

Goals for a Healthier me and baby-to-be!



Changes in insurance plans might mean that you (and your family) are eligible for some added preventive health services, such as screening, vaccinations, contraception (birth control) and counseling, with no co-payment or deductible. To learn more talk with your health insurance company agent.

1. Plan pregnancies.

- Decide which goals to meet before having children—school, work, financial.**
- Think about my goals for children.**

I want to have ___ child or children.

I want to get pregnant when I am ___ years old.

I want to have children ___ years apart.
(At least 18 months apart is recommended.)

I want to finish having children when I am ___ years old.

- Talk with my partner to share my pregnancy desire and gain support for my plan.**
- Select a method of birth control that is effective and fits my needs until we are ready to get pregnant.**

If I choose an IUD or implant, I don't need to do anything except get my method replaced on time (3-10 years) and talk to my provider if I have any questions or problems with my method.

If I choose other methods, I will use my method correctly and consistently at all times and make sure that I get more supplies before I run out. I will also talk to my provider if I have any questions or problems with my method.

I will talk with my doctor about the prescribed and over the counter medicines I am taking and which ones I need to stop or change.

2. Eat healthy foods.

Planning meals and snacks ahead of time and having the food on hand make it less likely that I will make unhealthy choices.

- Make a list before I go to the grocery store, farm stand or market, or neighborhood garden.**
- Include plenty of vegetables and fruits. (Eat my colors!)**
- Shop the outside edge of the store where the healthiest food is sold.**

3. Be active.

Setting aside a time for regular physical activity and being active with a friend will help me keep my plan. Fitting in several 10 minute physical activity sessions throughout the day can help me reach my activity goal.

- Try to get 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week.**
- Find an exercise friend.**
- Find ways to be active at home and at work.**

4. Take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid daily.

Folic acid is good for my health. Taking it daily will help prevent birth defects of the brain and spine when I decide to or if I get pregnant before I am ready.

- Take a vitamin every day unless I eat a serving of breakfast cereal that says it has 400 mcg of folic acid on the nutrition label.**
- Place vitamins by my toothbrush or on the kitchen counter or _____ to help me remember to take them daily.**

5. Protect myself from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Abstinence (not having sex) is the best protection from STIs.

- Agree to have sex with only one person who has agreed to have sex with only me.**
- Buy a supply of condoms, and use them correctly and every time.**
- Get checked if I have been exposed to STIs. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/thefacts.htm>**

6. Protect myself from other infections.

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/pregnancy_gateway/infections.html

- Wash my hands frequently with soap and water.**
- Ask my partner to change the cat litter.**
- Stay away from people who are sick.**
- Try not to share food, drinks, utensils with young children.**

7. Avoid harmful chemicals, metals, and other toxic substances around the home and in the workplace.

<http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pdfs/ToxicMatters.pdf>;

<http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/stayingsafe/indepth.html>

8. Make sure my vaccinations (shots) are up-to-date.

Vaccinations are our best defense against many diseases. Sometimes, those diseases can cause serious problems. I want to protect myself against those diseases.

- Remember to get a flu shot every year, especially if I am pregnant.**
- Check the vaccination schedule before I see my doctor. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/adult.html>**
- Remind my doctor to update my vaccinations.**

9. Manage and reduce stress and get mentally healthy.

- Learn more about getting mentally healthy. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/mental-health/> <http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/stress-your-health.cfm> <http://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/default.htm> Call National Institute of Mental Health (1-866-615-6464)**
- Be aware of things that stress me out.**
- Make a plan to reduce my stress.**
- Find a support person or group, if needed.**

10. Stop smoking.

Smoking is not healthy for me or others around me. I want to be healthy! Second hand smoke is not healthy either. I will avoid being around people when they smoke and will ask my partner not to smoke around me. <http://www.cdc.gov/features/pregnantdontsmoke/index.html>

- Make an appointment with my doctor to talk about help for this.
- Find a support person or group for additional help.
- Check out www.BeTobaccoFree.gov and <http://smokefree.gov/> 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-7848-669).

11. Stop using street drugs and prescription medicines that are not mine.

Taking drugs not prescribed for me is not good for me or my baby-to-be. There are different effects depending on the drugs used. I want my baby and me to be as healthy as possible!

- Make an appointment with my doctor to talk about help for this.
- Find a support person or group for additional help.

12. Reduce my alcohol intake now, and stop drinking before trying to get pregnant.

Drinking alcohol can be habit forming. Drinking alcoholic drinks when trying to get pregnant and during pregnancy can cause problems for me and my baby. I want my baby and me to be healthy and free of bad habits. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/>

- Reduce my drinking to less than 7 drinks a week and never more than 1 on any occasion before trying to get pregnant. <http://www.cnpp.uds.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/ExecSumm.pdf>.
- Make an appointment with my doctor to talk about help for this.
- Stop drinking when I start trying to get pregnant and right away if I find myself pregnant before planned. Drinking during pregnancy can cause birth defects. There is no known safe level of alcohol in pregnancy.

13. Stop partner violence.

Abuse can be emotional, physical, or sexual. No one deserves to be abused. I love myself and my child or children enough to take steps to deal with violence if it should happen to me or my family.

- Talk with my doctor.
- Talk with a counselor. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TDD).
- Make a plan.

14. Manage my health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, overweight.

- Learn more about my health condition(s).
- Talk with my doctor about a plan to manage my health condition(s) and my medicines.
- Find a support person or group to help me with the plan.

15. Learn about my family's health history

Learning about health problems in my family can help my doctor and me determine which problems to look for and how to prevent or deal with them.

- Ask my parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins about any health problems in the family.
- Keep a record of my findings. <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov/fhh-web/familyHistory/start.action>
- Update yearly.

16. Get regular checkups. See my doctors as needed for other problems.

- My doctors' names and phone numbers are _____
- Schedule my yearly appointment.
- Reminder! Take this with me to the appointment.

Your preconception health is important for you and your baby-to-be. Keep this checklist handy so that you can look at it regularly, update it, and talk with your partner and your doctor about how to best put this plan into action. Remember to take this tool with you to your appointment. Life is full of changes so make sure you update your plan regularly. Make time for yourself... Show yourself some love. Your baby will thank you for it.

Show Your Love  Preconception Health

CS239163-B

Show Your LOVE!

Steps to a Healthier me and baby-to-be!

You have thought about your goals for school, for your job or career and for your health. You have also thought about how having children fits in with those goals, and you have decided that you want to become pregnant. Your preconception (before pregnancy) health is very important and can affect the health of your future baby. By making a plan before getting pregnant and taking the time to get healthy, you can take the steps to a healthier you and baby-to-be. This is a tool to help you do that.

Start by choosing your goals for this year. It is easier to focus on 2 – 3 goals. Then use the checklist below to set your plan into motion.

Date plan made or revised:

My top health 3 goals for this year are

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities