



PRE-CONCEPTION HEALTH INFORMATION CHECKLIST

Information in this leaflet is general in nature and should not take the place of advice from your health care provider. With every pregnancy there is a 3 to 5% risk of having a baby with a birth defect or developmental problem.

Lifestyle

Before you fall pregnant it is important to be as healthy as you can be. A healthy body and lifestyle mean a healthier start for your baby and can optimise your pregnancy. The following are a list of recommendations to consider before you fall pregnant. They may even assist you and your partner in falling pregnant!

- Healthy weight (a Body Mass Index of 20-25 is recommended)
- Quit smoking
- Consider your alcohol intake. No alcohol is recommended during pregnancy
- Street drugs - giving these up before you fall pregnant gives your baby the best start to life
- Caffeine - evidence tells us no more than 2 espressos a day is best for mum and baby
- Healthy diet - A well balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables is important before, during and after your pregnancy. There are certain foods that should be avoided when you are pregnant
- Exercise - developing a regular exercise program before you fall pregnant means you will be more likely to continue. Exercise has positive benefits on your physical and mental health

Vitamin & Mineral Supplementation & Medications

There are a large number of multivitamins and minerals designed for pregnant and breastfeeding women. These types of multi-vitamins and minerals are specially recommended during pregnancy and breastfeeding. However, it is important you take this supplementation before you fall pregnant as a large amount of baby's development is in the first few weeks and you may not even know you are pregnant. The vitamins and minerals that should be in a pregnancy multivitamin to optimise baby's development are:

- Folate/Folic Acid
- Iodine
- Calcium
- Vitamin D

Certain medicines prescribed by the doctor or bought in the chemist or supermarket may not be safe while you are pregnant. Other medications are okay to continue during a pregnancy and can be of benefit to you and baby to keep you in good health for the pregnancy. Check your medications with your local doctor or pharmacist before you fall pregnant.

Some herbal medicines, traditional medicines, homeopathy products and nutritional supplements may be harmful to you and a developing baby and it is important to check this before you fall pregnant.



Immunisations & Blood Tests

You should know your vaccination status and immunity when you are planning a pregnancy. A simple blood test can reveal whether you have had immunisations and are immune to certain infections that otherwise could be harmful to a pregnancy.

Know you are immunised or have immunity to the following:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis (DTP)
- Rubella
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Influenza

Your doctor or midwife would also like to check that you are generally healthy before falling pregnant so may order other tests including:

- Thyroid function testing
- Fasting blood sugar levels and glycosylated haemoglobin (a test for diabetes)
- HIV
- Full blood count (for iron and thalassaemia screening)

Knowing this information before you fall pregnant may help you resolve any problems before you fall pregnant.

Family History

Knowing about the medical history of your family can be beneficial when planning a pregnancy. It is also important to find out if there are any of the following in your family, specifically to do with pregnancy:

- Birth defects
- Foetal anomalies
- Miscarriage or stillbirth
- Complicated labours

Health Check-Ups

It is important to know you are as healthy as possible before you fall pregnant. If you have any known medical conditions it is important to ensure you have the condition managed by your GP or specialist prior to falling pregnant. Even if you have no other medical conditions it is still important to have the following check ups before falling pregnant:

- Dental check up
- Women's health check up
 - o Breast check
 - o Pap Smear
 - o Skin check

Social Situation & Mental Health

Pregnancy can also be an emotional time. Ensure you have a few people you feel comfortable talking to and a GP you feel comfortable with so you can discuss anything bothering you and are able to let them know if things begin to feel overwhelming.

Finally

It can take couples a while to fall pregnant. Relax and enjoy the time with your partner, knowing you have done everything you can to prepare for a healthy pregnancy. Good luck.

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For more information call MotherSafe: NSW Medications in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Service on 9382 6539 (Sydney Metropolitan Area) or 1800 647 848 (Non-Metropolitan Area) Monday -Friday 9am-4pm (excluding public holidays)