

L.A. MOMs



LA MOMs

Los Angeles Managing Obesity in Moms

Obesity¹ is a national epidemic with wide consequences and cost to America's health. In Los Angeles County 1 in 3 women of reproductive age are overweight or obese, with a disproportionately higher number of Hispanic and African American women being affected. Maternal overweight and obesity are linked to poor birth outcomes and lower breastfeeding rates. Being overweight or obese before pregnancy increases the likelihood of retaining at least 11 pounds postpartum. Preventive measures and nutritional care should begin preconception and interconception to mitigate overweight problems and other obesity-related pregnancy consequences. As the first teachers in a child's life, parents play a critical role in teaching healthy behaviors and modeling those lifestyles. Focusing on empowering postpartum moms obtain a healthy weight will not only impact and improve her health, but potentially her children's as well.

Up until now, little is known about weight management during the postpartum period. Over four years, LA MOMs will provide guidance on nutrition, physical activity, and stress reduction, in particular for breastfeeding moms and those who had a surgical or complicated vaginal delivery, with the goal of reducing obesity among postpartum women in Los Angeles County. Breastfeeding education, resources, and support will be offered online and through referrals. The Internet and social media channels will enable women to connect to information, resources, and each other. Upon completion of the project, we hope to create a sustainable, evidence based postpartum weight management program with a strong social media platform that will be incorporated into groups supporting new moms such as WIC, mother's groups, health plans, and daycare centers.

Collaborative partners receive training on increasing **Knowledge, Skills & Desire** for weight improvement:

- *Nutrition* training: Focusing on healthy food choices, eating out, and cooking demonstrations
- *Breastfeeding* Support: Focusing on educating and linking women to resources and support
- *Exercise* training: Focusing on the timing and various types of exercises
- *Stress Management & Motivation*: Focusing on identifying high stress areas and providing support and understanding on the motivating reasons for overeating and the desire for change
- *Contraception* education: Focusing on providing information on all methods, in particular, long acting reversible contraception so that participating women can use the most effective method for them to plan their next pregnancy

Overall Goal: Reduce obesity among postpartum women in Los Angeles County

Objectives:

- Develop LA MOMs, an evidence based postpartum toolkit for weight management
- Have community organizations and other stakeholders incorporate LA MOMs into their programs
- Use existing surveys such as the Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) project to track and communicate improvement in postpartum obesity

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines obesity as an excess body fat for an individual having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 kg or greater. Overweight is defined as a BMI of greater than or equal to 25 kilograms/m².