



PLAN AHEAD FOR A HEALTHY BABY

The most important time in a baby's development occurs during the first weeks of pregnancy, a time when many women do not know they are pregnant. **Preconception** health is preparing physically and emotionally before becoming pregnant to increase your chances of having a healthy baby.

You can take many steps to increase your chances of having a healthy baby, including:

- **Before you try to get pregnant, get a check-up and talk to your health care provider** about your health history, pregnancy history, and family history of genetic conditions. Ask your health care provider about when you should stop using birth control. Don't hesitate to ask questions!
- **Get health problems under control.** Talk with your health care provider if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, epilepsy, heart, kidney, or thyroid disease, infections, hepatitis, anemia, or other health conditions that might affect you or your baby.
- **Update your immunizations.** It's especially important to make sure you are immune to rubella, chickenpox, and hepatitis B. If you are not up to date, make sure you get the necessary immunizations before you become pregnant.
- **Go over all the medicines you take** (prescription and over-the-counter including herbal supplements or remedies) with your health care provider and ask if they are safe to take while you are pregnant. Especially avoid Accutane (for acne) and Warfarin (for blood clots).
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** A healthy weight range is based on a measurement known as the Body Mass Index (BMI).
- **Get 400 micrograms (0.4mg) of folic acid daily** as part of your healthy diet. This is an important vitamin for everyone to take but it is especially important to get enough of this vitamin for at least 3 months before getting pregnant as well as during pregnancy.
- **Stop smoking, drinking alcohol and use of street drugs.** Using tobacco, alcohol and other drugs can have harmful effects during pregnancy and can cause your baby to be born too small or too soon. Quitting is hard, but you can do it. There are places that can help. If you want to stop smoking, call the Wyoming Quit Tobacco Program, 1-800- QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669). Give yourself time to quit before you get pregnant.
- **Get tested and treat sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.**
- **Get a dental check up.** Regular visits to the dentist, along with good nutrition, and brushing and flossing habits are a part of being healthy and staying well.
- **Begin prenatal care as soon as you find out that you are pregnant.** If you think you may be pregnant, get a pregnancy test and exam as soon as possible---within the first two weeks after missing your period if possible.
- **Plan enough time between pregnancies** so your body can recover and rebuild the nutrients it needs. Return to family planning soon after the baby is born for a new start on your birth control method.