

Chief Medical Officer  
**Professor Sir Michael McBride**



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

## Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG247) 12/25

**Subject: NICE Public Health Guideline NG247 - Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years**

**For action by:**

Chief Executive of Public Health Agency – **for distribution to:**  
Director of Public Health and Medical Director – for cascade to relevant staff  
Director of Nursing and AHPs – for cascade to relevant staff

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**  
Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff  
Heads of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Acute Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads  
Directors of Social Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Finance – for cascade to relevant staff  
AHP Leads – for cascade to relevant staff

Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority – **for cascade to:** relevant independent healthcare establishments

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

**For Information to:**

Chair of Public Health Agency  
Chairs of HSC Trusts  
Chair of RQIA  
NICE Implementation Facilitator NI  
Members of NI NICE Managers' Forum

**Summary of Contents:**

This guideline covers nutrition and weight management in pregnancy for anyone who may become pregnant, is planning to become pregnant or is already pregnant, and nutrition in children up to 5 years. Care of babies and children born preterm or with low birth weight is not covered. The guideline does not give detailed advice on what constitutes a healthy diet.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:  
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Circular Reference: **HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG247) 12/25**

**Date of Issue: 6 November 2025**

**Related documents:**

HSC (SQSD) 15/22  
HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG194) 27/21  
HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG201) 2/22  
HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG246) 6/25

**Superseded documents**

None

**Status of Contents:**

Action

**Implementation:**

As per circular HSC (SQSD) 15/22

**Additional copies:**

Available to download from  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/safety-and-quality-standards/national-institute-health-and-care-excellence-nice>

## Dear Colleagues

**NICE Public Health Guideline NG247 - Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years -**  
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng247>

The Department has recently reviewed the above NICE guidance and has formally considered it for applicability in Northern Ireland.

### Decision:

All recommendations in *NG247 - Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years* **are to be implemented, monitored and assured.**

### Action Required:

As outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 15/22, only those pieces of guidance or specific recommendations determined for implementation require formal monitoring and assurance. Where guidance or recommendations are for noting or highlighted for particular attention, no formal monitoring or assurance is necessary, but organisations may be required to demonstrate how they have taken account of the guidance in planning and delivering services.

In accordance with the process outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 15/22 (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/HSC%20%28SQSD%29%2015-22.pdf>), the following initial actions should be taken.

#### 1. PHA

- a. In conjunction with the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) Department of Health, identify Commissioning and Professional Leads who will consider the commissioning implications of the Public Health Guideline and co-ordinate with any other relevant commissioning teams. The Lead / Leads will consider the plans received from the HSC Trusts **in regards to those pieces of guidance or specific recommendations where implementation is required** (within 2 months of receipt) as well as any complex issues they may have highlighted. They will identify any areas where regional planning / investment / commissioning are required, or where there is material risk to safety or quality. These will then be actioned immediately through normal commissioning arrangements or through bespoke arrangements reflecting the nature of the issue / risk.
- b. Identify other relevant stakeholders and networks and disseminate as appropriate, typically within two weeks of receipt.

#### 2. HSC Trusts

- a. Proceed with targeted dissemination, agree a clinical / management lead to coordinate implementation and consider what has to be done to achieve implementation using a risk based assessment and baseline review as appropriate to support planning. These initial actions should be undertaken within a three month period.

3. RQIA
  - a. Disseminate the Guideline to the independent sector as appropriate.
4. HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs
  - a. Take account of this Guideline in training and other developments as appropriate.

To inform the planning process, please find attached details from the Departmental review. You should consider and take account of other relevant policies and strategies in your planning and implementation of this guideline, as well as any legislative / policy caveats identified in the course of the Departmental review.

A full current list of NICE guidance endorsed for application in Northern Ireland can be found on the Department's website at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/safety-and-quality-standards/national-institute-health-and-care-excellence-nice>



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**Chief Medical Officer**

## Appendix 1

### Endorsed NICE guidance - Details from Departmental review

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Reference Number                        | NICE Public Health Guideline – NG247<br><a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng247">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng247</a>   |
| Title                                   | <b>Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years</b>  |
| Summary of guidance                     | <p>This guidance updates and replaces NICE Public Health Guideline PH11 (March 2008) &amp; partially updates and replaces PH27 (July 2010), which were published by NICE prior to the introduction of the DoH process for endorsing Public Health guidelines.</p> <p>The guideline covers nutrition and weight management in pregnancy for anyone who may become pregnant, is planning to become pregnant or is already pregnant, and nutrition in children up to 5 years. Care of babies and children born preterm or with low birth weight is not covered. The guideline does not give detailed advice on what constitutes a healthy diet.</p> <p><b>This guideline includes recommendations on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ vitamin supplementation</li> <li>➤ healthy eating, physical activity and weight management during pregnancy</li> <li>➤ breastfeeding and formula feeding</li> <li>➤ weighing babies and young children</li> <li>➤ healthy eating behaviours in babies and children from 6 months and up to 5 years.</li> </ul> <p><b>NICE has also produced Clinical Guidelines:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ NG194 - Postnatal care (endorsed by DoH in October 2021) - <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng194">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng194</a></li> <li>➤ NG201 - Antenatal care (endorsed by DoH in January 2022) - <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng201">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng201</a></li> <li>➤ NG246 - Overweight and obesity management (endorsed by DoH in June 2025) - <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng246">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng246</a></li> </ul> |
| Related strategically relevant policies | <p>Healthy Child Healthy Future – A Framework for the Universal Child Health Promotion Programme in Northern Ireland – <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/healthy-child-healthy-future">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/healthy-child-healthy-future</a></p> <p>HSS(MD) 5/2017 - New Advice on Vitamin D Intake - <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hss-md-05-2017.pdf">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hss-md-05-2017.pdf</a></p>   |
| Inter-Departmental interest             | None at policy/ legislative level   |

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| <p>Legislative / policy caveats</p> | <p>This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case.</p> <p>This guidance refers to the <i>Equality Act 2010</i>. Northern Ireland healthcare professionals should refer to the relevant sections available at: <a href="https://www.equalityni.org/Legislation">https://www.equalityni.org/Legislation</a></p> <p>This guidance refers to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance for employers about protecting pregnant workers and new mothers. This should be interpreted within the Northern Ireland legal framework for the <i>Management of health and safety at work - Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (Sections 16-18)</i>. Available at: <a href="https://www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/I21-management-health-and-safety-work-gb-acop-approved-use-ni">https://www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/I21-management-health-and-safety-work-gb-acop-approved-use-ni</a></p> <p>This guideline refers to the NHS webpage on Planning your pregnancy. The equivalent resource in Northern Ireland is available at: <a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/planning-your-pregnancy">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/planning-your-pregnancy</a></p> <p>This guideline refers to the NHS webpage on Vitamin D. The equivalent resources in Northern Ireland are available at: <a href="https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/vitamin-d">https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/vitamin-d</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/vitamin-d-and-you-0">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/vitamin-d-and-you-0</a></p> <p>This guideline refers to the NHS webpage on B vitamins and folic acid. The equivalent resources in Northern Ireland are available at: <a href="https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/food-and-nutrition/vitamins-and-minerals">https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/food-and-nutrition/vitamins-and-minerals</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/folic-acid---one-life's-essentials-0">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/folic-acid---one-life's-essentials-0</a></p> <p>This guideline refers to NHS information on Bottle feeding and advice. The equivalent resource in Northern Ireland is available at: <a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/bottlefeeding">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/bottlefeeding</a></p> <p>Where this guidance makes reference to Department for Education's <i>Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework</i>. Northern Ireland healthcare professionals should refer to <i>Nutrition matters for the early years: Guidance for feeding under-fives in the childcare setting</i>. Available at: <a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/nutrition-matters-early-years-guidance-feeding-under-fives-childcare-setting">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/nutrition-matters-early-years-guidance-feeding-under-fives-childcare-setting</a></p> <p><b>The following resources should also be considered in respect of Northern Ireland as they are significantly relevant to this guidance:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/pregnancy-book-0">https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/pregnancy-book-0</a></p> |
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<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/birth-five>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/good-start>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/weaning-made-easy-moving-milk-family-meals-english-and-translations>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/getting-good-start-healthy-eating-one-five-english-and-translations>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/breastfeeding-and-returning-work-0>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/promoting-breastfeeding-mothers-returning-work-guide-employers-1>

## Annex B

### **NICE NG247 - Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years**

| <b>Recommendation</b> |  | <b>Endorsed for:</b>                     |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1.1                   | Vitamin supplementation  | Implementation, monitoring and assurance |
| 1.2                   | Healthy eating, physical activity and weight management during pregnancy         | Implementation, monitoring and assurance |
| 1.3                   | Breastfeeding and formula feeding beyond 8 weeks after birth                     | Implementation, monitoring and assurance |
| 1.4                   | Weighing babies and young children   | Implementation, monitoring and assurance |
| 1.5                   | Healthy eating behaviours in babies and children from 6 months and up to 5 years | Implementation, monitoring and assurance |