



BAsem

British Association of Sport
& Exercise Medicine



Dr Hayley Mills and Dr Marlize de Vivo

Physical Activity During and Beyond Pregnancy

The importance of consistent and clear messages

Background: UK Guidance

NO NATIONAL GUIDANCE IN THE UK

2006 RCOG Position Statement

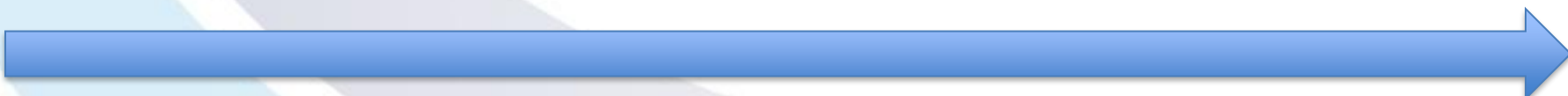
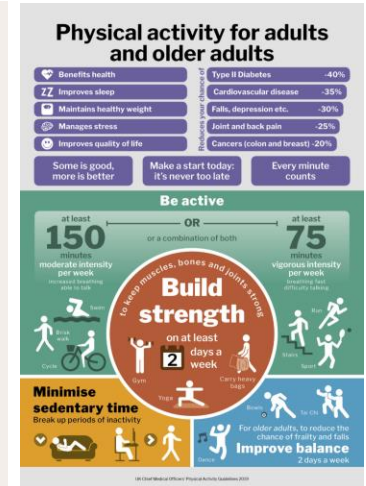
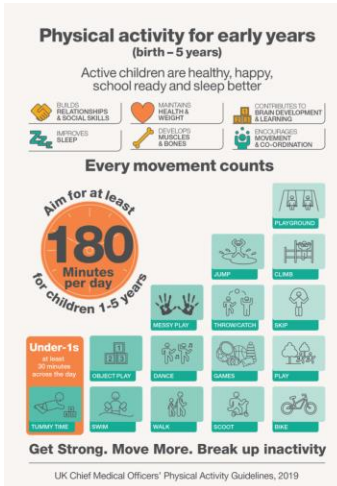
UNTIL...

2017 CMO Physical activity for pregnant women

2019 CMO Physical activity for pregnant women (update)

2019 CMO Physical activity for women after childbirth (birth to 12 months).

Background: The life course approach



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-infographics>

Research shows...uncertainty

"I worried I would be responsible for something going wrong"
(Pregnant woman)

"No information on exercise, didn't get information from the health visitor or the midwife...spoke to other mums who carried on....." (New mother)

"You just wanted to be told it's ok to do and find your place within that"
(Pregnant woman)

"Used google but don't know who to trust"
(New mother)

"Focus on what you can do not what you can't...I wanted specific advice, some tips and ideas" (Pregnant woman)

"...said drink lots of water and didn't ask about activity..."
(New mother)

"My gym instructor didn't think I should do body pump..."
(Pregnant woman)

Aim of session

1. Raise awareness of the NEW CMO physical activity guidance during and beyond pregnancy.
2. Unify messages across exercise and health professions.
3. Signpost to resources to support practice and further knowledge.

CMO Guidance – During Pregnancy

Physical activity for pregnant women 2017

- Helps to control weight gain
- Helps reduce high blood pressure problems
- Helps to prevent diabetes of pregnancy
- Improves fitness
- Improves sleep
- Improves mood

Not active? Start gradually

Already active? Keep going

Throughout pregnancy aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity every week

Home (Walking, Gardening, Household tasks)

Out and about (Cycling, Walking, Shopping)

Leisure (Swimming, Jogging, Dancing)

Do muscle strengthening activities twice a week

Every activity counts, in bouts of at least 10 minutes

No evidence of harm

Listen to your body and adapt

Don't bump the bump

UK Chief Medical Officers Recommendations 2017: Physical Activity in Pregnancy. bit.ly/startactiveinfo

Physical activity for pregnant women 2019

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Every activity counts, every minute counts, more is better

No evidence of harm

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Don't bump the bump

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

CMO Guidance – During Pregnancy

Pregnant women with **uncomplicated pregnancies** should aim to:

1. accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity throughout the week*
2. engage in 8–12 repetitions of muscle strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups twice per week*

*EVERY ACTIVITY COUNTS! There is no minimum amount of physical activity required to achieve some health benefits.



CMO Guidance – During Pregnancy



Already active? Keep going

- Encourage maintenance of physical activity levels
- Adaptation of activities may be required as pregnancy progresses

Not active? Start gradually

- Emphasize gradual introduction of physical activities
- Avoid prolonged periods of sitting
- Incorporate into daily living

CMO Guidance – During Pregnancy



Key evidence-based messages:

1. Helps to control gestational weight gain (GWG)
2. Improves cardiorespiratory fitness
3. Helps reduce hypertensive disorders
4. Helps to prevent gestational diabetes (GDM)

Adopted benefit messages:

1. Improves sleep
2. Improves mood

CMO Guidance – During Pregnancy



Key safety messages:

1. No evidence of harm
2. Listen to your body and adapt
3. Don't bump the bump

CMO Guidance – After Childbirth

Physical activity for pregnant women

- Helps to control weight gain
- Helps reduce high blood pressure problems
- Helps to prevent diabetes of pregnancy
- Improves fitness
- Improves sleep
- Improves mood

Not active? Start gradually

Already active? Keep going

Throughout pregnancy aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity every week

Home (Walking, Stairs, Gardening, Yoga)

Out and about (Cycling, Walking)

Leisure (Swimming, Running, Gym)

Do muscle strengthening activities twice a week

Every activity counts, every minute counts, more is better

No evidence of harm **Listen to your body and adapt** **Don't bump the bump**

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

Physical activity for women after childbirth (birth to 12 months)

- Time for yourself - reduces worries and depression
- Helps to control weight and return to pre-pregnancy weight
- Improves tummy muscle tone and strength
- Improves fitness
- Improves mood
- Improves sleep

Not active? Start gradually

Active before? Restart gradually

aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity every week

Out and about (Walking, Stairs, Gardening, Yoga)

Leisure (Swimming, Running, Gym)

Home (Walking, Stairs, Gardening, Yoga)

Start pelvic floor exercises as soon as you can and continue daily

Build back up to muscle strengthening activities twice a week

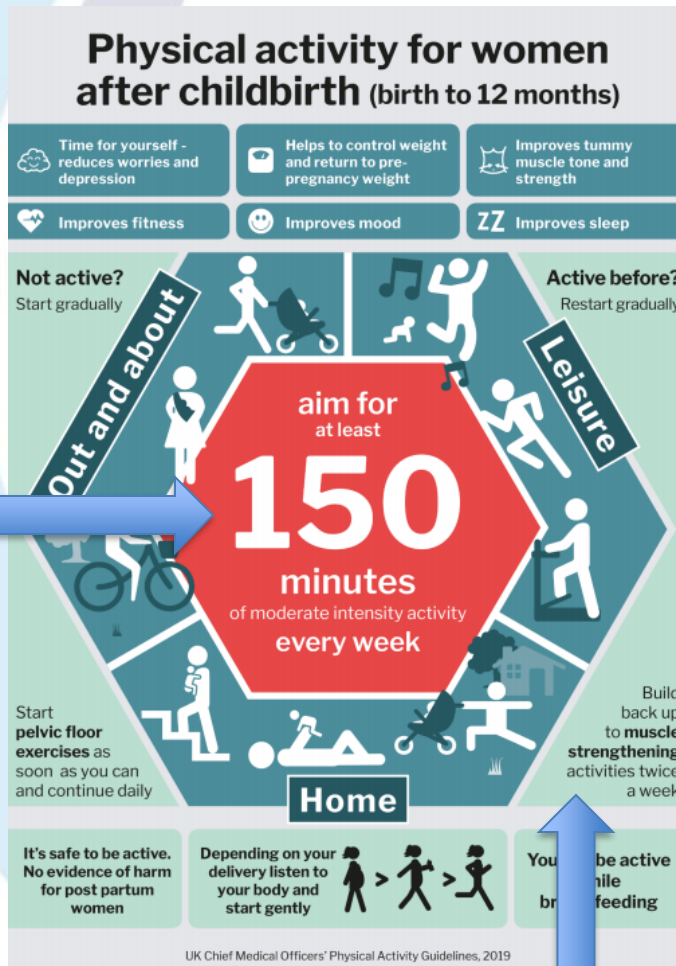
It's safe to be active. No evidence of harm for post partum women

Depending on your delivery listen to your body and start gently

You can be active while breastfeeding

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

CMO Guidance – After Childbirth

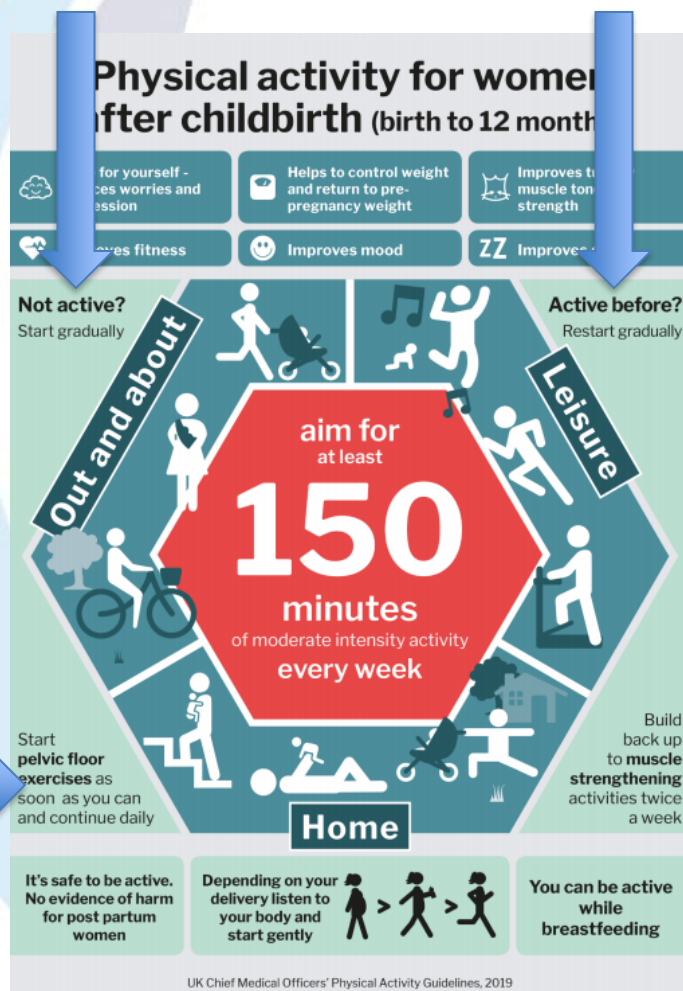


After childbirth, women should aim to **gradually build up to:**

1. accumulating 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity throughout the week*
2. muscle strengthening activities involving all major muscle groups twice per week*

*EVERY ACTIVITY COUNTS! There is no minimum amount of physical activity required to achieve some health benefits.

CMO Guidance – After Childbirth



If a woman has had a straightforward birth, gentle exercises such as gentle stretches, pelvic floor exercises can resume as soon as she feels up to it.

After the 6-8 week postnatal check, advice should be tailored to whether a woman was active before or during their pregnancy.

Active before? Restart gradually

If a woman was active before, encourage a gradual reintroduction of physical activities. However, emphasise that they may need to change or adapt the type of activity undertaken initially.

Not active? Start gradually

If a woman was inactive, encourage her to start gradually. Pelvic floor exercises should be discussed and encouraged, and should be continued daily.

After having built up moderate intensity physical activities over a minimum period of three months and in the absence of any signs or symptoms of pelvic floor or abdominal wall dysfunction, more intense activities can gradually resume e.g. NHS Couch to 5k could be advised.

CMO Guidance – After Childbirth



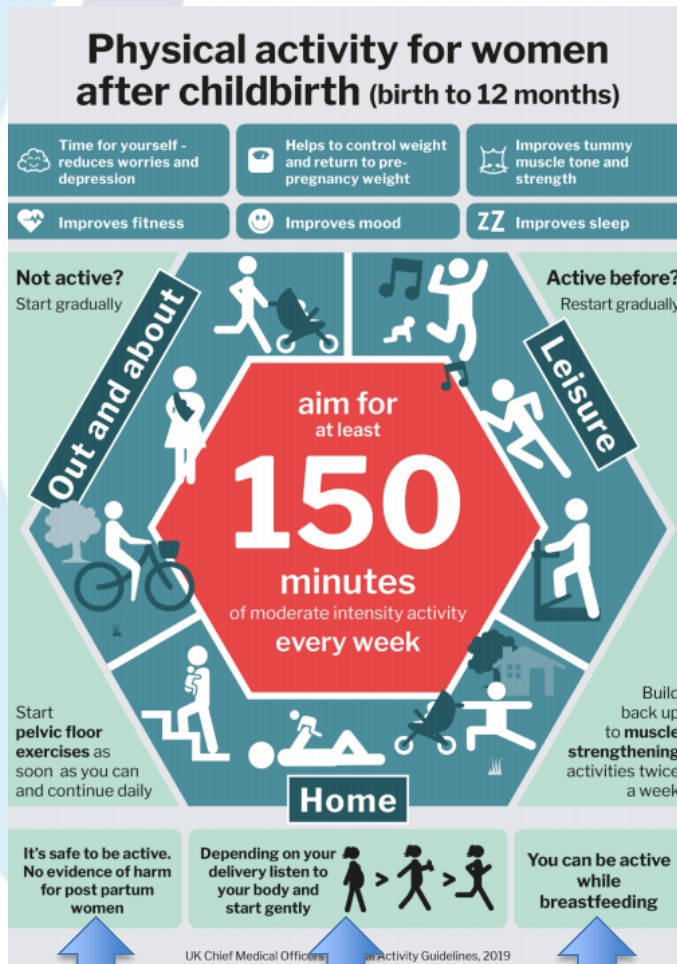
Key evidence-based messages:

1. Reduction in depression
2. Improved emotional wellbeing
3. Improved physical conditioning
4. Reduction in postpartum weight gain and a faster return to pre-pregnancy weight.

Adopted benefit messages:

1. Improves sleep

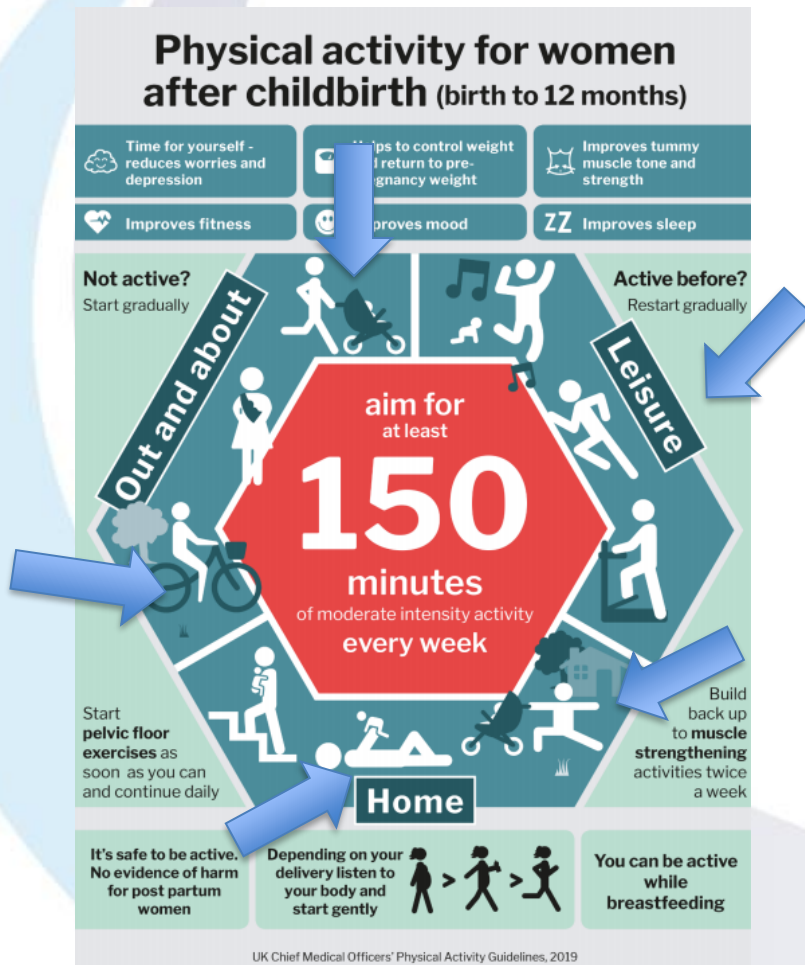
CMO Guidance – After Childbirth



Key safety messages:

1. No evidence of harm for postpartum women
2. Depending on your delivery, listen to your body and start gently
3. You can be active while breastfeeding

CMO Guidance – After Childbirth



Active with baby and/or time away to be encouraged
“Found walking really good, calms her and calms me...”

Play and tummy time – ‘Infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activity’

Active with others “Time to chat to other mums, learn new things...”

Behaviour maintenance or change?

- Dispel misconceptions
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Context
 - Already active = behaviour maintenance (e.g. TMM – VBA, MECC)
 - Previously sedentary/inactive = behaviour change (e.g. Moving Medicine – motivational interviewing)

Dispelling myths and perceptions can help to reassure

'Exercise will cause an early birth'

'Weight strengthening is dangerous'

'You selfish cow'

'Exercise will take nutrients from the baby'

'Don't let your heart rate rise over 140 bpm during exercise'

Myths and Fears
Mums Hear

'Feet up- you just need to rest'

'You will starve the baby of oxygen'

'Running will jar the baby'

'Shaken baby syndrome'

'If you weren't active before, you shouldn't start anything new'

Moving forward

- Epigenetics – benefits extending to baby/child
- Trimester specific guidance – energy requirements of pregnancy
- Fertility and ART guidance
- Surveillance and communication
- Resources and training

Resources

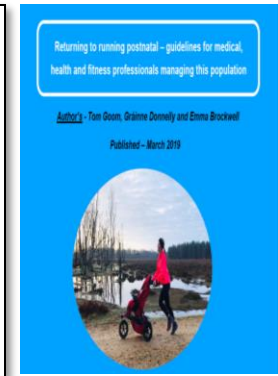
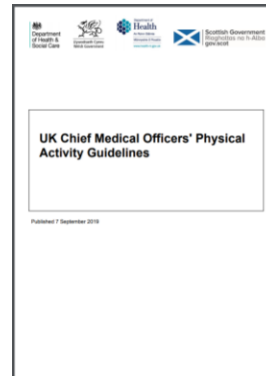
- [CMO Guidance and Infographics](#)
- [2019 Canadian Guideline for Physical Activity throughout Pregnancy](#)
- [Returning to running postnatal](#)
- [Pelvic, Obstetric & Gynaecological Physiotherapy - Resources](#)
- [This Mum Moves \(TMM\)](#)

Coming soon:

- [E-learning for Healthcare](#)
- [Motivate 2 Move](#)
- [Moving Medicine](#)

Support the cause:

[The Active Pregnancy Foundation](#)



Contact

- [Perinatal Physical Activity Research Group \(PPARG\)](#) at Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, Kent.
- Email:
 - hayley.mills@canterbury.ac.uk
 - marlize.devivo@canterbury.ac.uk
- Other PPARG members:
 - Dr Jamie O’Driscoll, cardiovascular physiologist. Research on preeclampsia, obese pregnancies and gestational diabetes.
 - Stacey Draper, PhD student. Research on physical activity and assisted reproductive treatments.