

Physical activity advice for pregnant women

If you are pregnant, there is new advice about the types of physical activity that are safe to do while you're expecting. Taking part in safe, responsible and appropriate physical activity while pregnant can have many health benefits.

Addressing health concerns

The new recommendations aim to address concerns around obesity, diabetes and other health issues during pregnancy.

Research shows that taking regular physical exercise during pregnancy can:

- boost the immune system
- help prevent health risks such as Type 2 diabetes
- improve mental health and wellbeing

If you are pregnant you should listen to your body and adapt your exercise accordingly.

As a general rule, if it feels pleasant, keep going; if it is uncomfortable, then stop and seek advice from your health professional.

If you are already active then try to keep up your physical activity levels.

You may need to adapt your activity throughout your pregnancy. For example, replacing contact sports with a non-contact sport or an appropriate exercise class – 'don't bump the bump'.

There is no evidence of harm for expectant mother or baby resulting from moderate intensity physical activity.

If you weren't active before pregnancy, it is recommended you slowly increase the amount of exercise you do. Begin with 10-minute bouts of moderate-intensity exercise, gradually building up to 150 minutes in total spread throughout the week. It is important to remember that 'every activity counts'.

If you were not active before your pregnancy you should avoid intense exercise, such as:

- running
- jogging
- racquet sports
- strenuous strength training

Activities to avoid

If pregnant you should avoid activities where there is an increased risk of falling, trauma or high impact injuries. These include:

- skiing
- water skiing
- surfing
- off-road cycling
- gymnastics
- horse riding
- contact sports, such as ice hockey, boxing, football or basketball

After the first trimester of your pregnancy you are also discouraged from exercise that requires lying flat on your back.

Medical advice

You should seek medical advice if you experience:

- breathlessness before or following mild exercise
- headaches
- dizziness
- chest pain
- muscle weakness affecting balance
- calf pain or swelling

If you experience pregnancy complications such as vaginal bleeding, regular painful contractions, or amniotic fluid leakage, you may also be advised to reduce or stop physical activity.

More useful links

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[Speak to your family about organ donation](#)

Everyone is being encouraged to sit down with their loved ones and talk about their organ donation wishes. A family will always have to agree to donation, whether or not their loved one is on the Organ Donor Register. You can sign up to the register online.

Organ Donor Register

The organ donation system in Northern Ireland is based on opting in to being a donor, and donors' families giving consent for their organs to be used.

Some families do not consent to the donation of their loved one's organs, when faced with this choice. A common reason for refusing is that the potential donor's family was not aware of their loved one's wishes. So everyone is encouraged to make their organ donation intentions clear.

When you sign up to the Organ Donor Register you will be able to register to:

- be a donor
- not be a donor
- record the details of up to two representatives, if you feel you would want someone to make that decision for you after death

How to register

By signing the register and talking to your family about your wishes, you could help save the lives of up to seven people. Organ donation really is the gift of life.

You can find out more, including how to join the register, on the page below:

Age isn't a barrier to being an organ or tissue donor, and neither are most medical conditions.

People in their 50s and over are encouraged to join, and people in their 70s and 80s have become donors and saved many lives.

More useful links

[Jury notice form of return online](#)

Members of the public will be receiving jury notices in the post. If you get one, you must fill in the Form of Return. You can do this online.

Jury service

Each year people are randomly selected from the Electoral Register to potentially be called for jury service.

If you [get a jury notice](#), this means that you may be called for jury service at any time during a 12-month period from the beginning of July 2019 until

the end of June 2020.

You must fill in a Form of Return within 14 days of receiving your jury notice. The most straightforward way to do this online at the following link:

If you fail to make a return within 14 days, or make a false statement, you will be liable on conviction of a Magistrates' Court to a fine of up to £1,000.

You should fully read the documents attached to the notice.

Jury summons

If you are selected at random for jury service, you will receive a jury summons.

This will have further information, including where and when you are required to attend to meet your legal obligations as a juror.

The jury summons will give you at least 10 days' notice to enable you to make arrangements to attend. However, longer notice will try to be given where possible.

You can find more information in the [jury service](#) section.

More useful links

[Remember to put clocks forward this weekend](#)

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Make sure you remember to put your clocks forward this weekend, as British Summer Time begins on Sunday (31 March). While you may get an hour's less sleep, on the plus side evenings will now be lighter for longer.

Reset clocks on Saturday night

At the moment we are on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). At 1.00 am on Sunday (31 March) the clocks will go forward an hour as we move to British Summer Time, meaning it will be 2.00 am.

You should reset your household clocks, watches and time-based equipment on Saturday night, so you don't spend Sunday trying to figure why you're late. The equipment you may need to reset includes:

- clocks – especially alarm clocks
- central heating and hot water timers
- your mobile device and computer (if their time zone settings do not instruct them to automatically take the correct local time from the internet)

British Summer Time ends on the last Sunday in October, at 1.00 am Greenwich Mean Time.

More useful links

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Take care driving in wintry conditions

With wintry weather forecast, icy roads, sleet and snow could make driving conditions more difficult in some areas. Always adjust your driving according to the conditions and plan your journey. Reduce your speed and drive with extra care, even when roads have been gritted.

Drive to suit the conditions

During adverse weather, you should:

- clear ice and snow off all windows, lights and vehicle roof before you set off
- use at least dipped headlights in poor visibility
- leave extra space between you and other vehicles
- be extra cautious at road junctions where road markings may not be visible

Even after roads have been treated in winter, driving conditions may remain challenging, especially if the road location and layout mean there is a high risk of ice. Be aware that ice forms more easily on:

- hilly or exposed roads

- roads that pass under or over a bridge
- roads shaded by trees or buildings

Try not to brake suddenly in icy conditions – it may lock up the wheels and you could skid.

If you start to skid:

- release the brake pedal fully or ease off the accelerator
- steer into the skid
- as you straighten, steer back along the road

You can find out more about driving in wintry conditions at the page below:

Check and service your vehicle

You can reduce your chances of breaking down by regularly servicing your car. You should also:

- top up anti-freeze and screenwash
- check for wear and tear on wiper blades (replace them as soon as they start to smear rather than clean windows)
- make sure your battery is fully charged (batteries last between two and four years – replace yours if it's no longer reliable)
- keep tyre pressure at the manufacturer's recommended level and check you have at least 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the breadth of the tread and around the entire circumference
- wipe dirt and spray off headlamps and make sure all bulbs are working

Winter kit

During winter you are advised to carry a winter kit in your vehicle. It should include:

- ice scraper and de-icer
- torch and spare batteries (or a wind-up torch)
- warm clothes and blankets
- boots
- first aid kit
- jump leads for the car battery
- a shovel (if there's a chance of snow)
- road atlas
- sunglasses (the low winter sun and glare off snow can be dazzling)
- warning triangle

If you're planning a long trip or if severe weather is forecast, you may want to also have in your car:

- any medication you need to take regularly
- food and a thermos with a hot drink

Is your journey necessary?

You should always plan your journey and check the latest weather and travel advice.

If the conditions are bad, ask yourself whether you really need to travel – or if you can delay your journey until conditions improve.

If you must travel, plan your journey carefully.

Traffic information

However carefully you plan your journey, things can go wrong. An accident or bad weather could mean that a road is closed for a time.

You can get up-to-date traffic information at the following link:

If you find yourself on a stretch of road that is closed, stay in the car and listen to traffic news.

Driving and walking in flooded areas

Do not travel in heavy rainstorms unless absolutely necessary.

In flooded areas, drivers should not:

- enter flood water that is moving or is more than four inches deep
- under any circumstances, drive through fast-flowing water as the car could be swept away

In more shallow but passable water:

- slow down
- avoid creating bow waves which can damage your car engine; and
- remember to test the brakes after leaving the water

Do not attempt to walk through flooded areas. Even shallow water moving fast can sweep you off your feet and there may be hidden dangers such as:

- open drains
- damaged road surfaces
- submerged debris; or
- deep channels which can result in serious injury or, in the worst cases, death

If you do become stranded in flood water and you feel there is a risk to life, dial 999 for emergency assistance.

More useful links

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