

## Nutrition, weight and exercise

Regular activity and a well-balanced diet including fresh fruit and vegetables will help you prepare for a healthy pregnancy.

Being above or below a healthy weight may make it harder to become pregnant. Ask your GP to check if you are a healthy weight. If you need to lose or gain weight, talk with your GP about the best way to do this.

Pelvic floor exercises are recommended before, during and after pregnancy as they can protect against weak bladder, a common problem for women after childbirth.

### Make Healthy Normal

[www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au](http://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au)

### Pelvic Floor Exercises

[www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au](http://www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au)

## Folic acid and Iodine supplements

Folic acid and iodine are needed for the healthy development of your baby's brain and nervous system. It can take time to build up these nutrients.

A daily supplement containing folic acid and iodine is recommended when you are planning pregnancy. You can buy these supplements at most pharmacies and supermarkets. Be sure to check the supplement contains at least 500 micrograms (mcg) of folate and 150mcg of iodine.

It's also a good idea to have your iron levels tested to see if supplements are needed. Low iron levels can reduce your chances of becoming pregnant.

### Factsheets

Folate before and during early pregnancy  
Available at [www.genetics.edu.au](http://www.genetics.edu.au)

Iodine supplementation for pregnant and breastfeeding women  
Available at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

## Steps to consider when planning a baby

### Check-ups

Talk with your partner about health issues and family history

Visit your GP to talk about

- health and lifestyle
- genetic conditions
- recommended tests
- vaccines you may need
- your regular prescribed or herbal medications
- cervical screening and breast self-examination

Visit your dentist

### Health

Start quit smoking program

Stop drinking alcohol

Reduce caffeine intake

### Wellbeing

Keep active / get regular exercise

Eat a balanced, healthy diet

Manage your weight

### Supplements

Start taking a supplement that includes folate and iodine

Ask your GP to check your iron levels

## Getting care early

As soon as you are pregnant, or think you are, book in to see your GP who will help you plan for your pregnancy.

...and finally, good luck with your pregnancy plans!

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Thinking  
of having  
a baby

This brochure talks about steps you can take to plan for a healthy pregnancy.

We've also included a checklist you can follow.

## A visit to your General Practitioner (GP)

3-6 months before trying to become pregnant book in to see your GP. Your GP will help you plan for your pregnancy, including talking about:

- health issues that may need to be managed
- conditions that can be passed from parent to baby (genetic conditions) and any recommended tests
- vaccines you may need.

Talk with your GP about any prescribed or herbal medication you are taking and whether they are safe to take when planning a pregnancy.

It's also a good idea to ask your GP or Women's Health Nurse about when your next cervical screen is due and breast self-examination during and after pregnancy.

### Family Planning NSW

[www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au)

### Planning for pregnancy

[www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au](http://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au)

### Centre for Genetics Education

[www.genetics.edu.au/pregnancy](http://www.genetics.edu.au/pregnancy)

### Immunisation

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation)

## Smoking, alcohol and other drugs

Cigarette smoking, excess alcohol and other drugs (e.g. marijuana) can affect women and men's fertility, making it harder to become pregnant.

Smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs can also harm the baby in pregnancy.

If you or your partner need help to quit smoking, alcohol or other drugs, contact your GP who can offer advice and refer you to support services.

As caffeine can affect fertility, it's recommended that women planning pregnancy drink no more than 1 to 2 cups of coffee each day. Caffeine is also in tea, cola and energy drinks.

### Quit line

[www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au) Tel. 13 78 48 (13 QUIT)

### Alcohol Drug Information Service

[www.yourroom.com.au](http://www.yourroom.com.au) Tel. 1800 422 599

## A visit to your dentist

Pregnancy hormones and morning sickness can increase the risk of having dental problems. A dental check-up is recommended before you become pregnant to correct any existing problems. The dentist can also talk with you about how to keep your teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy.

### Dental Health During Pregnancy

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth)

## At home and work

Check with your GP and workplace about any health risks in your home or at work. Wear masks and gloves when using chemicals like cleaning products or pesticides and when touching used cat litter and gardening soils.

Washing your hands can also help you avoid viruses that may be harmful in early pregnancy.

### MotherSafe

[www.mothersafe.org.au](http://www.mothersafe.org.au) Tel. 1800 647 848

## Mental health and wellbeing

Looking after your mental health and having the support of people you love and trust (partner, family or friends) are important when planning for pregnancy.

If you have experienced mental health issues in the past or you are taking medication, talk with your GP, mental health worker or psychiatrist about your plans to become pregnant.

### Beyond Blue

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) Tel. 1300 22 4636  
(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

### Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE)

[www.cope.org.au](http://www.cope.org.au)

## Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence has a big impact on the health of families, especially on women and children.

Domestic and family violence can affect a baby before birth. If a pregnant woman is injured, the baby can also be harmed. The stress of living with violence also has a major impact on pregnant women that can affect how the baby develops.

If you are concerned for your safety call the police, talk with a health professional or someone you trust, or call the Domestic Violence Helpline.

### Domestic Violence Helpline

Tel. 1800 656 463 (toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

### Domestic violence information

[www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au](http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au)

## Travel

If you are planning to become pregnant, before you travel check the latest advice about recommended vaccines and ways to avoid infections. Some viruses and infections can cause miscarriage or harm to your baby.

### NSW Health infectious diseases information

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious)