

Beautiful Beginnings: Start Your Pregnancy Off Right

Are you considering having a baby, or did you just find out you're expecting? Is someone close to you expecting?

Following this advice can give you or your loved one the best chance for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.



Eat Right

For good health, eat foods from all five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy. Choose whole grains, no- or low-fat dairy, lean meats and fish. For a healthy pregnancy, you also need 400 to 800 micrograms of folic acid every day. Your doctor may recommend starting a prenatal vitamin now and taking it throughout your pregnancy.



Manage Medicines and Conditions

Tell your doctor about any prescription or over-the-counter medicines you take. If any are unsafe for pregnancy, the doctor can help you stop taking the medication or find an alternative. If you have a chronic condition, it's important to work with your doctor to get it under control before you get pregnant.



Stay Active and Don't Smoke

Working out at a moderate intensity throughout pregnancy is safe and has many benefits, including reducing back pain and constipation. Talk with your doctor about an exercise routine that's right for you. You and your partner should also quit unhealthy habits like smoking.



Relieve Morning Sickness

Most women can find relief from nausea and vomiting with strategies such as avoiding smells that may bother them, like strong perfumes, and not eating spicy or greasy foods. If you can't keep any food or liquids down and are worried about your nutrition, talk with your doctor.



Visit Your Doctor

As soon as you know you're pregnant, contact your doctor. Getting regular prenatal care can help prevent complications and keeps you informed about your baby's development.

Pregnancy Advice for Partners

Here's how to be there for your partner at every stage, from early pregnancy through your baby's arrival:

- **First trimester (weeks 1-13):** Go to prenatal doctor visits when you can and pitch in more around the house so she can get extra rest.
- **Second trimester (weeks 14-27):** Help prepare the house for the baby's arrival and discuss parental leave options with your employer.
- **Third trimester (weeks 28-40):** Take a birthing class together and install a rear-facing car seat in your vehicle.
- **Labor and delivery:** Time her contractions and know when to alert her birthing team; massage her shoulders and back, if that makes her more comfortable.