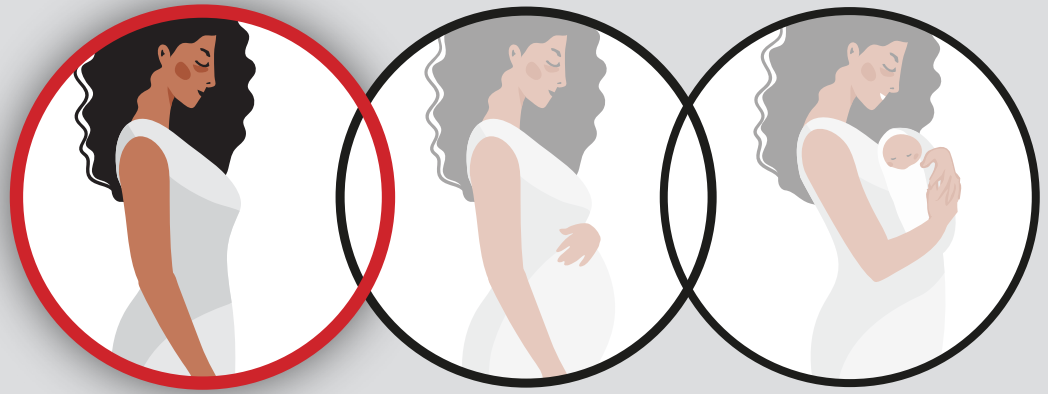




PRE-PREGNANCY CHECKLIST

If you're thinking of becoming pregnant, it's time to prioritize your health. Your health care professional can help you stay healthy before you get pregnant, while you're pregnant and after your baby is born. This helps you and your baby stay safe and strong.

Here are some questions you can take to your next appointment with your health care professional.



YOUR HEALTH

Tell your health care professional about your health, any preexisting conditions, issues or concerns.

- Will my health affect my baby's health?
- Do I have health problems that would make pregnancy unsafe?
- Am I at a higher risk because of my age? If so, what are those risks?
- How can I improve my health before I become pregnant?
- Will I need to see any specialists? If so, will you continue to be one of my health care professionals throughout my pregnancy?
- Should I consider recent episodes of sadness, anxiousness or extreme tiredness and mental health before pregnancy?



RISK FACTORS AND FAMILY HISTORY

If cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, depression and/or other serious health issues run in your family, it's important to tell your health care professional. Family history can be a risk factor for developing cardiovascular disease, which is the number one cause of maternal death in the United States.

- Is there anything I can do to prevent health problems or conditions that run in my family?
- Will my baby be at greater risk for any problems based on my health or family history?



WEIGHT

Carrying too much extra weight before pregnancy can make it harder to stay healthy. It can also lead to problems like high blood pressure and diabetes, which can hurt your heart. Try keeping track of your weight in a notebook or on your phone so you can see how it changes before you get pregnant.

- My BMI is [add your specific number]. Is that a healthy number for me to become pregnant?
- What should my goal weight be?
- How will my weight affect my pregnancy and my risk factors?
- Should I lose weight before I get pregnant? If so, how can I reach my goal in a healthy way?
- What are the health effects of being overweight or obese if I become pregnant?



BLOOD PRESSURE

Keeping your blood pressure healthy before pregnancy can help reduce your risk of developing gestational hypertension, preeclampsia or eclampsia while pregnant. These problems can be dangerous and may even affect your heart later in life. Try writing down your blood pressure numbers in a notebook or on your phone so you can keep track before you get pregnant.

- What is my blood pressure today? Is it within a healthy range?
- If family members or I have a history of high blood pressure, preeclampsia or eclampsia, what can I do to lower my blood pressure and risk of developing complications?
- How should I check my blood pressure? If I have a high reading, what should I do?



NUTRITION

Eating healthy foods like vegetables, fruit and lean meats is always important – especially when you're planning to have a baby. Your health care professional may ask you to consume less salt, because too much salt can raise your blood pressure.

- What should I eat before and during pregnancy?
- I am a [vegetarian/pescatarian/vegan] am I getting enough nutrients??



EXERCISE

Being active is critical for good heart and mental health. Pick something fun that you like to do. If you don't want to go to a gym, you can walk outside, inside a mall, a large store or watch workout videos online. Before you start a new exercise plan, ask your health care professional what kinds of exercise are best for you.

- Should I change how I exercise before pregnancy?
- Are there certain workouts I should avoid during pregnancy?



MEDICATIONS

Your health care professional can help you know which medicines are safe to take before, during, and after pregnancy. They may also tell you to start taking a prenatal vitamin with folic acid and iron to help your baby grow strong. Always talk to your health care professional before stopping or changing any medicine. Some medicines — like ACE inhibitors and ARBs for high blood pressure — and some vitamins or supplements are not safe if you're trying to get pregnant. If you do get pregnant while taking them, tell your health care professional know right away.

- Are my current medications, vitamins or supplements safe to continue taking before and during pregnancy?
- Will my medications need to change if I become pregnant?
- What prenatal vitamin do you recommend?



SMOKING AND DRINKING ALCOHOL

If you use tobacco/vaping products, e-cigarettes and/or drink alcohol, you should stop using them before becoming pregnant.

- How can I stop using tobacco products?
- Is it OK to drink alcohol until I become pregnant?
- What are healthy ways to manage my stress instead of using tobacco products or drinking?

To learn more, visit goredforwomen.org/pregnancy and have a conversation with your health care professional.