

Preparing for Pregnancy

Introduction

Welcome to the Virtual Self-guided Wellness Exhibit **Preparing for Pregnancy**. This learning module contains 14 posters and takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Before you get started, print the **Passport to Maternal Health: Preparing for Pregnancy** which is on the next page of this Virtual Exhibit. Answer the questions on the Passport as you go through the Virtual Exhibit to reinforce your learning.



Passport to Maternal Health: Preparing for Pregnancy



Name: _____

Answer these questions as you go through the virtual educational exhibit to reinforce your learning.

Exhibit 1: Preparing for Pregnancy Overview

When should **women** begin preparing for pregnancy? _____

When should **men** begin preparing for pregnancy? _____

Exhibit 2: Lifestyle and Preparing for Pregnancy

List 3 or more examples of healthy habits you would like to continue or improve while preparing for pregnancy.

Exhibit 3: Physical Activity for Fertility and Pregnancy

For the four key areas of structured exercise and the 10,000 steps per day guideline, note what you are currently achieving and what you want to do to change to meet the physical activity recommendations.

Strength: _____

Flexibility: _____

Balance: _____

Steps per day: _____

Cardiovascular: _____

Exhibit 4: Preconception Nutrition and Healthy Eating

List 2 healthy eating improvements you are willing to try to improve your nutrition and your chances of getting pregnant.

Exhibit 5: Healthy Hydration

List ways you can improve your hydration so you can consume more water and hydrate well.

Exhibit 6: Vitamins for Fertility

Women preparing for pregnancy should take a multivitamin that contains _____ of Folic Acid.

Exhibit 7: Preconception Counseling and Genetic Screening

List 3 potential areas of discussion during a preconception counseling visit.

Exhibit 8: Preventative Care

Review the recommendations for vaccines. List any that you need to check the status of and schedule needed vaccinations or booster shots.

Exhibit 9: Infertility

Two potential causes of female infertility are: _____ & _____ .

Two potential causes of male infertility are: _____ & _____ .

Exhibit 10: Alternative Reproductive Options

What alternative reproduction options are you willing to consider if you have difficulty becoming pregnant and carrying a baby to term.

Exhibit 11: Environmental Exposures

What environmental exposures can you change to reduce your risk of toxic exposure?

Exhibit 12: Guide to Buying Organic Produce

List non-organic items that you currently purchase from the “Dirty Dozen” so you can make note to begin purchasing organic for these items that test high for pesticide use:

Exhibit 13: Guide to Buying Fish

Exposure to mercury should be reduced _____ months prior to pregnancy?

Exhibit 14: Healthy Fats and Oils for Cooking

What oils would you substitute to ensure you are cooking with the right fats?



PREPARING FOR PREGNANCY OVERVIEW

Why

Preconception health prepares your mind and body for pregnancy and ensures the best outcome for your future child.

When

- **Women:** 3-6 months ahead
- **Men:** 3 months ahead

What to Consider When Preparing for Pregnancy

- Practice healthy lifestyle habits
- Manage chronic health conditions
- Review medications and supplements with healthcare provider
- Keep immunizations up-to-date
- Take prenatal vitamins
- Consider genetic testing
- Minimize environmental exposures

LIFESTYLE AND PREPARING FOR PREGNANCY



Unhealthy lifestyles are linked to infertility and poor pregnancy outcomes. A healthy lifestyle is associated with improved health for the parents and child.

Discontinue Altogether

- Tobacco
- Marijuana
- Recreational Drugs

Use Cautiously

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- OTC Medications
- Prescriptions
- Supplements

Continue Healthy Habits

- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating
- Healthy Hydration
- Sleep
- Stress Management

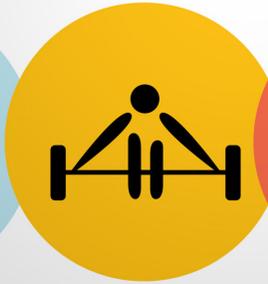


Cardiovascular

Strength

Flexibility

Balance



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR FERTILITY & PREGNANCY

Exercise Recommendations for Adults Ages 18-64

Strength: 2 days/week

Flexibility: 2 days/week

Balance: 2 days/week

Steps: 10,000 steps/day

Cardiovascular: 30 minutes/5 times/week of moderate-intensity activity (such as brisk walking) or 25 minutes/3 times/week of vigorous-intensity activity (such as jogging or running)

If you go beyond these minimum guidelines, you'll gain even more health benefits.

Some exercises combine strength, flexibility, and balance enabling you to meet the physical activity recommendations more efficiently. Your step count includes all steps you would get in your day.

Source: CDC, AHA, ACSM, WHO



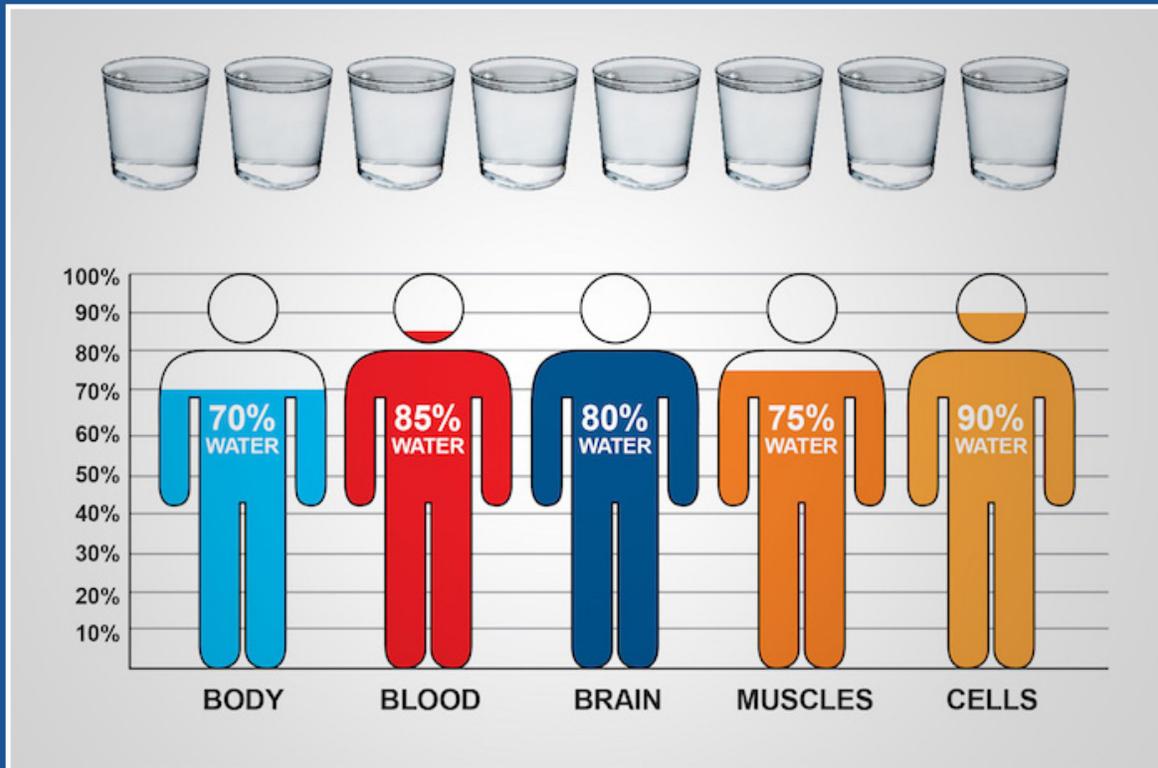
PRECONCEPTION NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING

For men and women, food and fertility are linked. Stick to a balanced diet to boost your chances of getting pregnant and having a healthy baby.

Simple Rules to Eat By:

- Consume whole foods
- Minimize packaged and processed foods
- Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juice
- Aim for variety
- Avoid skipping meals
- Eat with others — make your meals a social event
- Take time to eat a meal — not at a desk, while on the phone, or driving
- Slow down — eat slowly and enjoy your food
- Cook at home — avoid take-out
- Control portion sizes

HEALTHY HYDRATION



Human body tissues are more than 70% water.
Water is the healthiest beverage.

Tips to Hydrate Well When Preparing for Pregnancy

- Aim for eight 8-ounce glasses of filtered water daily.
- Replace sugar-sweetened drinks and juice with water.
- Limit or eliminate artificial sweeteners and diet drinks.
- Limit caffeine to 200 mg per day, or 12 ounces of brewed coffee.
- Minimize alcohol while preparing for pregnancy.
- Stop drinking alcohol when trying to conceive.

*Eat your calories.
Don't drink them.*



VITAMINS FOR FERTILITY

Vitamins complement a healthy diet and are important to consider when planning for pregnancy.

Vitamin Recommendations

- A prenatal vitamin that includes **400 micrograms of Folic Acid**.

Folic Acid is found naturally in these foods:

- Leafy vegetables
 - Citrus fruits
 - Beans
 - Legumes
 - Whole grains
- **Vitamin D** – have your level measured and supplement as needed



PRECONCEPTION COUNSELING & GENETIC SCREENING

Preconception counseling involves a discussion of the medical and family history of both partners with a healthcare provider covering:

- Personal health history
- Family history of genetic disorders, birth defects, or intellectual disabilities
- Chronic medical conditions
- Lifestyle, exercise, and environment
- Tobacco, alcohol, or substance use
- A plan for lifestyle changes as needed
- Social and mental health issues
- Prescriptions, OTC medications, and supplements
- Genetic screening



PREVENTATIVE CARE

It is important to keep your vaccines current to protect yourself and your future baby.

Vaccine Recommendations:

- Influenza (Flu)
- Tdap/TD (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis)
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- HPV (Human Papillomavirus)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Meningococcal vaccines are recommended for certain groups
- COVID-19
- If traveling to other countries check on recommended immunizations

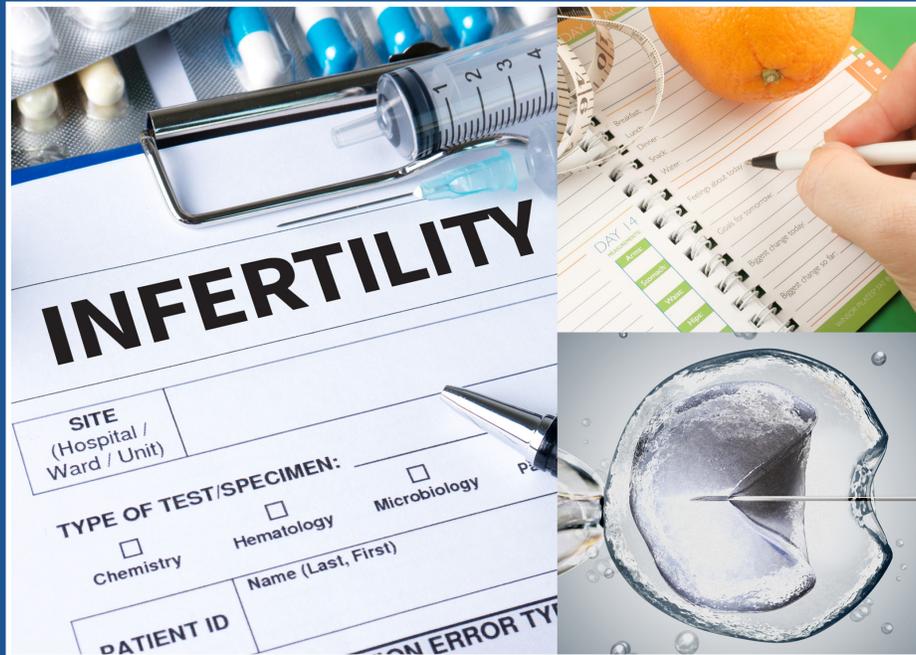
Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

Preventive Care Recommendations:

- Check that your cervical cancer screening is up-to-date
- Maintain dental health



INFERTILITY



Many couples experience infertility and require medical assistance to conceive.

Potential Causes of Female Infertility



- Irregular or lack of regular ovulation
- Weight related (under and overweight)
- Endocrine disorders
- Pelvic conditions: infection, scarring, blockage, endometriosis
- Growths in the uterus

Potential Causes of Male Infertility



- Hormonal
- Erectile or ejaculatory dysfunction
- Obstruction of the vas deferens
- Mass of varicose veins
- Infection
- Genetic

Infertility assessments help to identify potential causes which define treatment options.





ALTERNATIVE REPRODUCTION OPTIONS

Donor-Assisted

- Use of eggs, sperm, or embryos donated by another person

Surrogacy or Third-Party Reproduction

- A woman carries a child for another individual or couple
- Used when it is unsafe or not possible for a woman to carry a pregnancy
- For single men and same-sex couples

Becoming a Parent Through Adoption

There are many types of adoption available including:

- Domestic
- International
- Newborns and older children
- Special needs children

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES



Tips to Reduce your Exposure to Toxins

- Drink filtered water
- Avoid microwaving in plastic food containers
- Look for canned food products that are BPA-free
- Use glass, porcelain, or stainless-steel for hot food and hot beverages
- Avoid high-temperature cooking methods
- Avoid “non-stick” cookware coated with Teflon or PTFE’s
- Use personal-care products that are phthalate-free
- Avoid pesticides, chemicals, and solvents
- Ask someone else to clean the cat litter box
- Avoid heat from hot tubs, saunas, tanning beds, and electric blankets
- Take your shoes off when entering your home
- Don’t travel to places that have the Zika virus

GUIDE TO BUYING ORGANIC PRODUCE

When preparing for pregnancy, it's important to eat as healthy as possible.

The **Clean Fifteen** helps shoppers seek out conventionally grown fruits and vegetables that tend to test low for pesticides.

The **Dirty Dozen** helps shoppers seek out organic fruits and vegetables whose conventional versions test high for pesticides.



The Clean Fifteen: OK to Buy Non-Organic

1. Avocados
2. Sweet Corn
3. Pineapple
4. Onions
5. Papaya
6. Sweet Peas (frozen)
7. Eggplant
8. Asparagus
9. Broccoli
10. Cabbage
11. Kiwi
12. Cauliflower
13. Mushrooms
14. Honeydew Melon
15. Cantaloupe

The Dirty Dozen: Buy Organic

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Kale, collard & mustard greens
4. Nectarines
5. Apples
6. Grapes
7. Cherries
8. Peaches
9. Pears
10. Bell & Hot Peppers
11. Celery
12. Tomatoes



GUIDE TO BUYING FISH

The “Best Choices” for consuming fish when preparing for pregnancy have the lowest levels of mercury.

- Reduce exposure to mercury up to 1 year prior to pregnancy.
- Nutrition guidelines recommend that adults consume 12 ounces of fish a week.

Fish to Avoid that Have Highest Mercury Levels

- King mackerel
- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
- Bigeye tuna

HEALTHY FATS AND OILS FOR COOKING



20-35% of daily calories should come from healthy fats.

Choosing the Right Oils for Cooking

Oils can be destroyed by heat and create free radicals that are damaging to your health. This happens when an oil reaches its “smoke point” — the temperature at which the oil begins to give off smoke. Beyond the health effects, it also does not taste very good. Oils labeled unrefined or virgin are unprocessed oils. Refined oils are highly processed and have a higher smoke point. **AVOID** cooking with these oils: corn, safflower, sunflower, soybean, canola, cottonseed.

Choose the oil that suits your needs by temperature of cooking:

High Heat Oil (frying, sautéing)	Medium to High Heat Oils (medium to high-heat sautéing, baking)	Medium Heat Oils (low-heat sautéing, sauces, salad dressing)	No Heat Oils (cannot withstand heat, use for salad dressings, sauces only)
Almond	Extra Virgin Olive	Extra Virgin Olive	Macadamia
Toasted Sesamee	Virgin Olive	Virgin Olive	Walnut
	Ghee (clarified butter)	Ghee (clarified butter)	Flaxseed
	Virgin Avocado	Virgin Avocado	
		Unrefined Coconut	

Tip: Drizzle olive oil on dishes just before serving to bring out their flavor. Olive oil is also a great choice for salad dressing and sauces.

Preparing for Pregnancy

Close

We hope you enjoyed the Virtual Self-guided Wellness Exhibit **Preparing for Pregnancy**. The Exhibit shared a wide range of healthy lifestyle, nutrition, medical, and environmental practices. These practices will help you to make more informed decisions and lifestyle changes that will help you on your journey as you prepare for pregnancy. You are now ready for the **Preparing for Pregnancy Challenge** to put these practices into daily living.