

# PREPARING FOR PREGNANCY

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## FAMILY PLANNING

Take a step back and look at your overall life goals and where, if at all, you see children fitting. If you are currently sexually active and **NOT** wanting children then talk to your health care provider about reliable birth control.

## CURB YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE

Alcohol is a part of many people's lifestyle, but if you are considering pregnancy it is important to minimize the amount, and not drink during these two weeks prior to your period when you might be pregnant.

## AVOID RECREATIONAL DRUGS

Many substances, including cannabis, opioids and stimulants can make getting pregnant more difficult. They are also linked to harmful effects on your pregnancy. If you are using illicit or recreational drugs, and not sure where to get help, ask your health care provider. We are here to help!

## STOP SMOKING

We know smoking has negative effects for you, but it also affects the health of your baby! The best thing you can do for your health and that of your family now and in the future is to stop smoking! There are lots of ways we can help! Check out [Pregnets](#) for more info!

## FOLIC ACID

All women should take a folic acid supplement prior to thinking about being pregnant! This helps to decrease the risk of spina bifida. Check out this blog post on '[Supplements in Pregnancy](#)' to see which dose is right for you!

## MEDICATION & VACCINATION

### Medication & Supplements:

There are certain medications (not many) we avoid during pregnancy, as they can cause birth defects. Check in with your health care provider to review any medications or supplements you are taking prior to trying to conceive. We can transition you over to safer options if needed, and make sure you are stabilized prior to getting pregnant.

### Vaccinations:

There are a few vaccinations (MMR, Chicken Pox) that we shouldn't give you while pregnant. It's a great idea to make sure you are up to date prior to getting pregnant! We advise getting a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine in your third trimester, so that one you can hold off on until then!

## GET YOUR PAP

Check with your health care provider to see if you are due for your pap. If so get it prior to getting pregnant! This is our screen for cervical cancer, and should be done regularly between the ages of 25-70. We know most cervical cancer is caused by HPV and we have a vaccine for that! Check with your health care provider if you haven't gotten your HPV vaccine.

## FAMILY HISTORY

Take this opportunity to learn about your family history. Some health conditions, especially those that can occur during pregnancy, can be handed down through generations. This knowledge can help you and your team keep you healthy during your pregnancy! If you can't find out... no worries, we can work with whatever information you have!



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## LIFESTYLE

Take a look at your lifestyle! Starting your pregnancy off in a healthy state gives you and your baby the best chance! What are we talking about? Nutrition, exercise and sleep!

### Nutrition:

The [Canada Food Guide](#) was recently updated and is a great framework for a healthy diet. If you have special dietary restrictions, or health concerns, make sure to talk to your health care provider about how you can get your pregnancy off to the best start!

### Exercise:

If you are fit prior to pregnancy we know that you will generally have an easier pregnancy with less aches and pains and more energy. The recommendations are for 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous exercise per week, and these can be broken up into as little as 10 minute sessions! You can do whatever you have been doing, and if you haven't been doing much, then chat with your health care provider about ways to add more physical activity into your day safely!

### Sleep:

Sleep is one of the most important things for our health, and unfortunately one of the things we let slip the most! Most people need between 6-9 hours of sleep a night, and if we don't do that our physical and mental health can suffer. Some basic tips to improve sleep:

- Keep a schedule – same bedtime and awakening time daily
- No screen time 1-2 hours pre bed.
- Bed is for sleep and sex only!
- If caffeine affects your sleep, don't consume after 10 am.
- Have a calming bedtime routine
- Get your exercise in daily!

If you are still struggling talk to your health care provider!

## MENTAL HEALTH

### Optimize your Mental Health:

Your mental health has a huge impact on your physical well being, so while improving your physical well being will help your mental health, the opposite is true too!!

If you are on medications for mental health make sure the one you are on is safe in pregnancy, most are safe, but there are a couple we might change for you!

If you are struggling with mood or anxiety, you are not alone! We know that 50% of women entering pregnancy have, or have had, a mental health illness! Ask for help early!

Here are a couple of tips:

- Take time to practice Mindfulness
- Optimize your diet, sleep and exercise
- Build a support network of friends and family
- Talk to your health care provider if you are experiencing symptoms of:
  - Low mood
  - excessive worry
  - being constantly overwhelmed
  - increased irritability

Here are a couple of great resources you can access as well!

<https://reproductivementalhealth.ca>

<https://www.anxietycanada.com>

