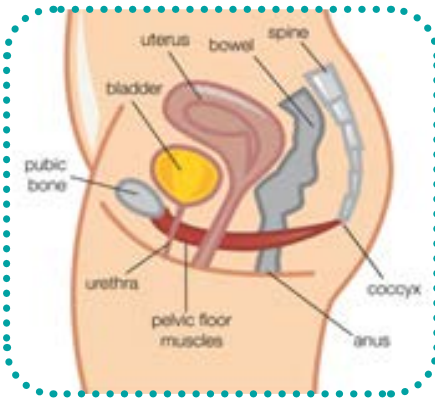
You may use it to sit on while you're working or relaxing as it can be much more comfortable and easier to get on and off compared to other seating. Sitting on the ball also gives you a mini-work out. As you rock or bounce on the ball your tummy and back muscles will be working to help keep you upright. In addition, it is a fun way to improve your posture and balance. This helps to support your body with the weight of your pregnancy.

You may also want to try your pelvic floor exercises whilst sitting on your ball. Sitting on the ball can make it easier to feel what is happening whilst also working your lower tummy muscles at the same time. In addition, many of the exercises above can be carried out on a gym ball. By doing this it will help to work your core muscles when you're pregnant.

Here are a couple of examples:



Pelvic Floor



What is a pelvic floor?

The pelvic floor is a sheet of muscle which forms the floor of the pelvis. It stretches from the pubic bone at the front of the body to the bottom of the back bone. It helps to support the bladder, womb and bowel, and also helps to control the bladder and bowel outlets.

The pelvic floor muscles can become weak and damaged for a number of reasons including:

- Childbirth
- Constipation
- A chronic cough
- Being overweight
- Frequent heavy lifting
- Changes caused by the menopause

The symptoms of pelvic floor weakness include:

- The urgent or frequent need to pass urine
- Leaking urine when coughing
- A change in sensation during intercourse

Pelvic Floor Exercise

Like all muscles, pelvic floor muscles need to be exercised to regain and maintain strength.

Imagine that you are trying to stop your flow of urine midstream, at the same time as trying to stop yourself passing wind. The sensation is one of squeeze and lift. It is important not to tighten your buttocks or leg muscles and you must not hold your breath. Only the pelvic floor and deep stomach muscles should be working.

1. Tighten the pelvic floor and hold for as many seconds as you can, up to the count of 10. Relax the contraction and relax for 4 seconds.

Repeat the exercise up to a maximum of 10 times. This exercise increases the stamina of your muscle.

Gradually you will be able to hold the contraction for longer, and do more repetitions.

2. Tighten and relax the pelvic floor quickly, up to a maximum of 10. It is important that the muscle can react quickly when you cough or sneeze.

Any time, any place!

Nobody can tell you are doing pelvic exercises, you can do them any time any place. So do them as often as possible, at least 3 times a day.

It may take 6 months to achieve a good result, so persevere! When your pelvic muscles are strong, do pelvic floor exercises twice a day for the rest of your life to maintain their strength. Everyone (including men!) will benefit from doing pelvic floor exercises.

Carbon Monoxide testing

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless and tasteless poisonous gas. You can't see it or smell it but it is in cigarette smoke, faulty gas boilers and car exhaust fumes. It is dangerous because it deprives the baby of oxygen. Your midwife will do a screening

test to assess your level of CO at every antenatal appointment. If your reading is high your midwife and the Healthy Pregnancy Team will support to reduce your CO exposure to ensure you have a healthy pregnancy.

Smoke free pregnancy

Protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is one of the best things you can do to give your baby a healthy start in life.

Every cigarette you smoke contains 4,000 harmful chemicals including carbon monoxide which limits the oxygen to your baby, increasing their heart beat. Each cigarette you smoke affects your baby, so cutting down is not an option.

Risks of smoking to baby:

- Slow growth and low birth weight
- Premature birth
- Risk of placenta abruption
- Greater risk of stillbirth
- Breathing problems, asthma, wheezing in first 6 months
- Increased risk of glue ear which can cause partial deafness

- Increased risk of sudden infant death and meningitis

Risks of smoking to you:

- More likely to miscarry
- Increased nausea
- Increased risk of bleeding
- Long term risks including lung, breast, cervical cancer, coronary artery disease, chronic bronchitis and emphysema

Help and support

Quitting before week 15 of pregnancy provides the greatest benefits for your baby but it is never too late to stop smoking. For help and support to stop smoking contact our Healthy Pregnancy advisors on 01209 615600. With help and support from a Healthy Pregnancy advisor you are 4 times more likely to quit smoking.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy in Pregnancy

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is safe to use in pregnancy. NRT contains only nicotine and none of the damaging chemicals found in cigarettes, so it is a much better option than continuing to smoke. It helps you by giving you the nicotine you would have had from a cigarette. There are lots of forms of NRT including patches, gum, mouth sprays, lozenges and inhalators.

You can be prescribed NRT during pregnancy for free by a Healthy Pregnancy advisor.

Vaping in Pregnancy

Vaping is at least 95% less harmful than smoking, and if using a vape helps you to stay smoke free it is much safer for you and your baby. Vape does not produce carbon monoxide and contains much lower harmful levels of chemicals than smoke.

Second-hand smoke in pregnancy

If you are exposed to second-hand smoke there is an increased risk of complications during your pregnancy and after the birth. More than 80% of cigarette smoke is invisible and doesn't smell. Therefore, no matter how careful someone thinks they are about keeping smoke away from you, you and your baby still be exposed to harmful chemicals.

Risks of second-hand smoke to baby:

- More likely to be smaller and sicker
- Increased risk of sudden infant death
- Increased risk of being admitted to hospital for bronchitis and pneumonia during the first year of life

If your partner or family member would like help and support to stop smoking, they can contact Healthy Cornwall on 01209 61500.

Raised CO in non-smokers

If your reading is high and you do not smoke, it may mean you have:

- A faulty gas or heating appliance at home
- Been in a car with a faulty exhaust
- Been exposed to second-hand smoke
- Been exposed to traffic fumes

If you believe you have been exposed to carbon monoxide by a faulty appliance you should call the Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Line on 0800 300 363.

The Healthy Pregnancy Team can support you to identify and eliminate any potential sources of carbon monoxide. For more advice, contact a Healthy Pregnancy advisor on 01209 615600.

Immunisations in pregnancy

Having the recommended vaccinations during pregnancy (and after your baby is born) is one of the most effective things that you can do to reduce the risk of vaccine preventable infections for you and your baby.

Ensuring your baby gets all their routine vaccinations means that this protection will continue during their most vulnerable years. Contact your midwife or GP to find out where you can get the flu and whooping cough vaccine.

Whooping Cough

Whooping cough is a serious respiratory condition that causes long periods of intense coughing and choking, making it difficult to breathe. This disease can be very severe, especially in young babies; it can lead to pneumonia and permanent brain damage. You can help protect your baby against whooping cough in its first weeks after birth by getting vaccinated while you are pregnant.

It's recommended all pregnant women have the whooping cough vaccination between 16 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. This will boost your antibodies which will pass through the placenta to your baby, providing protection until they get their first immunisation at two months.

The whooping cough vaccine has been routinely given since 2012 and research has shown no risks to pregnancy associated with the vaccine.

The flu jab

There is evidence that pregnant women are at greater risk of developing complications if they get flu during pregnancy, this means your baby could be born prematurely or have a low birth weight.

If you are pregnant during the winter months you will be offered a flu vaccination. It is free for pregnant women and is normally available from September until February each year. The viruses that cause flu change every year so you will need to have a 'flu jab' even if you had it last year.

Studies show the flu vaccination is safe to be given at any time during pregnancy. Pregnant women who have the flu vaccine also pass some protection to their babies, which lasts for the first few months of their lives.

Keeping teeth and gums healthy in pregnancy

Hormonal changes during pregnancy can make your gums more vulnerable to plaque, leading to inflammation and bleeding.

This is also called pregnancy gingivitis or gum disease. It is therefore very important to keep your teeth and gums as clean and healthy as possible while you're pregnant.

Top tips for looking after your teeth and gums:

- Clean your teeth carefully twice a day for two minutes with fluoride toothpaste
- Brushing is best with a small-headed toothbrush with soft filaments
- Avoid having sugary drinks (such as fizzy drinks or sweet tea) and sugary foods
- If you're hungry between meals, snack on vegetables and avoid sugary or acidic foods
- Avoid mouthwashes that contain alcohol
- Stop smoking, as it can make gum disease worse

If you have morning sickness, rinse your mouth with plain water after each time you vomit. This will help prevent the acid in your vomit attacking your teeth. Avoid brushing your teeth straight away after being sick as they will be softened by the acid from your stomach. Wait about an hour before doing so.

Dental care is free during pregnancy and until one year after your due date. You can register with an NHS dentist in Cornwall by calling 0333 006 3300. If you need an emergency appointment, call **0333 405 0290**.

Your Mental Health Matters

Depression and anxiety are common experiences in pregnancy and following child birth.

It is thought that up to 1 in 5 women will be affected by mental health problems at some point during pregnancy and the first year following child birth. Problems range from mild anxiety and mild depression to more severe mental illness requiring urgent support and intervention.

In Cornwall we are working hard to raise awareness around perinatal mental health. We know that women often find it hard to come forward with mental health issues and that as a result, women suffer without appropriate support and/or treatment. Speaking openly with family and friends can help break the silence around mental health and dispel the misconception that pregnancy and motherhood comes naturally and must be a happy time.

If you are already on medication for your mental health, it is important to speak with your GP prior to making any change to this. Your GP will be able to give you the information you need regarding the pros and cons of continuing medication, in order for you to decide what is right for you.

Getting out of the house is so important and helps to combat the temptation to further withdraw when feeling low. There are a number of excellent services available locally, including peer groups and group based therapy where you are encouraged to attend with your baby.

For more information visit:

letsmush.com

**[Outlooksw.co.uk/
finding-yourself-again](https://outlooksw.co.uk/finding-yourself-again)**
or **Tel. 01209871414**

Tommy's Pregnancy and Post-birth Wellbeing Plan

For more severe mental health problems, a Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team is available. Your midwife will be able to refer you.

CHLAMYDIA & MY BABY

CORNWALL
CHLAMYDIA
SCREENING
01872 258481



**1 IN 12 UNDER 25 YEAR OLDS TEST
POSITIVE FOR CHLAMYDIA.**

Chlamydia can increase the risk of your baby

**Being born prematurely
or with a low birth weight**

It often has no symptoms, but testing is easy with a
self taken vaginal cotton bud swab.



Untreated Chlamydia infections can be passed on
to babies, they may develop:

**Conjunctivitis
& Pneumonia**

If you test positive for Chlamydia during pregnancy it can be treated
with a course of antibiotics to prevent this happening .

Under 25 years olds can order a free self testing kit at:
www.freetest.me

Or alternatively you can ask your midwife or GP for a
chlamydia test, anyone over 25 years old should also request
a test this way.

Preparing for Breastfeeding

**Breastfeeding is great for you and your baby.
Your breast milk is everything your baby needs for the first six months of their life.**

Your breast milk changes depending on what your baby needs and helps to build a strong bond between you both.

Benefits for your baby

- Reduces risk of infection, with less visits to the hospital
- Reduces risk of diarrhoea and vomiting
- Reduces risk of type 2 diabetes later in life
- Reduces risk of obesity

Benefits for you

- Reduces your risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Helps your bones to get stronger
- Helps you to lose your baby weight
- It's free
- There is no hassle to wash and prepare bottles; it's there ready to go!

Breastfeeding and weight loss

When you are pregnant your body stores fat to give you a store of energy, which helps produce breast milk. When you have given birth, breastfeeding will help to use up the energy stores. If you choose not to breastfeed, your body is left with a store of fat it doesn't need, that you might find hard to lose after you have given birth. Breastfeeding burns calories but if you are feeling extra hungry try not to snack on high-fat, high-sugar foods. Choose snacks that are full of nutrients to make sure you continue to eat well whilst you are breastfeeding.

Vitamin D and breastfeeding

If you are exclusively breastfeeding you and your baby will both need a vitamin D supplement. Infant formula is already supplemented with vitamin D so formula-fed babies do not need a supplement if they have more than 500ml a day.

National Breastfeeding Helpline
0300 100 0212

Sign up to Start4Life for trusted NHS advice and breastfeeding support.

Motivation

Are you finding motivation difficult?

Here are a few top tips to keep you going!

1. Set a goal

Make sure your goals are realistic, remember small changes can make a difference! So whether it's increasing your fruit and veg by one portion or going for a short walk twice a week this will benefit you and your baby! Write your goals down and share them with family or friends, this way you will be more likely to stick to it!

2. Reward yourself

If you succeed at your goal, make sure you reward yourself. Rewards are great to keep you motivated, choose something you find enjoyable but try not to make it food related. Such as buying a magazine or nail varnish, having a bubble bath or get your hair done!

3. Sleep

The first few weeks or months you won't get enough. But remember, it will get better! Whilst you probably won't be able to get as much sleep as you would like, holding back on the alcohol and being active during

the day will help make the sleep you do get much better. Sleeping when the baby is sleeping is a great way to get in a few extra precious hours of sleep too.

4. Distract yourself

Find a distraction when you have a food craving and you know you're not hungry.

5. Include family and friends

Keeping active with friends is more fun than going on your own and you are more likely to stick to your plans if you have someone else encouraging you.

6. Don't feel guilty

We all have days where we don't have much energy or eat a bit too much chocolate. If this happens, try not to feel guilty or angry with yourself. Negative feelings can make you feel low and give up on your goals. Remind yourself why you are trying to eat healthier and be more active, and that tomorrow is another day... you don't have to wait until Monday to get back on track!

Helpful links and websites

Change4Life

Tips, activities, recipes, lunchbox and snack ideas

nhs.uk/change4life

Start4Life

Support to give your baby a better start in life. Weekly emails and videos to give you help and advice

nhs.uk/start4life

NHS Choices

Reliable and up to date information on everything you need to know about your pregnancy and beyond, including immunisations, medications and maternity benefits – visit nhs.uk and search ‘pregnancy’

nhs.uk

WILD

A specialist support and education service for young mothers or mothers to be under 23 years and their children

www.wildproject.org.uk

Mush

Helping mums everywhere to instantly become part of their local mum community.

letsmush.com

mush



Dad Pad

The essential guide for new dads, developed with the NHS.



Outlook South West

Psychological therapy services for people aged 16 and above in Cornwall. Self-refer directly for help with difficulties such as: stress, low mood, worry, anger, panic attacks, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

www.outlooksw.co.uk
01208 871905

First Light

Provides support for people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

www.firstlight.org.uk
0300 777 4777

The Trussell Trust

A nationwide network of food banks providing emergency food and support.

www.trusselltrust.org

Young Mums Will Achieve (YMWA)

A programme to support young mothers or mothers to be aged between 14 and 24 years back into mainstream education, employment and training whilst supporting the development of positive parenting and life skills

ymwa@cornwall.ac.uk or
0330 123 2523

Tommys

Helpful midwife led information to support a healthy and safe pregnancy

tommys.org

Handi

The HANDi Paediatric app gives up-to-date advice about common childhood illnesses and how to treat them.



Healthy Pregnancy

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

The Basset Centre, Basset Road, Camborne, TR14 8SL

Tel: 01209 615600

Email: healthy.pregnancy@cornwall.gov.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road,
Truro TR1 3AY

telephone: 0300 1234 100

email: equality@cornwall.gov.uk

www.cornwall.gov.uk