

SOCIAL SITUATION & MENTAL HEALTH



Pregnancy can be an emotional time. It's important to have people you can talk to and a GP you feel comfortable with so you can discuss anything bothering you and let them know if things begin to feel overwhelming.

Domestic and family violence has a big impact on the health of families, especially women and children. If you are concerned for your safety at any time, talk with a health professional, your GP or call the Domestic Violence Helpline.

FINALLY

It can take couples a while to fall pregnant. Relax and enjoy the time with your partner, knowing you have done everything you can to prepare for a healthy pregnancy.

CHECK LIST

- Keep active, exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy balanced diet & reduce caffeine
- Manage your weight
- Check & list prescribed medications, over the counter remedies, complementary & herbal products
- Start taking supplements you might need at least one month prior
- Update vaccinations
- If due organise a check-up for breast and cervical screening
- Dental and skin checks
- Research family history and genetics
- Quit alcohol, smoking & recreational drugs
- Check mental health & wellbeing
- Contact MotherSafe if unsure about exposure to environmental, occupational or medicinal hazards

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Phone: 0408 398 109

Email: SESLHD-PlanRHW@health.nsw.gov.au

FACT SHEETS



Produced by
the Royal Hospital
for Women's
PLaN Clinic



Planning for a healthy pregnancy

When starting a family it's important to optimise your health – to give your baby the best start in life.

PLaN is a free pre-pregnancy planning clinic, led by a team of specialists at the Royal Hospital for Women.

NUTRITION, WEIGHT & EXERCISE

Healthy weight - a recommended BMI between 19 and 25

Healthy diet - a well-balanced diet is important before, during and after pregnancy

Exercise - developing a regular exercise program before you fall pregnant means you will be more likely to continue post pregnancy. Pelvic floor exercises protect against a weak bladder, a common problem for women after childbirth, and are recommended before, during and after pregnancy

SMOKING, ALCOHOL, CAFFEINE & OTHER DRUGS

Caffeine - reduce daily intake to < 200mg (equal to two espresso shots). Caffeine can also be found in tea, cola and energy drinks

Smoking - no smoking as this is harmful to you and your baby

Alcohol - no alcohol is considered safe during pregnancy

Recreational drugs – no recreational drugs are safe during pregnancy

VITAMIN & MINERAL SUPPLEMENTATION

A well-balanced diet can provide you with most of the nutrients you need prior to and during pregnancy, but some supplements may be required.

It is important that you take 0.5mg of folic acid daily before you fall pregnant as this helps your baby's early development. Check with your health professional regarding the correct dose for you and if you require the following prenatal supplements:

- Iodine
- Iron
- Vitamin D
- Calcium

MEDICATIONS

It can be helpful to make a list of all the treatments you are taking, including prescription and over the counter medications as well as herbal, complementary products and nutritional supplements.

Some of these medications may not be safe for you or your baby to take during pregnancy or when breastfeeding. It is important to get as much information as you can about the medicines you're taking before you fall pregnant.

While some medications are not considered safe during pregnancy, other prescription medications are important to keep you and your baby in good health.

For further advice consult your doctor or MotherSafe before you try to fall pregnant.

IMMUNISATIONS & BLOOD TESTS

It is important to check your vaccination status and immunity when planning a pregnancy. A simple blood test can reveal immunity to certain infections that could be harmful to your baby. Remember that you must wait **one month** before trying to get pregnant after receiving chickenpox and rubella vaccinations.

You should confirm that you and your partner are immune to the following

- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Rubella (German measles)

You should also confirm that you are both up to date with

- Diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis (DTP)
- Seasonal influenza (Fluvax)

When planning a pregnancy it is recommended that you and your partner have the following blood tests

- HIV
- Hepatitis B & C
- Screening for sexually transmitted infections
- Full blood count (iron and thalassemia screening)

The blood tests required just for you include

- Blood group and antibody levels
- Thyroid function
- Fasting blood sugar levels and glycerinated haemoglobin (a test for diabetes)

MEDICAL HISTORY

The following conditions may have an impact on your pregnancy and wellbeing. If you have any known medical conditions, such as the below, you should ensure you have them managed and optimised by your GP or specialist prior to falling pregnant.

- Cardiovascular e.g. Heart valve problems, hypertension
- Respiratory e.g. Asthma
- Endocrine/hormone e.g. Diabetes or thyroid problems
- Neurological e.g. Migraines, epilepsy
- Kidney e.g. Urinary tract infections
- Mental health e.g. Depression, eating disorders, anxiety, schizophrenia
- Blood e.g. Bleeding or clotting problems
- Gynaecological

HEALTH CHECKS

Even if you have no other medical conditions it is still important to have the following health checks before falling pregnant

- Breast check & pap smear
- Dental check to correct any existing problems
- Skin check

FAMILY HISTORY

It is important to find out if there are any of the following problems in your family, or your partner's family, specifically to do with pregnancy and reproduction. You can discuss these with your GP, who can refer you to a genetic counsellor or specialist.

- Birth defects
- Fetal abnormalities
- Developmental delay/learning problems
- Miscarriage or stillbirth
- Pregnancy complications
- Complicated labour

If you know you have a family history of a particular condition, e.g. muscular dystrophy, genetic testing may be available to help plan your reproductive options. However it can take a while to obtain genetic test results and information, so plan well in advance. People without a specific family history of a genetic condition may wish to consider carrier testing for common conditions such as cystic fibrosis.