



Thinking about pregnancy?

WOMEN & INFANTS

1. **Stop taking birth control.**

Getting off birth control a couple months before you start trying to get pregnant will allow your cycle to return to normal and help you figure out when you ovulate.

2. **Schedule a visit with your OB/GYN.**

A pre-pregnancy appointment will be a chance to make sure this physician is who you want to see throughout your pregnancy. It is also the time to make sure you're up-to-date on vaccinations, checked for STDs and high blood pressure and cholesterol, and to check on any other health conditions you have, such as diabetes, asthma or thyroid problems.

3. **Start taking a prenatal vitamin.**

A multivitamin with folic acid before and during early pregnancy is recommended to help prevent birth defects. -*March of Dimes*

4. **Aim for a healthy weight.**

Excess weight can affect fertility, pregnancy and delivery. Stock your fridge with healthy foods and try to exercise regularly.

5. **Limit your caffeine intake.**

Research on caffeine during pregnancy is mixed, but watching how much you have now can make it easier if your doctor suggests cutting back.

6. Cut back on alcohol.

Women who want to become pregnant should stop drinking alcohol as soon as they stop using birth control. Most women don't know they are pregnant until they are four to six weeks into the pregnancy and could unknowingly be exposing their developing baby to alcohol.

-The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

7. Stop smoking.

Tobacco can affect egg quality, not to mention increase your risk of birth defects, miscarriage, preterm labor, and other conditions after you become pregnant.

8. Talk with your partner.

Now is the time to discuss parenting styles, such as childcare, traditions, schooling and money matters.

9. Pay attention to the fish you eat.

Avoid fish high in mercury, which can be harmful to the brain and nervous system if a person is exposed to too much of it over time.

Visit FDA.gov for recommendations.

10. See your dentist.

Poor oral hygiene has been associated with premature delivery, intrauterine growth restriction, gestational diabetes and preeclampsia.

-American Dental Association

11. Reduce environmental risks.

Stay away from paints, chemicals and pesticides.

12. Ask female relatives about their pregnancies.

Learn how long it took them to conceive, if they had any complications or pregnancy-related health conditions. Although each pregnancy is different, there are some things that can run in families and this information may be helpful to your doctor.

BARNES-JEWISH HOSPITAL

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PHYSICIANS

ST. LOUIS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL