



# Planning a healthy pregnancy

Healthy moms tend to have healthy babies. Take these steps before you get pregnant. These steps can help your baby get off to a good start.



## TALK TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Let him or her know you are planning to get pregnant. Follow advice.



## HAVE A COMPLETE MEDICAL EXAM

This includes a gynecological exam. (That’s an exam of the female organs.) Some medical problems may cause harm to you and your baby. They are:

- High blood pressure
- Heart diseases
- Diabetes
- Bleeding
- German measles (rubella), and some other viruses such as CMV.
- Rh disease (after the first pregnancy). This is not a problem if you get Rhogam. Rhogam keeps Rh disease from harming your next baby.
- Obesity
- STIs (sexually transmitted infections)
- HIV

## KEEP YOUR LIFESTYLE HEALTHY

- Follow a balanced diet:
  - Whole grains
  - Green leafy and other vegetables and fruits
  - Protein foods (e.g., lean meats, poultry, beans, lentils, seafood, and eggs)
  - Calcium-rich foods (low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese; items that have calcium added to them like some juices and breads)
- Go easy on high-fat and junk foods, added sugars, and salt.
- Begin or continue on with an exercise schedule.
- Don’t drink alcohol or use street drugs.
- Don’t smoke. If you smoke now, stop smoking. Ask your health care provider for help.
- **Before** you get pregnant, have less than 400 milligrams of caffeine a day. During pregnancy, avoid or limit caffeine to 200 milligrams a day or follow your doctor’s advice.

Caffeine Chart		
Caffeine Source	Amount	Milligrams
Coffee		
brewed	8 oz.	95 to 260
instant	8 oz.	80 to 120
decaffeinated	8 oz.	3 to 6
flavored (from instant mixes)	8 oz.	36 to 100
Espresso drink (2 shots)	16 oz.	175 to 225
Coffee pod	8 oz.	75 to 150
Tea: black (5-minute brew)	8 oz.	47 to 90
Cocoa beverage	8 oz.	3 to 24
Cola beverage	12 oz.	30 to 50
Mountain Dew	12 oz.	54
Energy drink	16 oz.	80 to 300
Chocolate desserts		
brownie (with nuts)	1-1/4 oz.	8
cake	1/16 of 9 inch cake	14
ice cream, pudding	1/2 cup	6
Chocolate candy		
chocolate kisses	6 pieces	5
milk chocolate bar	1 oz.	1 to 15
sweet (dark) chocolate	1 oz.	20

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- All females who plan to get pregnant or are able to get pregnant should take 400 to 800 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day. Folic acid is a B-vitamin. It may prevent certain birth defects, such as spina bifida. For this effect, you take it before conception and during the early months of pregnancy. Ask your health care provider which vitamin pills you should take to get the folic acid and other vitamins and minerals you need.
- Do you use an IUD or “the pill”? Change your birth control method. Do this 1 to 2 months before you try to get pregnant. Let 1 to 2 normal periods happen. Your cycle needs to return to normal. Use another form of birth control during this time. Condoms or a diaphragm are good choices.



- Take care of medical problems.
  - Do you have a chronic condition? That’s a problem that lasts a long time, or comes back often. If so, ask your health care provider how it could affect your pregnancy.
  - Do you take any medications? Ask your health care provider if you have to stop taking any medications before you get pregnant. Follow their advice. Don’t stop taking a prescription medication on your own.
- Ask your health care provider before you take any medicines. That’s even for ones you can buy without a prescription.
- Check that all your immunizations are up-to-date. These protect you from disease. Ask your health care provider about them.
- Read books on pregnancy. Ask your health care provider for good titles.
- Use condoms if you think your partner may have sex with others.
- Consider genetic tests or genetic counseling. These are a good idea if:
  - You or your partner has a family history of genetic health problems. These are problems that are passed down through families. Examples are sickle cell anemia and cystic fibrosis.
  - You are 35 or older
  - Your partner is 50 or older
- Seek prenatal care. Do this as soon as you think you are pregnant.

