

## Tips For Changes in the Body

Become educated - read pregnancy books, talk to others, attend your antenatal classes.

Take some quiet time to reflect on the wonder of your changing body and how these are supporting the needs of your baby. Be kind to yourself and indulge all your senses to make your body feel pampered and relaxed.

Consider joining a support/self help group, eg, SEED Eating Disorder Support Services, where body image workshops may be available.

Express your wishes regarding your preferred choice of health care worker. You can use your appointments with them to express your hopes and fears about your changing body.

Develop and practice assertive strategies for dealing with attention from others regarding your pregnant state.

Wear clothes in the right size that are comfortable for you as your pregnancy develops.



There is medication that is safe to take when breastfeeding.

## Once Your Baby Is Born

### Congratulations!

Now your baby has arrived, just be aware of prolonged mood changes and seek help from your GP, Midwife or House of Light if this becomes too distressing.



Mums wishing to breast feed their babies may wish to seek help from their Midwife or Health Visitor who are available to support you in addressing your goals in feeding your baby.

Please don't forget about contraception, this is **very** important!

## In Summary

Ensure a better well being both emotionally and physically prior to conceiving.

Inform your obstetrician of your eating disorder and know what additional help is available.

Consider working with a dietitian who has specialist experience of eating disorders to ensure diet and weight is maintained throughout your pregnancy

Consider engaging in help available from local mental health services and eating disorders services to help you anticipate and manage the challenges of pregnancy and parenting.



Please make sure that your mental health well being and physical needs are met.

## Useful Information

**Perinatal Mental Health Services** - via Single Point of Access

**Dietitian (Hull) Services** - via Single Point Of Access 617560

**House of Light** - Self Help Services <http://www.pndsupport.co.uk>

Telephone No: 0800 0432031

**Samaritans** - 08457 90 90 90

**NHs Direct** - 0845 46 47

**Crisis in Pregnancy Centre Hull** - 01482 491929

DoH Pregnancy book 2009 -

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_107302](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_107302)

c/o 207 Lambwath Road, Hull, HU8 0HS



**Helpline: 01482 718130**

**Email: [info@seedeatingdisorders.co.uk](mailto:info@seedeatingdisorders.co.uk)**

[www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk)



## SEED Eating Disorders Support Services

Support and

Empathy for people with

Eating

Disorders



## Being Healthy In Pregnancy



In partnership with Perinatal Mental Health Services, Humber NHS Foundation Trust and City Health Care Partnership's Eating Disorder Advice and Consultation Team

**Telephone: 01482 718130**

Charity No 1108405

## Preparing to Conceive

It is important that there is an improvement in the level of management over your eating disorder prior to trying for a baby. This will include nutrition and problem behaviours. This is because being of a low weight and engaging in behaviours to compensate for the food you eat can compromise your fertility.

A healthy weight promotes ovulation. Many women with eating disorders may experience a disruption in their hormone production, and periods may not be present. If this is the case they are less likely to ovulate and release a mature egg, which would enable them to become pregnant. Women with Bulimia Nervosa can be of normal weight, but can still have severe nutritional deficiencies that can affect their fertility. Research has shown that once a healthy dietary intake has been resumed, problem behaviours have reduced and weight improved, women with eating disorders can expect to resume their menstrual cycles.

Fulfilling your role as a mother by supporting your growing baby during pregnancy and once your baby has arrived requires great physical and emotional strength, so it is important that you are at your best possible health.

## Getting The Right Help!



During your pregnancy, it is advisable that you seek specialist medical, dietetic and psychological help to enable you to cope with your pregnancy and eating disorder symptoms. Support is available to you via your GP, Midwife, Health Visitor and within Primary Care Services. Your GP can also refer you to Single Point of Access, who would look at what support would be appropriate to meet your needs. In addition, self help can be sought via SEED Eating Disorder Support Services. It is also recommended that you inform your Obstetrician about your illness in order that appropriate support and monitoring can be provided.

## Risks During Pregnancy

The outcome of pregnancy may be compromised in women with disordered eating.

Possible risks to you include:

- poor nutrition
- dehydration
- cardiac irregularities
- gestational diabetes
- premature birth
- labour complications
- difficulties nursing, and
- depression.

Possible risks to your baby include:

- delayed development
- premature birth
- low birth weight for age
- respiratory distress
- other perinatal complications
- feeding difficulties.

The above risks can be minimised by significantly reducing disordered eating patterns, including restricting intake or bingeing and purging, maintaining a healthy weight before conception, and allowing the desirable weight gain during pregnancy.

## Once You Are Pregnant

Although this is happy news for most women, for those experiencing eating disorders the confirmation of being pregnant can create an uncomfortable mix of emotions. Pregnancy may have a positive or negative impact on a woman's eating disorder and this may be difficult to predict at first. Your eating disorder may exacerbate the fears that most women have anyway; surrounding weight gain, changes to body shape and disruptions to life routines. Some women find that they develop better control over their eating disorder symptoms during pregnancy, which is motivated by desire to have healthy babies and be healthy themselves in order to provide the best care for them. However some women continue to have difficulties with poor/distorted body image and are unable to distinguish being pregnant from being "overweight". There is also a common fear that the weight gain during pregnancy will become out of control.

## Medication

Many women with active or past eating disorders take medication, such as antidepressants. Medication is an important part of life for a lot of people and it should not be discontinued suddenly as it may lead to a deterioration in your mental health. Ideally, it should be discussed with your GP or consultant before or as soon as you find out you are pregnant to ensure the best outcome for you and your baby. Your Doctor is able to discuss this with Perinatal Mental Health Liaison Team's Consultant Psychiatrist if needed. It is crucial to protect your emotional health and wellbeing as pregnancy is a major psychological and physical adjustment.

Due to the potential risks of developing postnatal depression which has an association eating disorders, you should discuss the possibility of taking antidepressant medication within 6 weeks of delivery should you feel your mood has deteriorated. If this is the case, you should consult with your GP to assess what is most suitable for your needs, in view of your medical history. GP's are more than welcome to consult with the Perinatal Mental Health Team Psychiatrist.

There are medications that are safe to take when breastfeeding.



## Eating Well

It is important to eat well-balanced meals and to stay hydrated with plenty of fluids during pregnancy. The 'average' woman gains between 25 - 35 pounds during a healthy pregnancy. As the foetus develops, it takes nourishment from the mother. If she suffers from an eating disorder this can seriously deplete her own reserves and she may begin to experience exhaustion and low mood can accompany being under nourished.

Consult with a specialist eating disorders dietitian before, or as soon as you know you are pregnant. With their help, you can create a healthy eating plan to support your own physical and emotional wellbeing during pregnancy, as well as the development of your growing baby. After the arrival of your baby you may wish to continue to see the dietitian for help and advice on returning to a weight you are comfortable with through healthy means.

