#### **Further information**

Information on who to contact, ie web sites / telephone numbers of other departments / organisations which may be of help.

How to contact us
Obstetrics and Gynaecology
St Albans City Hospital
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Waverley Road St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 5PN

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.net** 





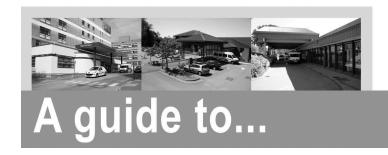




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# West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust



# **Body Mass Index** and Fertility

#### Patient information

#### **Obstetrics and Gynaecology**

Watford General Hospital Hemel Hempstead Hospital St Albans City Hospital

#### Introduction

Being overweight has an adverse effect on reproduction. In women who need assisted conception techniques (such as IVF, ICSI) recent evidence has shown a decrease in pregnancy rates with increasing body mass index (BMI), which is calculated as weight in kg/ height in metres<sup>2</sup>

Obesity is a common health problem amongst the women of reproductive age, with 57% of women in the UK being either overweight or obese.

#### World Health Organisation classifies BMI as:

Normal	19.0 - 24.9 kg/m <sup>2</sup>
Overweight	25.0 – 29.9 kg/m <sup>2</sup>
Moderate obesity	30.0 – 34.9 kg/m <sup>2</sup>
Severe obesity	35.0 – 39.9 kg/m <sup>2</sup>
Very severe obesity	Above 40.0 kg/m <sup>2</sup>

#### Fertility issues and risks associated with obesity:

- Irregular and/ or infrequent menstrual cycles
- Increased risk of infertility
- Increased risk during fertility surgery
- Reduced success with fertility treatments

### Potential pregnancy complications with obesity; increased risk of:

- Miscarriage
- High blood pressure during pregnancy
- Diabetes in pregnancy
- Birth defects
- High birth weight infants
- Caesarean section

#### Benefits of weight loss:

- Weight loss even 5-10% may dramatically improve ovulation and pregnancy rates
- Improved health including reduced chances of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease
- Reduced risk of miscarriage
- Improved self esteem and well being

## Most fertility centers have strict criteria for accepting women for treatment:

- If BMI is more than 30: we advise weight reduction prior to treatment and a discussion with a dietician, mainly due to the reason that majority of the times, simple step such as weight loss can result in spontaneous conception
- If the BMI is more than 30, we are unable to offer any definitive investigation or treatment

#### Different ways to achieve a normal/desired BMI:

- Targeted approach
- Change in diet
- Exercise regime
- Expert advice from dietitian
- Lifestyle modification