Interviewer: How did you receive healthy eating advice in pregnancy

Response: It was my health worker, it was my health worker

Interviewer: at what stage of the pregnancy

Response: let me say about 8 months, my health worker checked my BMI and she called me. Its in this 3rd trimester, because she was concerned about my BMI, because of COVID and everything, so she called me, she gave me dietary advice.

Interviewer: is this your first pregnancy in the UK?

Response: no 3rd

Interviewer: at what stage of the first pregnancy did you receive healthy eating advice

Response: to be honest, I can’t remember. The second pregnancy, I was told about healthy eating in my second trimester. That’s because after my first baby, I usually do not register for antenatal on time. So, I don’t know if they usually talk earlier than then.

Interviewer: When do you usually register?

Response: For my second pregnancy, I didn’t register on time. The first pregnancy, I did register on time. For this third pregnancy, you know because of COVID and all, I was running from the hospital. (laughs)

Interviewer: You haven’t just had any reason to visit the hospital?

Response: No

Interviewer: okay

Response: In my second pregnancy, they were concerned about my heart rate. My heart rate was kind of high. My heart rate is usually high during pregnancy, so in my second pregnancy, they sent me for some tests. They wanted to know why my heart rate was over 100. So I did some tests. I did the 24hr ECG, I did some thyroid tests as well.

Interviewer: what necessitated the late hospital registration. Did you assume that you could handle everything on your own?

Response: The late registration was particularly for the second pregnancy, this third pregnancy late registration was necessitated by COVID.

Interviewer: Would you have registered on time if there was no COVID?

Response: yes

Interviewer: Could you tell me what the healthy eating advice was about?

Response: The midwife said that since I am pregnant, I cant really do any diet but that my BMI was 40. So she just advised me that I should take walks like 30 minutes everyday, remove processed sugar from my diet and snacks. I should still eat 3 times daily and even if I want to snack, there are healthy snacks, I can snack on carrot, cucumber and eat healthy and I should go for walks. Yeah

Interviewer: Were you signposted to any pregnancy apps or notes or leaflets?

Response: no I wasn’t given anything like that

Interviewer: Which trust are you in?

Response: Homerton, Hackney

Interviewer: In your own words, what do you understand about the term healthy eating?

Response: I believe it’s a way of eating the right way, eating the right way yeah. Eating the right nutrients, the right foods, the right proportions

Interviewer: did your eating habit change in pregnancy?

Response: yeah

Interviewer: How did it change?

Response: I had to take some things out of my diet, I had to reduce, not remove, I had to reduce my sugar intake and my junk intake. I also took a lot or take a lot of avocados and smoothies in the morning. I take a lot of avocados and banana. I also eat a lot of salmon and salads.

Interviewer: why did you change your eating habit?

Response: Because I know for brain development, I need a lot of … for my baby’s brain development, I need a lot of omega 3 and 6. For my heart as well, I don’t have blood pressure issues but I have palpitations and I know that the HDL, the healthy fats, I can get it from avocado and salmon. My pulse is usually 120 in this pregnancy BPM, although it will come down after the pregnancy.

Interviewer: Was this a voluntary decision?

Response: yes

Interviewer: Were there any other things that caused changes to your eating habits?

Response: Apart from that, my mum passed on at the age of 40 due to hypertension and diabetes complications, so I am actually trying to make some changes here and there. So family history of diabetes and hypertension as well is actually making me make some dietary changes as well.

Interviewer: The national Institute of Health and care Excellence Maternal and Child Nutrition guidelines states that women attending maternity and health visitor appointments are given advice on how to eat healthy. With that in mind, were you offered any healthy eating advice earlier on in the pregnancy?

Response: I know I said 8 months, can I just say third trimester. I know its 3rd trimester, it might have been at 28 weeks, I cant really remember right now actually. I know its this 3rd trimester.

Interviewer: okay

Response: I had not registered at 16 weeks, I think I registered at 22 or 25 weeks or something.

Interviewer: what form did the advice take, verbal or pamphlet

The term diet has been misconstrued in this interview. Probably there is an assumption that diet means the healthy form of a persons food and not actually the food itself.

Response: via the phone, they called me on phone

Interviewer: Were you referred to any NHS sites or apps or something?

Response: No, no

Interviewer: okay, did the midwife ask about the composition of your diet?

Response: I don’t think so, I can’t remember. I know in one of my pregnancies, I was asking the midwife if I should go on a diet and they said no. But to be honest in this pregnancy when I got to a 100kg, I asked the midwife if I could go on a diet and asked if she would refer me to a nutritionist and she said it wasn’t necessary. That I should just make some healthy changes. That I had to change my lifestyle, I couldn’t go on any diet.

Interviewer: what changes did she ask you to make specifically?

Response: Replace processed sugar, take vegetables and fruits. If half of my plate used to be rice before, now it’s a quarter. I have replaced my breakfast with smoothies. I skip lunch sometimes or a lot of times and then have dinner. Prior to pregnancy, I used to eat whatever I wanted to eat.

Interviewer: is it the typical African diet?

Response: Yes, for breakfast, I could have yam and egg with tea, bread and egg with tea, plantain and egg. Anything I fancied including the full British breakfast. I used to eat 4 to 6 slices of bread, now I eat just 2 slices of bread.

Interviewer: Did you find the advice useful?

Response: Yes, I have, I have found it very useful

Interviewer: Relating it to your social context i.e. the context of your income, environment, education, do you think that the advice being offered could fit into your social context or was suitable for your social context?

Response: Yes it was

Interviewer: Okay, What do you consider important to you when choosing a meal? Is it distance, time, culture, availability, personal taste or finance

Response: I would say culture because ermm I have tried to eat only what Is available but its not working. I still need to eat those African foods. Even when I am eating my veggies, that meat sometimes is kpomo and shaki. So I would say culture. I don’t think I would say availability because there is a market near us where they have all the Nigerian food. So I would say culture. I also consider cost/finance. Even though I would like to eat my home food, I still go for the cheaper options. I also consider the time to cook the meals. I wont go and make edikan ikong that will take me forever. I will make the one that’s easier to make

Interviewer: Were there other sources of nutrition advice you received in pregnancy?

Response: I went online and ermmm I know you were asking about some apps. I have some apps on my phone which were not recommended for me by the hospital like the pregnancy beyond app, pampers app. So when you register, there’s a way you register your baby on it, so each week it gives you some advice. So I took some of those advices

Interviewer: Were these healthy eating advice or just general advice

Response: They were healthy eating advice

Interviewer: did you receive advice from family and friends?

Response: yes

Interviewer: Which would you consider the best form of advice?

Response: I won’t say friends and family(laughs). I will say online. Sites like pregnancy and beyond, the baby centre. The pregnancy and beyond is a page on Instagram

Interviewer: so the internet is your most trusted healthy eating source.

Response: The thing is what I got from the internet and what the health worker told me corresponded. They were almost the same thing.

Interviewer: okay. Have you ever seen the eatwell guide?

Response: (thinks for a while) eatwell guide? Is it healthy eating?

Interviewer: yes

Response: yes

Interviewer: what do you think about it?

Response: Pauses… did I read it? I think I read it in previous pregnancies, not this one.

Interviewer: what did you think about it

Response: I think it was okay. Very comprehensive

Interviewer: Was it useful to you?

Response: yes, I know I read it in the first 2 pregnancies. To be honest I didn’t read it in this pregnancy.

Interviewer: Some of the things that have come up during interviews have been the switch of antenatal appointments to phone in appointments. Did you find the phone in appointments suitable?

Response: They were enough, because as a pregnant woman, your immunity is low, because your immunity is very low, so to me anything that will prevent me from going to the hospital. If it means me doing phone conversations, so it was okay enough. It reduced the risk

Interviewer: Does your belief affect the way you eat?

Response: do you mean my religion

Interviewer: Yeah, you can say that or your belief system

Response: I don’t think my religion has any effect on my food. Since they said all foods are clean

Interviewer: so what do you think are the risks and consequences of unhealthy eating?

Response: Obesity, then ermmm if you have a family history of diabetes and hypertension, if you eat well you can reduce your chances of having them and when you don’t eat healthy you are more likely to get these diseases.

Interviewer: So what do you think are the barriers to healthy eating?

Response: healthy foods are more expensive than unhealthy food. It seems unhealthy foods are cheaper and they are more accessible. There is a corner shop around where I stay where you can just pop in if you don’t want to take a bus and go to the market. Most of the foods you see there are not healthy, they are unhealthy processed foods around than healthy foods. Unhealthy foods tastes better. Imagine someone going to work and coming back, its whatever they see around them that they eat, meanwhile healthy foods take a lot of prepping.

Interviewer: Do you consider African food unhealthy?

Response : yeah not all but a lot of our foods are unhealthy. A lot unless you eat it in the right proportion. I do not think carbs is wrong, I just think it is the proportion with which we eat it. Like when we eat eba and efo, instead of eating those huge eba that we eat, we can just eat small proportion and more of veggies. Meanwhile we eat more of carbs and small veggies, if we eat it the other way around, then its okay. Then we eat a lot of oil, if we reduce the oil, some people if the oil is not swimming they wont eat it so…

Interviewer: so what do you think can facilitate healthy eating?

Response: First of all , we have to make some modifications to our meals like Nigerian food we can still eat it but make some modifications. Like when I want to make my stew, I try to just use one serving spoon of oil to cook my stew even if it’s a big pot. So that way you are still eating your Nigerian food but its healthier. Then I try to eat more of veggies even if I want to have swallow. Though to be honest I haven’t had much swallow because it gives me reflux. The experience isn’t good, I think with time I will go back to the swallow but for now no.

Interviewer: Okay, so have you heard about African beliefs and old wives tales in pregnancy, some foods that are taboos to eat in pregnancy. Were you told that in your pregnancy?

Response: Nooo. Although I was told in my first pregnancy that if I eat okro, I will have heart burns but I didn’t believe it. I was told not to take anything cold but I didn’t believe in them. All my children are fine.

Interviewer: I am going to talk about some of the things that came in prior interviews. First Do you live in a multigenerational household?

Response: No

Interviewer: Do you have access to social support prior to COVID 19

Response: I stay with my friend, so I have support from her.

Interviewer: Did COVID have any effect on you?

Response: Ermmmmm, I couldn’t go out, I had to do my shopping online. I don’t like going to the hospital to be honest cos of COVID, anytime I go I can use up to half a bottle of hand sanitizer to be honest. Most of the activities like going to church, it affected normal activities that without COVID, you could do, churches were moved online.

Interviewer: Some peoplehave said that they would have preferred that the healthy eating guide was more tailored to the African culture. What do you think?

Response: we live in London, I believe. Are they looking for how the midwife will tell them how to make dietary changes with our Nigerian food?(laughs) That means they will have to employ someone who knows about our food. Well I don’t think I needed anybody to tell me about my Nigerian food and how to modify it. I think it was something I could have done by myself.

Interviewer: Do you have anything else you want to say?

Response: No, thank you very much