

What you need to know before you get pregnant



IT STARTS
WITH
MOM

Your health is affected by things other than your personal choices. Where you live and the quality of healthcare available to you are just some examples. If you're planning to get pregnant soon or hope to in the future, this can be especially overwhelming. But the good news is that you can equip yourself with information that will help you be your own best advocate. Take a look at the recommendations below.

1 Prepare for **big changes**

- **Check the status of your health.** Get a medical checkup at least 3 months before you start trying to get pregnant. If possible, get your checkup with the healthcare provider you want to take care of you when you do get pregnant.
- **Keep chronic conditions under control.** Chronic conditions include high blood pressure, diabetes, thyroid problems, and autoimmune conditions. These can cause complications during pregnancy, so it's important to get the right treatment for them before pregnancy.
- **Review your medications.** Talk with your provider about all medicine you're taking, including over the counter medication and herbal supplements. Ask if they're safe to take during pregnancy, and don't stop taking any prescription medicine without your provider's OK.



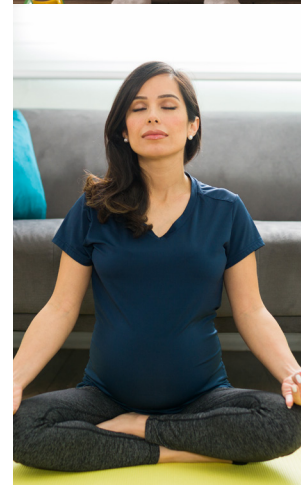
2 Care for your **emotional health**

- **Address mental health concerns and conditions.** Whether you're dealing with high levels of stress, have anxiety, or are experiencing depression, talk to your provider about ways to treat these conditions before getting pregnant.
- **Set yourself up for an emotionally healthy pregnancy.** Unmanaged mental health conditions can put you at greater risk of depression during and after pregnancy. In the U.S., about 1 in 5 women will experience a mental health condition during pregnancy, or within the first year after pregnancy.
- **Build your wellness and self-care toolkit.** Opening up about how you're feeling can be tough, but with the right support and tools, it doesn't have to be. There's so much power in knowing your options and what strategies work for you.



3 Stick to **healthy habits**

- **Don't skip out on folic acid.** Folic acid helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spine when taken before and during early pregnancy. Take a vitamin supplement with 400 mcg of folic acid every day before you start trying for a baby.
- **Prioritize nutrition and exercise.** Fast food and processed meats have been linked to chronic disease and inflammation. Instead, opt for whole foods, like fresh fruits, vegetables, and lean protein, and limit beverages that contain too much sugar. Aim for at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week.
- **Stay away from harmful substances.** Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs can cause problems for you before, during, and after pregnancy, including miscarriage, birth defects, and stillbirth. Talk to your healthcare provider about treatment if you need help quitting any of these substances.



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