

Parent Wellbeing Tip Sheet



Exercise and Weight Loss

Regular exercise is vital to your physical and mental health. Exercise helps you to combat disease, improve your mood, boost your energy and promote better sleep patterns. It is important for new parents to stay active, even though raising children can be time consuming and tiring.

For new mothers, returning to physical activity after childbirth can be challenging. However, there are a great many benefits. You will have gained weight during pregnancy and you may continue gaining weight after giving birth. Taking control now is a positive step that can prevent future problems. Do not expect weight loss to happen immediately, your body has undergone significant changes during pregnancy and birth and will need time to readapt. A weight loss of 0.5-1.0 Kilograms per week is recommended.

These are some simple tips to follow:

- If your pregnancy and delivery were uncomplicated you can immediately begin a light exercise routine, including activities such as walking, pelvic floor exercises and gentle stretching.
- If you had a complicated birth or Caesarean you should make sure to see your doctor or midwife before you start exercising.
- Your ligaments and joints will be loose for up to three months after pregnancy so delay and ease back gently to vigorous stretching, high impact exercises and sports that require rapid change of direction.
- Regular moderate to vigorous exercise (around 2 hours per week) can significantly decrease physical fatigue.
- Start gently and build up as you increase your fitness as immediately jumping into rigorous exercise can lead to soreness or injury.
- Exercise with your partner, you could ask them to join you for a walk with the pram.
- If you don't reach your goal weight by a certain time it doesn't matter, there will be natural peaks and plateaus to your routine.

For a list of safe and easy exercises see Ngala's fact sheet <http://www.ngala.com.au/You-and-Your-Family/Being-a-Parent/Healthy-You-Healthy-Baby/Physical-Activity/What-Type-Of-Exercise-Is-Safe>