

## Things to Consider

Your health before pregnancy will affect the health of your baby. Read through the list below. The more items that describe you, the healthier you may be.

- I limit the amount of fat I eat.
- I keep physically active.
- I have my health problems, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, under control.
- My weight is about right.
- I don't smoke.
- I don't use recreational drugs.
- I don't have a drinking problem.

Your healthcare provider can help you learn more about preparing for pregnancy. Also think about issues other than your physical health. Planning ahead can help you prepare for the challenges of parenthood. Think about the following:

- Who will help you through pregnancy and with childcare?
- Do you have health insurance or another way to pay for healthcare?
- Do you have the money needed to cover transportation, childcare, and other day-to-day child expenses?
- If you work, will you be able to take the time you need away from your job for maternity needs and childcare?

## A Bright Future

Take all the time you need before becoming pregnant. Plan. Stay healthy. And make wise decisions. Good choices now can help you have a healthy baby in the future.



# Preparing for Pregnancy

Your Health Before Conception



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Manipal Cure and Care  
No. 14, Manipal Towers, Airport Road,  
Bangalore- 560008

Contact us: 91 - 39893979  
Website: [www.manipalcureandcare.com](http://www.manipalcureandcare.com)  
Email ID: [howareyou@manipalcureandcare.com](mailto:howareyou@manipalcureandcare.com)



CMPMedica India Pvt Ltd.,  
# 640, 10 'A' Cross, WCR, 2nd Stage, Bangalore - 560 086

# 611-617, Sagar Tech Plaza - A, Sakinaka, Andheri-Kurla Road,  
Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400 072

# House No. A-9/3, DLF City -1, Gurgaon - 122 002



This brochure is not intended as a substitute for professional dental care.

## Getting Ready for Your Pregnancy

Even before you become pregnant, your health matters to your future baby. Adopt good health habits today. And take care of any medical problems you have before becoming pregnant. Once you're pregnant, you'll be making choices for two.

### The Right Choices

What's good for you is often good for your baby. And what's harmful to you may harm your baby even more. Start making the right choices before pregnancy. That means eating a healthy diet and keeping physically active. If you're ever unsure about what's healthy and what's not, ask your healthcare provider.



### Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle before pregnancy will help you have a healthy baby. Each of the following tips can improve your health as you prepare for pregnancy:

- Take a daily vitamin supplement that contains **foliac acid** (a vitamin that reduces the chance of some birth defects) and iron.
- Eat a high-fiber, low-fat diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise 3 or more times a week.
- Get within 15 pounds of your ideal weight.



The first weeks of pregnancy are the most important time in a baby's development. A developing baby can be harmed by unhealthy habits even before you know you're pregnant. Before you become pregnant:

- **Don't** use recreational drugs.
- **Don't** drink alcohol.
- **Don't** smoke.

### Working with Your Healthcare Provider

Your healthcare provider can help answer any questions you may have. Do you know when to stop taking birth control pills? What are the best foods to eat? Are any over-the-counter medicines safe for pregnant women? You can also ask about special care you may need if you have any of the following:

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), such as herpes or chlamydia
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Other chronic health problems (illnesses that need long-term treatment)

**Remember:** As soon as you know you are pregnant, be sure to get regular prenatal care.

