

Obesity and Pregnancy

How can I lose weight safely?

You can safely begin a weight loss journey by getting regular exercise and eating healthy foods. Your doctor can refer you to a nutritionist to help you plan a healthy diet, and to help you increase your level of physical activity. Physical activity, such as brisk walking, jogging, and swimming, is important for losing weight.

How much should I exercise during pregnancy?

You should discuss your exercise plan with your obstetrician to make sure it is safe.

Can I still have a healthy pregnancy if I am obese?

Yes. While your pregnancy will have a higher risk, you can still have a healthy pregnancy. However, you will need to take steps to carefully manage your body weight through diet and exercise. You will also need to ensure you have proper medical care throughout your pregnancy, including labor and delivery.

How does obesity affect labor and delivery?

Overweight and obese women have prolonged labor, compared to normal weight women. Baby monitoring during labor will be more difficult, which increases the chance of a cesarean delivery.

Overweight and obese mothers who have cesarean deliveries also have an increased risk for infections, bleeding, and the other cesarean delivery complications, compared to women who are of a normal weight who have cesarean deliveries.

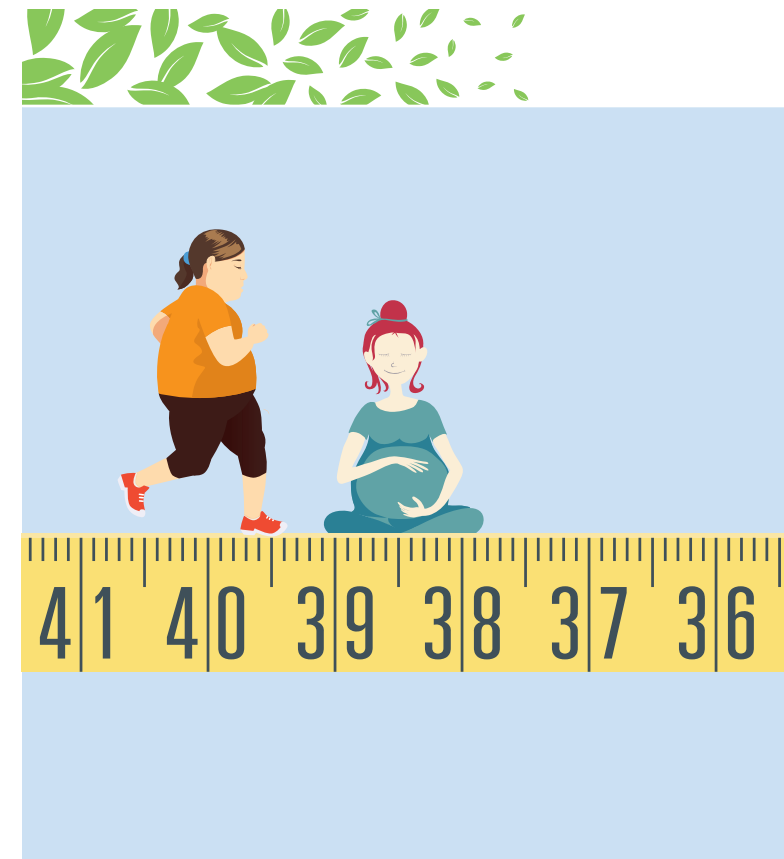
How can I manage my weight after my baby is born?

Be consistent. Stick with your healthy eating and exercise plan. Breastfeeding is also a great way to help you lose weight after the birth of your baby and is recommended for the first year of your baby's life.

References:

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (www.rcog.org.uk/womens-health/clinical-guidance/management-women-obesity-pregnancy).

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth>



Patient and Family Education

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What is obesity?

Obesity is defined as having an excessive amount of body fat. A formula based on height and weight, called body mass index (BMI), is often used to determine if a person is obese.

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 to 24.9	Normal
25 to 29.9	Overweight
30 and higher	Obese
40 and higher	Extreme Obesity

Body Mass Index



Does being obese during pregnancy put me at risk for any health problems?

Obesity during pregnancy puts a woman at risk for several serious health problems, including:

High blood sugar: When diagnosed during pregnancy, high blood sugar can increase a women’s risk of requiring a cesarean delivery. Women who have had high blood sugar during pregnancy also have a higher risk of developing high blood sugar diseases in the future, as do their children.

High blood pressure disorder: This serious illness can affect a woman's main organs, including her liver and kidneys, and can also lead to neurological problems.

Infection: Women who are obese during pregnancy are at increased risk of urinary tract infections and post-delivery infections.

Miscarriage: Obesity increases the risk of pregnancy loss.

Does being obese during pregnancy put my baby at risk of any problem?

Obesity during pregnancy also puts a women’s baby at risk for several serious health problems, including:

Pregnancy loss: Women who are obese miscarry more than women who are of a normal weight.

Birth defects: Babies of obese mothers have an increased risk of having birth defects, such as a hearing defect.

Higher birth weight: The baby of an obese mother will be larger than normal, which increases the risk of the baby being injured during birth.

Pre-term birth: Babies of obese mothers are more likely to require early delivery for medical reasons.

If I am overweight or obese, should I plan to lose weight before getting pregnant?

Yes. Losing weight before becoming pregnant is the best way to decrease the risk of problems caused by obesity.

