

HEALTHY MOM Tips for Self-Care in Pregnancy Planning



Good nutrition, avoidance of harmful substances, and consistent care with trusted, compassionate health professionals will greatly improve your chances of being a healthy mom with a healthy baby.

Good Nutrition for a Healthy Start

One of the best things you can do to prepare for a health pregnancy is to establish a healthy diet before you conceive. Besides boosting your fertility, sticking to a healthy diet will:

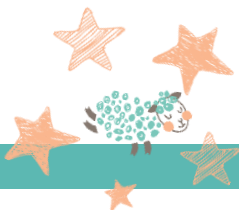
- decrease the risk of pregnancy complications
- help you look and feel better during your pregnancy
- make it easier and faster to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight

If your current diet comes up short, now's the time to set good eating habits:

- **Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.** Vegetables are high in vitamin A, vitamin C, iron and magnesium, while fruits deliver vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and fiber, all of which are essential to a baby's healthy development.
- **Restrict your sugar intake.** It can be hard to eliminate sugar – it's hidden, or not so hidden, in many common foods, from baked goods to condiments to candy. But too much refined sugar could make it harder for you to conceive.
- **Curb the caffeine.** When you're trying to get pregnant, limit your caffeine intake to 200 mg a day, or about one 12 oz. cup of coffee. (Tea, with only 25-75 mg of caffeine per 12 oz. serving, or decaffeinated beverages, might be a better choice, but take care with herbal teas.)

- **Practice food safety.** Some food choices can affect baby's health even before you conceive. For example, methyl mercury, a metal found in swordfish, shark, king mackerel, tilefish and tuna steak and other seafood, can harm baby's developing nervous system. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends limiting consumption of albacore "white" tuna, which also contains high levels of mercury, to 6 oz. a week during pregnancy. It's never too early to start.
- **Don't skip meals.** Busy schedules can make it tempting to skip breakfast or work through lunch. But once you're pregnant, you'll need to supply baby with nutrients throughout the day. Get in the habit now of planning and eating regular, complete meals and healthy snacks.
- **Get help for special dietary needs.** If you follow a restricted diet for any reason, ask your doctor, a dietician or nutritionist if you should refocus your food choices or add supplemental nutrition. If you're living with an eating disorder such as bulimia or anorexia nervosa, talk with a health professional and get help from a support group.

Worried about what to include in your diet? See the "Nutritional Guidelines for Pregnancy" and do your best.



MORE ESSENTIALS: PRENATAL VITAMINS

Prenatal vitamins can replenish your body's crucial stores of folic acid, iron, vitamin D, and calcium. They won't enhance fertility, but taking them for up to a year before conception may reduce your chances of an early miscarriage and help prevent birth defects. Remember, vitamins are **not a replacement for good nutrition**.

REDEEMER BABY

You can find more information about all stages of pregnancy at redeemberbaby.com.



Stopping Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Any substances that have no benefit for mom or baby are best to avoid, even before you become pregnant. In fact, smoking or using alcohol can make it harder for you to get pregnant. And tobacco products can increase your chance of having a miscarriage once you conceive.

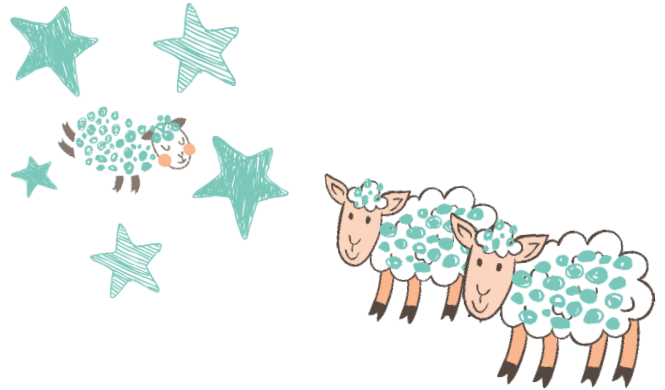
Some of the more common harmful substances to avoid:

- alcohol
- cigarettes, cigars and vape products
- illegal drugs and narcotics
- some prescribed medications

If you are planning a pregnancy and using any of these substances, get help. Your health care provider can recommend programs to help you quit.

Even over-the-counter cold medicines may not be completely safe for mom or baby, so it is a good idea to check with your pharmacist or doctor before taking any medicine if you suspect you're pregnant.

Get ready to take special care. See "Common Complaints and Safe Medications in Pregnancy" for tips on feeling better with and without medication.



You and Your Care Team

Good for you (and baby!): You've decided to see your health care provider **before** you get pregnant. Even if you feel well, professional care plays an important role in helping you prepare for a healthy, low-risk pregnancy.

YOUR PREGNANCY PLANNING VISIT

Be ready to discuss your current health, your health history, and your family's health history with your provider. They may refer you to a genetic counselor if they find health issues that could be passed on to baby.

You may need blood tests, or you may need to bring vaccines up to date. Your provider will talk with you about any medicines, herbs, and supplements you

take, and may recommend changes before you get pregnant.

You can also get help with controlling any chronic health problems, such as asthma or diabetes, or with losing weight, if needed. All this will reduce your risk of complications in pregnancy.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Take this time to get comfortable with your provider. You'll be seeing them for prenatal appointments once a month through the first and second trimesters (till 28 weeks), every two weeks in the early third trimester (till 36 weeks) and then weekly until delivery. (This may vary if you have special medical concerns.)

