

MEMBERS GUIDE 2011



So why exercise during pregnancy?

Research has shown that the benefits of, regular exercise during pregnancy include

- Improved cardiovascular fitness and improved muscular strength
- A decrease in the physical discomforts associated with pregnancy (back and pelvic pain, swelling, leg cramps)
- Improved ability to deal with heat stress, compared with a non-pregnant state
- Decreased maternal weight gain and limited fat deposition during pregnancy
- Better than average placental growth and functional capacity
- Improved supply of glucose and oxygen for the baby
- Improved sense of well-being and confidence for the impending labour
- Easier, shorter and less complicated labour
- Improved rate of recovery post birth
- Improved aspects of growth and development post birth

There is also strong evidence for a marked decrease in the need for medical interventions in exercising pregnant women, including

- decrease in the need for pain relief
- decrease in the incidence of maternal exhaustion
- decrease in the need to artificially rupture the membranes
- decrease in the need to either induce or stimulate labour
- decrease in the need to intervene due to abnormalities in fetal heart rate
- decrease in the need for episiotomy
- decrease in the need for operative intervention, (either forceps or caesarean section)

The Preggi Bellies program is based soundly on current research and we are involved with various projects regarding exercise in pregnancy at La Trobe University.

Preggi Bellies – a brief history

Established in 1998 by physiotherapists Lauren Gabriel and Michelle Gray, Preggi Bellies was the first pregnancy exercise program of its type to offer quality supervised fitness training for pregnant and post-natal women in Melbourne. It was the first pregnancy program to utilize the stabilizing properties of the exercise ball and the use of weights for upper body conditioning.

In recent years, the program has expanded to encompass 16 venues, running around 50 classes per week. Over 12 000 women (representing more than 25 000 pregnancies) have exercised with Preggi Bellies since its inception. Today, the majority of pregnant women exercising in Australia are doing so with Preggi Bellies and continuing after they deliver in the 'Back to Body' program.

The popularity of the program led to the development of a home exercise for pregnancy DVD now used by women around the world. Designed for women who

do not have access to our classes, the DVD is a complete workout, including aerobic, muscle toning and stretching components. The DVD and mediBall are available from our website and head office. The DVD sells around the world and has been rated by many consumers as their number 1 choice for home exercise when pregnant.

The screening process

Distinct from other pregnancy exercise programs, Preggi Bellies keeps detailed records of your pregnancy. We keep records of all communications and developments throughout your time with us. In this way we provide you with continuous care and subsequently we are able to modify our program at any time to suit your particular needs. Sometimes, we may get you to consult with your obstetrician or doctor before commencing classes.

The first time you call us we will explain in detail the workings of the program. If you choose to do a trial class the cost is \$25. This cost is non refundable if you change your mind about doing a trial but we can certainly rebook your trial class to any date that suits you.

Payments for the trial class can be made by Visa or Mastercard or direct debit only.

Initial screening: Prior to booking in your first class we run through the first of our Triple screening process. Detailed questions about you, your health and your pregnancy are necessary to ensure you are safe to exercise whilst pregnant. There are some conditions that may mean you are not allowed to exercise at all, however many conditions simply need modification of specific exercises and you can continue to safely improve your fitness and strength throughout your pregnancy.

We understand that your privacy is of utmost importance and all information is treated with confidentiality and sensitivity. Should you choose not to answer any safety screening questions we will be unable to have you as a member in our classes. We will also discuss whether or not you are currently exercising and find out what stage of pregnancy you are when you call. You may begin classes at any stage of your pregnancy provided your Doctor has cleared you for exercise. Due to the nature of exercise and the stresses of pregnancy, women who are 30 weeks pregnant or more are unable to begin classes. Women who have been coming to classes and have not attended regularly since they reached 30 weeks pregnant are also unable to 'restart' classes after this time. We invite them to return to classes post natally to regain fitness and get back into shape in our regular classes and later on in our Back to Body, postnatal classes.

It is preferable that in the absence of any contraindications to exercise that you begin classes in your first trimester to gain the best benefits for you and your baby.

During your initial screening, we will ask you for an email address. We will use this to send you booking sheets, receipts and reminders. It is essential that we have your current and active email address and you are responsible for keeping us informed of any changes to these details.

If you do not have an email address, we will use a telephone number that you will select (waitlist contact number) to keep in touch with you. Any changes to your addresses must be communicated to us.

You will be asked to select a class that you wish to attend and an email containing a **registration form, price list, members guide and terms and conditions** will be emailed to you. These are also available at all times on our website.

It is important that if you do not get this email that you contact us on 1300 72 71 71 immediately so we can resend the information. Staff may not carry these with them at classes and you will be unable to attend a trial class without your forms filled in and signed.

Registration form: Your registration form is the second part of the screening process. You will need to read it carefully and fill in any medical or other issues so that our staff can make sure you are safe to exercise and also modify any exercise necessary for your specific condition.

The registration form contains our terms and conditions and you will need to sign that you understand these and agree to them prior to doing your trial class and joining the program.

New members must submit a signed form in order to be able to participate in classes.

Screening at trial class: You are required to be at the trial class **15minutes before the class starts!** During this time the instructor will read through your forms and ask you more questions. This is the final part of our screening leading up to your trial class.

Please understand that if during this time the staff feel you should not be exercising they may ask you not to do the trial class and if this is the case our head office will speak with you and your doctor if necessary, the next day to ensure that you are safely exercising when pregnant.

This is very rare and for the majority of pregnant women exercise in pregnancy is safe and recommended.

Once your forms are checked, staff will discuss with you the class and explain to you the use of the equipment. You may ask any questions you wish before, during or after the class.

Preggi Bellies locations

Preggi Bellies has multiple venues around Australia, in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney. When you join the program you become a financial member of a particular franchisee in a particular area.

Each franchisee runs independently and is responsible for your membership fees, any eligible refunds, class bookings, cancellations and feedback.

Franchisees of other areas may allow you to attend their classes without paying any additional fees but have no other obligation (refunds, bookings, cancellations, feedback etc) to you as a member. Any feedback on these classes must be made to the Preggi Bellies franchisee that you joined initially. This franchisee will be your point of contact for bookings and cancellations.

All venues will usually have at least two classes for you to attend but should any of these times not suit you, you are usually able to book in for classes at other venues.

Preggi Bellies has a dedicated staff member looking after each venue to ensure balls are in excellent condition and equipment is available and in good working order according to Occupational and Health Safety standards. Should you have any feedback regarding a venue please call your franchisee and it will be taken care of as soon as possible.

For an up-to-date timetable of class times and venues, please see our website at www.preggibellies.com.au

When to start Preggi Bellies classes

Your and your baby's safety is our number one priority.

You can start Preggi Bellies at any time before the 30th week of your pregnancy, provided your doctor has not excluded you from physical activity as a result of any medical or physical condition. In addition, providing you are found suitable following screening and completion of registration forms, you will be allowed to attend classes.

If you are currently doing a form of exercise and your Dr says you are fine to continue you may begin classes as early in your pregnancy as you wish. Some women even start before they become pregnant. Most people tend to start around 10-14 weeks. The earlier you begin the more benefits you and your baby can gain.

At least 2 classes a week need to be attended by you in order for you to remain an active member of the program; however you may attend up to 5 classes per week.

Post-natally you may begin or recommence classes when you are ready, usually after about 6 weeks post delivery. This may be earlier or later depending on the individual, and we recommend that you are cleared by your obstetrician/doctor before resuming.

Mums who have had Caesars or episiotomies usually return after 8 weeks. In addition the new experience of motherhood coupled with any bleeding, breast feeding problems, mastitis, lack of sleep, postnatal depression and so on may mean a return to classes later than originally intended. This is perfectly normal and should you be unsure of whether or not you can return to classes please call us and our staff will be more than happy to discuss this with you. Once you have had your baby regular attendance of at least 2-5 classes a week still applies.

Twice weekly attendance

Our program is unique in its fitness approach and we have found that regularly attending our classes is necessary to gain optimum results and improve your fitness level. Research has also shown that daily exercise is recommended for pregnant and non-pregnant women alike.

In order to facilitate this, members can attend any venue on the timetable in any combination to make up the 2 classes per week. We record your attendance by means of the attendance sheets, which all clients are required to sign prior to the start of each class. If for some reason you cannot attend 2 classes in a particular week (for example you are going on holidays or ill), this can be accommodated with more bookings in another week, however if you are consistently missing classes, we will certainly be in touch with you! (See terms and conditions).

Preggi Bellies reserves the right to suspend a membership until post natal if any member does not meet the minimum attendance policy.

Purchasing Preggi Bellies classes

Preggi Bellies was established as a fitness and strength program designed to see you through the length of your pregnancy. With this in mind Preggi Bellies can assist you in choosing the ideal number of sessions for you. Similarly for postnatal women, the number of classes you purchase will depend on the results you hope to achieve. Regular sessions of 2-5 times per week will provide you with the best results in terms of fitness, tone and strength. A price and session guide is available from Preggi Bellies franchisees, instructors or head office.

If you purchase sessions at your trial class, payment can be made with credit card or cash (exact money please!). We usually have a special offer that is available if you join at the time of your trial class. This offer is subject to change and you are welcome to ask us about it when you book your trial class.

We also offer special 'Unlimited Memberships' which are sold to postnatal members. These allow clients to attend as many classes they wish within a limited period of time. These memberships cannot be extended for any reason (including but not limited to illness, holidays and the 6-8 week period that women are unable to exercise after they have given birth) and are ideally suited to post natal members.

Preggi Bellies understands that you may be unable to pay the full amount upfront. We are more than happy to accommodate a payment plan to allow you to attend and benefit from these classes whilst easing any financial burden. Payment plans have a \$20-00 once off administration fee.

Making your bookings

You can make your bookings for any combination of class times and venues by emailing Head Office. This is done through our website www.preggibellies.com.au via the "Members" Page

Alternatively you can make bookings by phone or fax (where applicable). Please make sure you include your name, surname, class details and a return contact number. Once you have made your request, please assume that it has been actioned, and we will only contact you if your request cannot be fulfilled. A copy of your request will be sent to you if you make it using our website.

If a class is full you will be placed on a waitlist (see The Waitlist Process). If a class is full you may also choose an alternative class for that week.

We are unable to guarantee that requests received via email will be processed in time if received outside of business hours. Any cancellations will be honored as long as they are received within the cut off times specified in the guidelines. Requests written on a class attendance sheet or passed on via instructors will not be processed.

It is important that you book in for every class that you wish to attend. If you arrive "unbooked" for a class and that class is full it means you would have to leave as there is not enough room or equipment for you in that class.

Purchasing additional sessions

When your sessions are due to finish, Preggi Bellies will contact you to renew your membership and make more bookings for you. However, you may purchase sessions earlier by contacting your franchisee, if you wish to avoid waitlists.

The Waitlist process

The waitlist is set up to allow us to accommodate your needs as best we can. If you want to book into a class that is already full, in the first instance we will try to find you an alternative class for that week. Otherwise, we will offer to put you on a waitlist for your requested class. If someone else makes a cancellation, a position in the class may become available, in which case we will notify you that you have successfully been booked into that class, by calling or leaving a message on the number you have nominated up until 5pm on the day of that class.

Once we have called, we will assume you are coming to the class, and you only need to contact us if you wish to cancel this booking (in which case normal cancellation times apply). If you don't hear from us you can assume that the class remained full, and that unfortunately we were unable to offer you a place.

As we may call to notify you of a place anytime up until shortly before the scheduled class, you will need to cancel yourself off the waitlist if you are no longer able to attend that class, in the same way as you would be required to cancel any normal booking.

Contacting Preggi Bellies after office hours (9am-5pm weekdays)

We have a message bank on which you can leave all your requests. This service records the date and time of your call. You can use this service anytime that we can't take your call, including after hours. Please leave your name, surname, a detailed message and a return contact number. Once again, assume that your request has been actioned, and we will only contact you if your request cannot be fulfilled.

Alternatively you can email us your requests using the 'Manage Bookings' button in the 'Members' tab on our website. Emails will be responded to within office hours and a confirmation email sent. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please call us to ensure that we have your correct email address on our records.

Preggi Bellies instructors

Preggi Bellies classes are taken by a wide range of professionals, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, human movement specialists, women's health and Pilate's specialists, personal trainers and physical education instructors. All instructors are trained in Group Exercise to Music, have current first aid and CPR certificates and are insured in accordance with Australian Institute of Fitness (AIF) standards. Instructors alternate through the classes to give the best variety and approaches to all ladies.

Once an instructor has been through our rigorous interview process they are required to our accredited training. This is intense and provides our staff with the best training available to anyone taking pregnancy classes. Instructors are trained and updated regularly throughout the year and their regular training includes sessions with leading physiotherapists, Pilate's specialists,

Obstetricians, Urogynaecological surgeons and world class personal trainers who have trained Olympic athletes. Preggi Bellies training ensures our staff are always ahead of other programs who have pregnant women in their classes and ensure they receive an education up to date with current research and exercise techniques.

Where an instructor has a physiotherapy provider number, that session may be able to be claimed under private health cover (extras). Other sessions are not rebateable. Requests for specific instructors are unable to be accommodated. You will need to check with your insurer as it is ultimately their decision to rebate your classes or not.

Some health insurers do rebate classes under gym memberships or wellness packages. Please check with them to see if classes are covered.

What to bring to your class

You should wear comfortable clothing in which you can move easily, and in which you can keep cool, e.g. bike pants and a t-shirt would be suitable.

Appropriate footwear such as sports shoes is also required for the class.

A good sports bra is vital and for some women an additional crop top over your bra will ensure minimal breast movement during class and make you feel more comfortable.

In addition we recommend that you bring a water bottle, a towel, your list of bookings, any payments, and any personal belongings you may need, such as medications, or change for parking meters. We provide all equipment needed for the class. Please remember that whatever equipment you use in the class must be packed away neatly before you leave.

Late arrivals

An adequate warm-up and cool-down are necessary especially now that you are pregnant. This is because the various cardiovascular and respiratory changes mean you need a longer time to warm up to prevent injury or dizziness etc therefore in keeping with your best interests, as well as out of respect to instructors and other participants, it is expected that all participants arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. It is a policy of the program and all of our health centres, that latecomers will be refused admission and the class forfeited.

Please note new members are required to be at their first class 15 minutes early.

If you wish to discuss an issue with the instructor, please arrive at the class 5-10 minutes before the start time, so that classes can start promptly.

Crèche

Some of the venues at which we run our classes offer crèche facilities. These run independently of Preggi Bellies services and therefore are at an additional cost. As places are limited we recommend you call the appropriate venue well in advance to make your booking. Children are not allowed in the classes.

Canceling classes

If you cannot attend a class for any reason, you must cancel that class at least 5 hours before the class is scheduled to start. Weekend classes must be cancelled by 5.00pm on the Friday before the scheduled class. In this way, we can re-book the class at a more convenient time for you. We do not automatically re-book cancelled classes unless requested. You can cancel classes by phoning your franchisee and/or by leaving your request on the message bank, or by email via the 'Members' page on the website or by fax. Make sure you leave your name, surname, class details to be cancelled, and a return contact number.

If you do not turn attend a booked class that you have (and have not cancelled the class), this will still be counted as a used session. If you cancel a booking outside of the timeframes stated above this will also be counted towards your used sessions.

Holidays

Preggi Bellies is closed on ALL public holidays and for the Christmas – New Year period as well as Easter Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. On rare occasions Preggi Bellies may be forced to cancel a class at the last minute. Should this occur members booked for a class will be contacted and advised of the cancellation and the class will be credited to your bookings. These calls will be made to your nominated "waitlist contact number" and if you do not answer a message will be left. This number is given to us by you on your registration form. A text message system may also be used to contact participants who have bookings for the class.

We will also contact the venue so that if you turn up for a cancelled class they will be able to let you know.

When to stop Preggi Bellies classes

Most women exercise with us right until their due date (and sometimes beyond!). Exercise can provide relief from pregnancy discomforts, tiredness and swelling common in late pregnancy. Easier options are always given for you at this time and remaining sessions may be used post-natally (sessions are valid for 12 months from date of purchase). Postnatal women attend Preggi Bellies classes as their regular form of exercise and make up 40% of our members. Many continue Preggi Bellies into their next pregnancy! Research shows that ceasing to exercise prior to 31st week will result in loss of the majority of benefits already gained!

Sometimes during the course of your pregnancy you may have to undergo procedures that require you to take a break from classes. We require that you take a break from classes for approximately two weeks after undergoing an amniocentesis or CVS. Although your doctor may advise you of a shorter rest period, our experience has shown that this can be an emotionally taxing time, and therefore it is in your best interests to wait until you receive test results, before resuming classes. On occasion you may need to take a break and in this case we may request a letter from your medical carer giving you permission to return to classes.

Pregnancy Problems and Preggi Bellies classes

Pregnancy can be an uncomfortable time and 60%-80% of women can develop back pain, unstable pelvises and Sacro Iliac joint and pubic bone pain. When severe it can mean that even walking is too difficult. In this instance your sessions will be placed on hold and are yours to use once you have had your baby.

Other examples of common pregnancy ailments include but are not limited to knee pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, pelvic floor problems, upper back and rib pain etc.

Preggi Bellies classes have been specifically designed to improve and develop your core stability. It is important to strengthen and improve the stability of muscles that will support your back and pelvis and baby during your pregnancy. Each exercise has a specific purpose and a specific muscle group or joint that it is targeting.

Some exercises may not be comfortable for you to do or may aggravate a preexisting or new condition. If this is the case cease the exercise immediately and inform the staff member taking the class. They will give you an alternate exercise to perform to ensure you can continue with classes and gain all the benefits. This new exercise must be done by you in the rest of your classes.

Remember to tell every staff member that you see that you have a new exercise to do.

Preggi Bellies staff are well trained in exercise modifications and accommodate most physical conditions in a class.

We may also refer you to a physiotherapist to deal with any pain full joints that are not improving and together with the therapist work to get you back into classes.

If your condition is severe and you are unable to continue pregnant classes are held for you until you have had your baby.

Returning Post natal and Back to Body classes

Once you have been cleared by your Doctor to return to exercise you may call us to book in your remaining classes or to purchase new ones.

When you return to class always remember that your body will have been through the marathon of labour and may not be in the same shape as it was prior to delivery.

In the first instance you will return to Preggi Bellies classes. During the first few classes you will begin to slowly return to your previous level of fitness and strength. You will begin on the ball until your pelvic floor and stomach muscles are stronger and able to cope with standing work.

Your instructor will progress you in the Preggi Bellies classes until you are ready to join Back to Body.

Back to Body is a high intensity program which is designed to burn calories, shape and tone your muscles. It utilizes some of the latest training techniques to ensure optimum benefits to our clients. Women who still have pelvic floor issues or unstable pelvis issues are not allowed to attend these classes until these issues are resolved.

You can use the Back to Body classes together with the Preggi Bellies classes and come as often as you wish. For best results 3-5 times a week is ideal. Our staff are able to accommodate post natal in Preggi Bellies classes to allow them the same hard workout as a Back to Body class...so ask!

Sessions are interchangeable and can be used in either Preggi Bellies or Back to Body classes.

You can also ask the staff for the Back to Body flyer which explains in detail your return to exercise post natally.

Refunds

In the instance where a baby is miscarried or there is a termination of pregnancy Preggi Bellies will refund your fees less a \$90 administration fee. You may choose to keep your sessions until you are pregnant again and we will extend their expiry date for you.

In the instance of change of mind, for any reason (including but not limited to moving house, change of jobs, change of mind) class fees are not refundable but can be held for a later stage within their expiry period.

There are a number of common medical/physical issues that occur commonly in pregnancy and for many of them classes can be continued safely and effectively with modifications to certain exercises or class intensity. In this instance staff are available at every class to help and guide you. Some examples of these include but are not limited to: carpal tunnel syndrome, Pelvic instability, separated rectus muscles, back and pelvic pain, low or high blood pressure, swelling, pelvic floor issues, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, strained muscles and ligaments, joint pain, knee problems, gastric reflux etc

In rare individual cases we may request detailed and specific medical notes from your treating specialist or GP. These should outline your specific medical situation for our records in order for us to give you accurate advice regarding your exercise regime.

Most issues resolve after pregnancy and women return to classes quite safely.

Classes are sold for pre and post natal sessions and not only for Post natal or pregnancy. In the case of sessions which remain unused during a pregnancy these are not refundable and can be used in the post natal period. In the case of unused sessions in a post natal these are not refundable and can be used in the pregnancy period.

Expired Sessions

These can be reinstated for \$7 per session or you may repurchase a new group of sessions and we will reinstate 1 expired session for free for every 3 new ones bought.

Keep us updated!

So we can give you the optimum level of care during your pregnancy and beyond, we need to know of any changes that occur during your pregnancy and post-natal period. These changes may be as minor as sore joints and muscles, or range to spotting and bleeding. Sometimes we will advise you to take a break from classes or consult your health professional. In many cases, we will advise you to modify your exercises. Therefore, it is important that you tell your instructor about any physical problems before each class, so they can modify it appropriately.

Please see your copy of Terms and conditions which are also viewable on our website, www.preggibellies.com.au

Have a happy and healthy pregnancy!

From the team at Preggi Bellies and Back to Body!