

- When you arrive on the labour ward tell your midwife that you need to see the duty anaesthetist

Tel: 01202 665511 (Bleep 0399 Obstetric Anaesthetist)

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

The Health Information Centre
Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole
Dorset
BH15 2JB
Telephone: 01202 448003
www.poole.nhs.uk

Department of Anaesthesia Patient information

Provision of emergency care

Occasionally women who are requiring emergency/urgent care in maternity require a second anaesthetist before anaesthetic care can be provided. This anaesthetist may have to come from the main Poole Hospital site or be called in from home. This is to allow for the safest care possible for the mother, despite the extra time required for this. The higher the BMI of the patient, the more increased the risk of this occurring is.

Further Information

- The Obstetric Anaesthetists' Association provide patient information on 'Pain Relief in Labour' and 'Anaesthesia for Caesarean Section'.
www.labourpains.com/ui/content/content.aspx?ID=331
- Royal College of Anaesthetists provide patient information leaflets.
www.rcoa.ac.uk/document-store

We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01202 448499, text 07758 272495 or email pals@poole.nhs.uk for advice. If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience team confidentially: phone 01202 448003, write to the Health Information Centre (address above), or email healthinfo@poole.nhs.uk.

Contact details

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How your weight may affect your labour and delivery



This leaflet describes contains health information for expectant mothers with a high 'Body Mass Index'

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Introduction

This information leaflet is aimed at expectant mothers who have been found to have a higher than normal Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a way of working out how overweight you are by calculating the relationship between your height and your weight.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (in kilograms)}}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ (in metres}^2\text{)}}$$

A normal BMI is between 20 and 25.

How your weight affects pregnancy

Although BMI is expected to increase during pregnancy, women who are medically obese (BMI above 30) at the start of their pregnancy are more likely to have problems affecting their health and the health of their baby.

The higher the BMI and the more weight gained in pregnancy, the greater the chances are of you developing problems. For example you are more likely to need an anaesthetic and a Caesarean section for delivery compared to those women who have a normal BMI.

Normal Weight gain in Pregnancy

During normal pregnancy, women can gain between 11kg (1st 11 lbs) and 18kg (2nd 12lbs). If you are overweight at the start of your pregnancy you should try not to put on more than 11kg (1st 11 lbs) during pregnancy.

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Your Weight in Pregnancy

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If you are having problems managing your weight and would like extra help ask your midwife or doctor to refer you to a dietician.

Why do I need to see an anaesthetist?

You have been referred to the maternity anaesthetic team because you have a higher than normal BMI, because of this you may need extra care during pregnancy and childbirth.

You will have an opportunity to meet a member of the maternity anaesthetic team and to make a plan for your pain relief and anaesthetic choices before your forthcoming labour and delivery.

The anaesthetist will be able to answer questions you may have about this leaflet. They can give you more information about your anaesthetic choices including their benefits and risks.

Making a plan for your labour and delivery

The anaesthetist may suggest that you have an epidural in early labour, the benefits are:

- It can provide pain relief throughout labour
- It can provide pain relief for delivering your baby using forceps or ventouse (a suction cap)
- It can avoid the need for a general anaesthetic if you later require a Caesarean section. This means you

would stay awake during the operation which is best for you and your baby.

You will be given medication to reduce your stomach acid during labour and it is best to avoid solid and fatty food when you are in labour. It is safer to drink only water and non-fizzy drinks.

If you have a Caesarean section, you will be given medical stocking and blood-thinning injections to reduce the risk of thrombosis (blood clots).

How can I reduce the risks?

- Whatever your weight, do not go on a low calorie diet as this can be harmful to your baby
- Try some gentle exercise such as walking or swimming
- Try to control your weight gain in pregnancy
- Attend regular antenatal clinics so that problems are found and managed quickly
- Have regular blood sugar checks if you are diabetic
- If you decide to have an epidural, have it early in labour when you are more in control. It can be difficult to insert an epidural and take longer than usual in women who have a raised BMI