



WEIGHT MANAGEMENT DURING PREGNANCY

Patient information to assist informed consent

Excess weight has become epidemic in Australia and New Zealand, with about five out of 10 women classified as either overweight or obese. Excess weight can lead to major health problems for women and their babies. Many clinical studies have proven that obesity is linked to serious health risks, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and arthritis, among others. During pregnancy, obesity puts both the mother and baby at increased risk of complications. Many genetic, social, behavioural and educational factors are involved in the development of obesity and excess weight. This means that no single approach to weight loss will always be effective. A weight-loss program should be tailored for each woman and should involve dietary changes, exercise and counselling.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION

For overweight or obese women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or have recently given birth, their doctors may choose to provide the following:

- information about weight-loss methods and nutrition before becoming pregnant, and diet during pregnancy
- information about risks to the mother and baby during pregnancy and labour
- advice about screening for diabetes and gestational diabetes
- dietary supplements, including folate, calcium, vitamin B12, iron and vitamin D
- consultation during pregnancy with an anaesthetist because caesarean section is more common and anaesthesia may have complications
- consultation with a dietitian about nutrition and appropriate weight gain during pregnancy
- counselling about nutrition and exercise following delivery and for future pregnancies
- consultation with a bariatric surgeon if a gastric band is in place, as adjustment

during pregnancy may be necessary

- follow-up and discussion about further approaches that may be indicated, such as bariatric surgery.

YOUR COMPLETE MEDICAL HISTORY

Your doctor and anaesthetist need to know your medical history. Discuss with your doctors any health problems you have had because some may interfere with pregnancy, delivery or recovery. Tell your doctors if you have or have had:

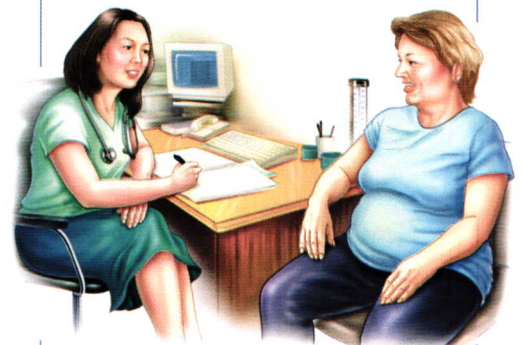
- an allergy or bad reaction to antibiotics, anaesthetic drugs, or any other medicines
- prolonged bleeding or excessive bruising when injured
- recent or long-term illness
- bariatric surgery or any other surgery.

Give your doctors a list of ALL medicines that you are taking or have recently taken. Include prescribed medicines, those bought without prescription, and "alternative" preparations. Include treatments such as blood pressure tablets, anti-depressants and others.

Smoking: It is wise to stop smoking before pregnancy because of the negative

effects on, and risks to, the developing fetus and the mother. Smoking has been linked to poor growth of the baby and stillbirth. Smoking significantly delays healing in the event of a caesarean section or other intervention. Your doctor will have information on Quit programs. If you cannot stop, reduce smoking as much as you can. It is best to quit.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR



The aim of this pamphlet is to provide general information for women who:

- are already overweight or obese when they become pregnant
- become overweight or obese during pregnancy.

This pamphlet is not a substitute for advice from your doctor. It does not contain all known facts about weight management during pregnancy. However, it provides important information that you may find helpful.

Read this pamphlet carefully, and save it for reference. Some terms may require further explanation by your doctor.

Write down questions you want to ask. Your doctor will be pleased to answer questions and discuss concerns you may have. If you are uncertain about the advice, consider seeking another medical opinion.

IMPORTANT: FILL IN ALL DETAILS ON THE STICKER BELOW

DEAR DOCTOR: When you discuss this pamphlet with your patient, remove this sticker, and put it on the patient's medical history or card. This will remind you and the patient that this pamphlet has been provided. Some doctors ask their patients to sign the sticker to confirm receipt of the pamphlet.