



Preconception Health

Get in Shape

If you are trying to have a baby, it is important to PLAN for pregnancy. Preconception health focuses on things you can do before and between pregnancies to increase your chance of a healthy pregnancy and newborn. **Are you ready to get into shape?**

1 PREPARE PHYSICALLY.

Get regular annual exams and discuss your family plans with your provider.

This is an important time to discuss:

- your personal and family health history
- any medical conditions you currently have
- medications and supplements (both prescriptions and over-the-counter)
- previous or potential pregnancy problems
- your vaccination status and risk for infection
- potential genetic concerns
- possible exposure to environmental toxins
- how to eliminate substances that may be harmful to your baby (alcohol, tobacco, illicit/street drugs, excess caffeine)
- your physical activity, eating behaviors and overall lifestyle (including BMI, consumption of processed foods, fats and sweets, calcium-rich foods, vegetables & fruits, lean sources of protein, whole grains, water consumption, sleep patterns, stress management, etc.)

2 PREPARE NUTRITIONALLY.

Up to 50% of pregnancies are **unplanned**, which means you should always assume you could get pregnant if you are sexually active (until menopause, average age of 51). If you are “trying” to conceive, 3 months before you stop contraception you should be taking a prenatal vitamin on a daily basis. (There is no harm in taking a prenatal vitamin every day if you are of reproductive age.) Adequate **folic acid** supplementation has been shown to decrease neural tube defects, such as Spina Bifida.

(Foods naturally rich in folic acid include asparagus, beans, oranges, strawberries, orange squash, tomato juice and breads and grains supplemented with folic acid.)

3 PREPARE EMOTIONALLY

If you are struggling with emotional or relationship issues, resist the temptation that having a baby will “fix” this. Nothing compares to the miracle of

RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN REMOVING A LOW-DOSE HORMONAL IUD (ie. Mirena):

- Be aware the contraceptive effect is immediately reversed.
- Wait for 2 cycles before “trying” to get pregnant & record the dates of your cycles (most women will have a cycle within 3 to 6 weeks of IUD removal).
- Start taking a prenatal vitamin daily (if you haven't already).
- Know that studies show there is no significant difference in how long it takes to get pregnant after the removal of an IUD compared to the general population. In general, 85% of couples will become pregnant within the first 12 months of not using contraception.



having a baby, but pregnancy and motherhood are emotionally and physically exhausting at times. If you are dissatisfied with your relationship, struggling with depression and/or anxiety, have a history or are currently in an abusive relationship, are moving or changing jobs, you should manage these issues first. Seek help from a trusted friend, therapist, clergyman or other professional as needed.

4 PREPARE FINANCIALLY

Okay, let's face it. You may not be entirely financially ready to have a baby, but make sure you don't have significant financial stressors before getting pregnant.

Find out about coverage specific to your insurance plan for both you AND your baby. Look at in and out-of-network coverage and consider which hospital will be covered under your plan. Set some goals and talk to a financial planner to prepare for your and your baby's future.

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