

- Eat as little as possible of: fried foods; drinks and confectionery high in added sugars; and other food and drinks 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 you are eating

For more advice visit: www.patient.co.uk/health/Healthy-Eating.htm
www.eatwell.gov.uk

Energy Out – Physical Activity

An adult should do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise five times per week. To lose weight you may require to increase this further.

Moderate intensive exercise includes brisk walking, stair climbing or gardening. This 30 minutes of exercise can be broken up into 10 minute sections through the day. Find ways of fitting it into your daily routine:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Try to walk or cycle short journeys instead of using the car
- Try to take up a sport as a hobby so it is fun rather than a chore

Free Gym and Swim

Working out at the gym can be a good way to exercise.

Worried about the cost?

Birmingham County Council has a scheme called "Be Active" which provides all Birmingham residents with **FREE**:

- Group fitness classes before 5pm Monday-Friday and after 1pm at weekends
- Fitness gyms before 5pm Monday-Friday

- and after 1pm at weekends
- Swimming at all times during casual public sessions

For more information speak to your local leisure centre or visit: www.birmingham.gov.uk/beactive

Group activities can be a great way of losing weight. Try Weight Watchers; www.weightwatchers.co.uk or Slimming World: www.slimmingworld.com

Isn't there a tablet I can take or surgery I can have to lose weight?

There are tablets available which your GP can prescribe to aid weight loss. However these only work along with diet and exercise. You need to show that you are losing weight while taking the drug to continue on it.

Surgery may be considered if your BMI is 40 or more. Speak with your GP.

Further Information

British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk
 Patient UK: www.patient.co.uk
 British Nutrition Foundation: www.nutrition.org.uk
 Change4life: www.nhs.uk/change4life

Author: Dr Lynne Robinson

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Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust
 Metchley Park Road
 Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TG
 Telephone: 0121 472 1377
 Fax: 0121 627 2602

Effects of being overweight

Weight is an increasing health problem with more than half of the women in the UK being overweight or obese.

It is important to maintain a healthy weight to improve your health as carrying extra weight can increase the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. It also decreases the chances of getting pregnant and increases the risk of miscarriage and other complications during pregnancy. This information is designed to help you understand the risks of being overweight and how to lose the excess pounds.

What is obesity and what causes it?

We put on weight when the amount of energy (calories) that we consume in food and drink is greater than the amount that we use by being active. By taking in more calories than your body is burning, you will gain weight. The extra calories that you have not used will be stored as fat which will result in weight gain. If you're not physically active, you are even more likely to gain weight.

To estimate if your weight is appropriate for your height we use Body Mass Index (BMI).

We use the calculation: BMI= weight (kg)/height (m²).

Normal BMI = 19-24.9

Overweight BMI = 25-29.9

Obese = 30-39.9

Very obese = 40+

It is useful to know your BMI as when your weight increases or decreases outside the normal range health risks may also increase.

Am I overweight because of a slower metabolism?

No. This is a commonly held belief but is not true. As you gain weight your metabolic rate actually increases as you use up more energy to move your increased weight around.

How does my weight affect my fertility?

Body weight has a significant effect on our ability to release an egg every month (ovulate). Even a small decrease in body weight of 5-10% can restore regular periods and therefore increase the chances of becoming pregnant naturally.

How does my weight affect the success of fertility treatment?

Obese women are harder to monitor with ultrasound scans and require more drugs to produce eggs. The chance of very obese women successfully becoming pregnant after in vitro fertilization (IVF) is just half that of women with a normal BMI

What effect does my weight have on pregnancy?

Obesity significantly increases the likelihood of the following in pregnancy:

- High blood pressure
- Pulmonary embolism and deep vein thrombosis (blood clot in the lung or eg)
- Diabetes
- Birth defects and still birth
- Requiring a Caesarean section to deliver the baby.

Birth defects double in women with BMI over 40.

Weight loss

How do I lose weight?

To lose weight we need to decrease our energy input and increase the energy we use.

Life style change

The most effective way to lose weight and keep it off is through lifestyle change. This means altering your diet and changing your physical activity habits long term.

TOP TIP: There is good evidence that continuing to do something for 21 days means it becomes a habit.

Crash diets are not good at bringing about long lasting change, and often result in weight gain in the longer term.

Realistic Goal

A realistic goal is to aim to lose 5-10% of your body weight in the first instance. losing about one to two pounds (between half a kilo and one kilo) a week. Weigh yourself regularly as evidence shows this keeps your focus on losing weight.

Energy In – Diet

Your GP can refer you to a dietitian for dietary advice. You should try to:

- Choose wholegrain foods, for example: brown bread and wholegrain pasta.
- Eat plenty of fibre-rich foods – such as oats, beans, peas, lentils, grains and seeds
- Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day in place of foods higher in fat and calories.
- Eat a low-fat diet,