



# SUPPORTING POSTNATAL WEIGHT MANAGEMENT





# Welcome

**S**upporting postnatal weight management is an important area and there are many opportunities to support women and families at this stage of life. As the wellbeing of mothers is crucial to the health of families, this ebulletin aims to highlight effective strategies, evidence-based approaches, and innovative solutions that promote healthy, sustainable weight management following childbirth.

This e-bulletin includes a range of projects and initiatives who have focused on enhancing postnatal weight management support in communities across Wales.

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*Public Health Wales*

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## Webinar: Supporting Postnatal Weight Management

Public Health Wales



**S**upporting postnatal weight management is an important area and there are many opportunities to support women and families at this stage of life.

This event focused on postnatal health and wellbeing where we explored the importance of supporting postnatal weight management, what needs to be done to provide this support, and what the next steps for doing this may involve.

Click [here](#) to find out more and view the presentations and live recording from the event.

## Conference: Building Strong Foundations: Enhancing Mental Health and Wellbeing for Babies, Children and Young People

Please ensure that you register for the event you can attend in person. We will be announcing the full programme very soon so please watch this space.

The conference will align with PHNC objectives of sharing knowledge, facilitating the developments of solutions and approaches and connecting members and building a community. The day will follow a structure of policy, research and practice and will include an 'open space' element which enables conversations with peers to discuss the challenges you face and allows you to share your experiences and encourage cross sector collaboration to find solutions.

[20 February 2025](#)  
[Cardiff](#)

[26 March 2025](#)  
[Llandudno](#)

# Supporting Postnatal Weight Management in Primary and Community Care

## Background



**1 IN 2**

women gain excessive weight in pregnancy.

**84%** of people in Wales think it is **important** for health professionals to provide support for postnatal weight management.



Our research looked at how postnatal weight management support could be embedded into routine primary or community care.



## Key messages

### For policy makers and practitioners

There was a **lack of consistent evidence** for how to best embed support.

The approaches that hold most promise:

Weight management interventions start around

**6 MONTHS** postnatal



are delivered in **routine health or child care appointments.**



Generally, both staff and women found the initiatives acceptable.

# Key messages

## For researchers

This is an **important and under-researched** area. We only found

**11 PAPERS**

including **1 UK study.**

**Only 2 studies** reported staff or women's views on postnatal weight management support.



There was a **lack of research embedding support beyond one year postnatal.**

## What needs to happen next?



We need **more research, especially in the UK** to understand the role that primary and community care can play in supporting women's weight after pregnancy.

There needs to be **raised awareness** about **the importance of embedding** postnatal weight management support and the role health care workers can play.





**Practice**

## Eating Well and Healthy Weight Management: Supporting Women and Families Across North Wales

**Andrea Basu,**

Service Lead, Public Health Dietetics,  
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board  
(BCUHB)

Good nutrition and healthy weight management throughout the perinatal period is pivotal in protecting short- and long-term health and wellbeing. Working collaboratively across services to ensure key messages are accurate and consistent is a key ingredient to ensure communications are practical, timely, and appropriate for the family unit. Within BCUHB, the Prevention and Early Years (PEYs) grant has enhanced core dietetic capacity provided by Nutrition Skills for Life (1), to increase opportunities for partnership working, notably through widening access to

training, information and resources for front line teams to maximise contacts with women and families after childbirth.

With the additional funding, public health dietetics has developed closer working with Flying Start teams, community pharmacies, women’s and children’s services and early childcare settings and public health to extend and adapt core training and resource offers, including:

**‘Eating for 1 Healthy and Active for 2’ training** adapted from the original

model (2) to support health visiting teams as part of their Healthy Child Wales programme delivery, particularly enhanced components (3)

**Creating content for the BCUHB Best Start hub** for women and parents after pregnancy [A healthy diet for you and your baby - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#)

**Increasing awareness of free access to self-management support tools** like Foodwise In Pregnancy and Foodwise for



Life Apps, enabling women's and children's services to confidently signpost to trusted resources (4)

**Widening access to Healthy Start vitamins** by partnering with community pharmacies to stock the vitamins in key locations  
[Healthy Start Scheme - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#)

**Complementing existing parenting support** (5) offering *Eat Smart Save Better* and *Introducing solid foods* short engagement sessions alongside capacity building amongst Flying Start teams to facilitate practical cooking skills courses like *Come and Cook*.

**Promoting access to weight management support** Help with my Weight North Wales  
[Help with my Weight - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#)

Additional capacity afforded through the PEYs grant has enabled the dietetics team to build a wider understanding of opportunities to extend and complement knowledge and skill development within, and between services supporting families after childbirth. This serves to strengthen the application of key food and nutrition resources to maximise collective effort and build greater consistency in approach.

In practice, 100% of the Flying Start and health visiting team members who accessed training in the last 12 months (n=27) reported their knowledge of ways to support women with eating well and healthy weight management before, during, and after pregnancy had increased. Demand for this particular training has increased as a result, with more sessions planned during 2025.

Holistic approaches that support women and their families, extending beyond pregnancy are needed. Bringing together existing and complementary resources to underpin planned and opportunistic contacts is a prudent approach that ensures the nutritional health and wellbeing of mothers in particular, are considered alongside the needs of children and the wider family unit. Utilising funding routes such as the PEYs grant has enabled this way of working to evolve and flourish, however continued funding is vital to ensure collaborative efforts that share consistent food and nutrition messages across services for women and families across North Wales are maintained.

## References

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## Practice

# Making Every Contact Count: Having Healthy Weight Conversations

**Sophia Bird,**

Principal Public Health Practitioner, Public Health Wales



Living with overweight or obesity is now normal for many people in Wales with 2/3rds of adult being affected. Overweight and obesity increases the risks of a number of health conditions which impact on our health and wellbeing, and limit our engagement in things that are important to us, such as being able to play with our children. For women experiencing overweight or obesity during pregnancy, there is an increased risk of antenatal and post-natal anxiety and depression, as well as post-partum complications for mother and child, and can

increase the risk of the child experiencing overweight from infancy through to adulthood. The environments in which we live, work and play can make it difficult for us to be and maintain a healthy weight. Sometimes having a brief conversation with a friend or colleague around weight can help us to express what is important to us and identify some small changes we can make that will help improve our wellbeing and prevent illness. Colleagues across Public Health, Dietetics, and Psychology have developed some e-learning resources to

support people within health and care settings, and wider, to have these healthy weight conversations with those we meet as part of our everyday interactions.

Within health and care settings this approach has been used for a number of years to support people to think about the actions they can take to increase their health and well being. This is known as the Making Every Contact Count programme, or MECC for short.

Two modules have been developed, at level 1 and level

2 within MECC. These are aimed at giving non-specialist staff from a wide range of organisations the confidence and skills to identify opportunities to initiate a healthy weight conversation and provide brief advice and signposting to further support.

To find out more about MECC and the online courses available, click here:

[https://mecc.  
publichealthnetwork.cymru/  
en/](https://mecc.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/)

To get support for your own weight management journey, check out the Healthy Weight: Healthy You website which provides a unique, bi-lingual offer that is tailored to your needs:

<https://healthyweight.wales/>



## Practice

# Best Start in Life – Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Healthy Pregnancy Service

**Lucy Usher,**

Dietitian, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Weight Management Service

A national priority, as part of Healthy Weight Healthy Wales strategy (1) is to “promote and support families to provide the best start in life, from pre-pregnancy to early years”. The first 1,000 days of the baby’s life, which includes the nine months of pregnancy, are seen as a critical window of opportunity to get nutrition right and not putting on too much weight in pregnancy helps to manage the increased risks for mother and baby (2). Over 28% of pregnant women in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) were classified as obese at their initial assessment (3)

A Healthy Pregnancy Team was set up between August 2022 and February 2024 across ABUHB to support people to improve diet and physical activity levels during pregnancy to achieve; healthier lifestyles, gestational weight gain within recommendations (4), reduced risk of complications during pregnancy and birth, and healthy babies and families.

There were a total of 1748 referrals to the Healthy Pregnancy Team and 73% were reached and had a brief intervention with a maternity

assistant practitioner (MAP). All were offered on-going support with 83% of those eligible for level 3 accepting specialist one to one support from Dietitian and 57% of those eligible for level 2 accepting either group or one to one support from MAP. 83% of people at Level 3 and 72% at Level 2 achieved weight change within guidelines. There were improved rates of breastfeeding, with an increase of 20% seen at level 3, which is important as there are lower rates of breastfeeding in those within the higher BMI categories (5). Less complications and lower rates

of low birthweight babies were also observed. 81% reported that they intended to continue with positive lifestyle changes.

A post-natal appointment was offered between 2 and 6 months after birth, with 41 people attending an appointment with dietitian by the time the pilot project ended. 15 people attended face-to-face and had a weight recorded, 11 of these (73%) had lost further weight and improved their BMI. 5 people reduced their BMI classification (6) and associated health risk. In the 18 months of the pilot project we had 2 examples where people started a second pregnancy with a lower BMI, which further influences risk, the level of care the pregnant person will receive and service user cost.

People were signposted to appropriate options if on-going support was required; 7% were referred for Mental Wellbeing Services, 7% community-based activities and 24% to ABUHB Weight Management Service. Future services should ensure links with other services to be able to provide on-going support for families. Improvements around waiting time for services and the option to 'fast-track' those planning to have more children could be considered for future interventions as well as

being able to refer to family interventions for healthy lifestyle would provide an ideal opportunity to further enhance 'best start in life'.

#### References:

- Welsh Government (2019). Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales Strategy. Available at: [gov.wales/healthy-weight-strategy-healthy-weight-healthy-wales](https://gov.wales/healthy-weight-strategy-healthy-weight-healthy-wales)
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[management-pathway-2021.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://all-wales-weight-management-pathway-2021.pdf)

# Grapevine





## Public Health Campaign to Support Ageing Well – Help us spread the word!

Rachel Millar and Dr. Jitka Vseteckova,

The Open University

From **1st May**, The Open University and Age UK are launching a free, UK-wide public health campaign: **Take Five to Age Well**. The campaign invites people to [sign up online](#) from **April** and **commit to 31 days of healthy ageing habits that will boost health and wellbeing now and into the future**. Taking part in Take Five, participants join a community making small daily changes for better ageing across 5 categories: **Eat, Drink, Move, Connect, and Engage and Think**. We are keen to share this campaign with the public and would love you to help us! **Please support us by using our [communications toolkit](#)**

### **to share Take Five with the public from 7<sup>th</sup> April.**

There are posters for social media / print, newsletter piece wordings and other resources that you can use / adapt to share with your audiences. Feel free to get in touch for further information or for a meeting: [Rachel.millar@open.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.millar@open.ac.uk)

We also have a website: <https://wels.open.ac.uk/research/projects/take-5>

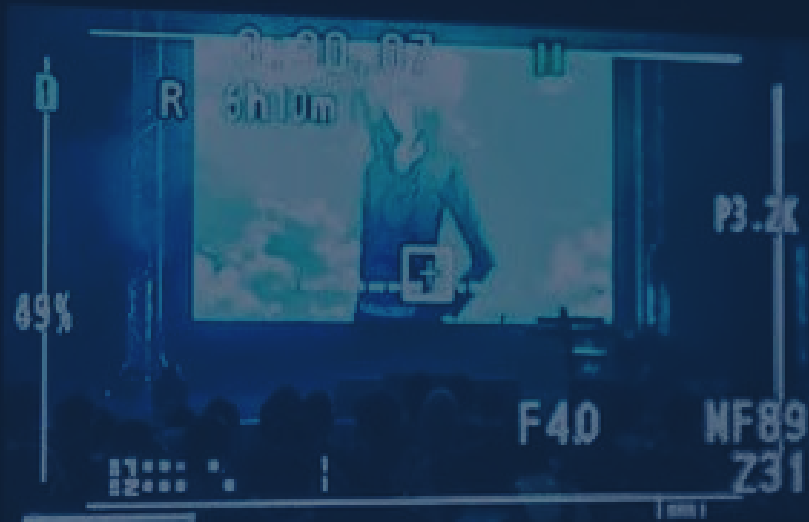
### **Background of Take Five:**

Take Five was piloted by the Open University in 2023 and over 3000 people participated with overwhelmingly positive feedback. All content is evidence-based and expert-

led, helping to bring a lasting positive impact. We provide suggestions for daily actions that are proven to boost health and wellbeing and throughout the month, we'll be sending participants regular emails with interesting facts, motivation and top tips.

**This is open to everyone - ageing well research suggests “the sooner the better but never too late” to adopt these habits and we are as inclusive as possible. Sign up link for April: <https://nquire.org.uk/mission/take-five-to-age-well-25-make-your-pledge/contribute>**

# Videos



BARS

EVF DTL ZEBRA

LCD WFM

COUNTER-RESET/TC SE

FUNCTION SHTR/F





## Supporting postnatal weight management

We explore the need to develop the evidence base, discuss a behavioural science perspective and consider next steps for developing policy and practice to support postnatal health and wellbeing.

[Watch](#)



## Public Health Wales' International Public Health Forum

The International Health Forum promoted the experiences of colleagues across Public Health Wales, shared their learnings from engaging in international health activities and research and provided time to discuss opportunities for the future to engage in international partnerships working and networks.

[Watch](#)



## WHIASU@20

The landscape of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has changed massively over the last 20 years, and the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) have been right at the heart of it since its founding in 2004.

[Watch](#)

Explore our video library on our website

[View all our videos](#)

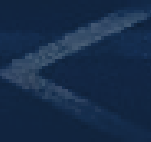
# News & Resources



...you have been in this game  
so long and what have you

walk and most  
never talk.

11





[Tooth decay rates in 12-year-olds in Wales fall, but challenges remain](#)

28-01-2025



[International evidence shows 'sugar taxes' reduce uptake of less healthy foods](#)

16-01-2025



[Preventing poor health is better value for money for NHS Wales and tackles inequalities](#)

15-01-2025

[All News](#)

## [Fiscal Levers to Address Obesity](#)

Public Health Wales

## [Investing in a Healthier Wales: prioritising prevention](#)

Public Health Wales

[All Resources](#)

## Next Issue

# GREEN AND BLUE SPACES FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING



Natural environments and accessible green and blue spaces play a direct and indirect role in health and wellbeing. They can mitigate climate change impacts and support active recreation, providing valuable opportunities for healing, relaxation, and growth.

For our upcoming e-bulletin we would like to hear from projects and initiatives that are actively promoting the benefits of green and blue spaces across Wales. These can be national, regional or local initiatives, policies or programmes.

Our article submission form will provide you with further information on word count, layout of your article and guidance for images.

Please send articles to [publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk) by 20 February 2025.

[Contribute](#)