

PLANNING A PREGNANCY?

LEARN THE 10 STEPS TO GETTING HEALTHY BEFORE PREGNANCY

1. Take folic acid

Take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid everyday before pregnancy and during early pregnancy when the baby's brain and spinal cord are developing. Look on the label of the bottle to be sure it has the necessary amount of folic acid. Most over the counter prenatal vitamins contain 800 mtgs. Eat a healthy diet that includes foods that contain folate, the natural form of the vitamin. Such foods include fortified breakfast cereals, beans leafy green vegetables and orange juice

2. Get a pre-pregnancy check up.

Your health care provider can help you stay as healthy as possible. She or he can explain how pregnancy might affect you, review any medications you are taking including over the counter medications and make sure your immunizations are up to date. Inform all your health care providers you are trying to conceive so potentially harmful medications will not be prescribed to you.

3. Eat right, maintain a healthy weight and get fit.

You'll feel better and start your pregnancy off right if you eat a variety of nutritious foods everyday. Avoid foods high in fat and sugar and cut back on the caffeine. Drinking more than two cups may make it harder for you to get pregnant.

If you are overweight, lose weight before you start trying to get pregnant. If you are underweight it may be easier for you to get pregnant if you reach a healthier weight.

Exercise is a good way to help maintain or lose weight, build fitness and reduce stress. If you aren't already exercising, now is a good time to start. Talk to your health care provider about safe activities that are both safe and beneficial.

4. Stop smoking and avoid second hand smoke.

Smoking may make it harder for you to get pregnant. Smoking during pregnancy can put your baby at risk for certain serious health problems. Research has shown that smoking slows the growth of the baby. The best time to stop is before you get pregnant. If you need help, ask your health care provider for advice.

5. Stop Drinking Alcohol.

Drinking alcohol puts your baby at risk for miscarriage and serious physical and mental problems. If you need help to stop drinking, ask your health care provider.

6. Don't use illegal drugs.

Taking street drugs can put your baby at risk for miscarriage, preterm delivery and serious physical and mental problems. Stop using any illegal drugs before you try to get pregnant and stay clean throughout your pregnancy. If you need help to stop, ask your health care provider. Don't stop taking any prescription medications without

first talking to your provider.

7. Avoid infections.

Some infections can harm a developing baby. Wash your hands frequently. Stay away from potentially unsafe food. Cook all meats and eggs thoroughly, wash all fruits and vegetables well. Avoid un-pasteurized milk products. Avoid handling cat litter or soil: they can contain a parasite that causes an infection called toxoplasmosis, which can harm your baby.

8. Avoid hazardous substances and chemicals.

Some cleaning products, pesticides, solvents and lead in drinking water from old pipes can be dangerous to your baby. Avoid chemicals and paint. Reduce your risk by wearing rubber gloves and working in a well ventilated area.

9. Learn about genetics.

Your health care provider will take your health history and ask about the health of members of your family.

10. Don't forget to help Dad get healthy too.

To improve your chances of getting pregnant, it is important for your partner to take care of himself, exercise, eat right and stop smoking, drinking or taking illegal drugs.

Call any of our offices at: Houghs Neck, North Quincy, Hull or Snug Harbor to make an appointment with one of our providers. Along with pre-conception guidance, we offer care throughout and after your pregnancy. As a family practice, we also look forward to caring for your baby.