



Pregnancy Checklist

Do you know someone who is pregnant or in the early stages of pregnancy? Maybe a daughter, granddaughter or friend. Show her you care by talking to her about some of steps she can take to help her baby be born healthy.

See your health care provider now if you're thinking about getting pregnant – Get a pre-conception health checkup to find out how best to prepare yourself for pregnancy and have the healthiest baby possible.

Start taking folic acid – Folic acid is a B vitamin that may help reduce your baby's risk for birth defects of the brain and spine, known as neural tube defects. It is crucial that folic acid be taken before and during early pregnancy. So even if you are not contemplating becoming pregnant soon, begin taking folic acid now so your body is ready when that day comes. The recommended dose is 400 mc of folic acid every day as part of a healthy diet. You can get enough by taking a multivitamin or folic acid supplement every day, or by eating fortified breakfast cereal that contains 100% of the recommended daily amount of folic acid. Additional foods that contain folic acid include enriched grain products, green leafy vegetables, oranges and orange juice.

Make healthy choices – Women who are pregnant or planning to be should not smoke, drink alcohol or take illegal drugs. Be sure to check with a health care provider before taking any prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

Achieve your ideal weight – It's best for women who are planning to have a baby to achieve their ideal weight before they conceive. Getting plenty of exercise is important too.

Know your medical history – A woman planning a pregnancy should be sure to tell her health care provider about her family's medical history. Conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and infections should be under control before pregnancy.

Get all immunizations – It's best to find out what immunizations are needed and to get them before conceiving.

Avoid hazards – Pregnant women need to avoid toxic substances and chemicals in the environment like cigarette smoke, paint thinner and bug sprays.

Reduce stress – Keeping stress to a minimum during pregnancy is a good idea for the health of both mother and baby.

**If you would like more information, please contact
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