Overweight Women and Pregnancy

Before Pregnancy
Being overweight can interfere with fertility. To help avoid these health problems, have regular medical checkups before getting pregnant. Your doctor can give you advice to help you achieve a healthy weight in order to ensure that you can in fact get pregnant and maintain a safe pregnancy.

Pregnancy
Overweight women face increased health risks and complications during childbirth, such as:
- high blood pressure
- diabetes
- blood clot formation, including life-threatening conditions such as Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolus
- difficulty assessing the heart rate of the fetus
- difficulty obtaining anesthesia
- increased rate of Cesarean Section
- wound complications
- increased blood loss

There are even studies that suggest a slightly higher risk of birth defects in babies. In addition, the ability to identify birth defects on ultrasound examination may be compromised.

Exercise
A regular exercise program, with at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise daily, is an important part of achieving a healthy lifestyle. Simple exercises are fine, such as going for long walks, but a more vigorous exercise regimen may be necessary; however, in pregnancy, your heart rate should not exceed 130 beats per minute. Check with your doctor regarding safe exercise recommendations.

Nutrition and Weight Gain
If you are overweight at the start of pregnancy, do NOT start dieting. It is not safe to diet and lose weight during pregnancy because that may rob the baby of nutrients that are needed for normal growth and development. Generally, overweight women should gain only a modest amount of weight during pregnancy. You should discuss safe weight goals during pregnancy with your doctor. We recommend that you have a nutrition consult early in your pregnancy. A nutritionist will help you plan a healthy diet based on your age, weight, height and medical history. You should call the hospital’s nutritionist experts and schedule an appointment: Center for Nutrition and Diabetes Management, Wescott Medical Arts Center, Suite 102, Wescott Drive, Flemington, NJ 08822, (908) 237-6920

Insurance coverage
It is the patient’s responsibility to understand the costs involved in seeing the nutrition experts and whether or not their insurance policy will help cover the costs for the consultation sessions. Contact the customer service department of your insurance company prior to making the appointment with the nutritionist to fully understand your coverage.