

## Social Situation & Mental Health

Pregnancy can also be an emotional time. Ensure you have a few people you feel comfortable talking to and a GP you feel comfortable with so you can discuss anything bothering you and are able to let them know if things begin to feel overwhelming.

Have you considered the following issues....

### **Family & relationships**

- Do you already have children?
- Have you & your partner discussed having children?
- Have you started trying to fall pregnant?
- Do you feel you have a good social support network (friends & family)?

### **Work, study & financial commitments**

- Do you work?
- Does your partner work?
- Are you studying?
- Have you considered childcare options?

### **Mental health & wellbeing**

- Do you have a history of anxiety and depression?
- Do you feel ready to start planning a pregnancy?
- Is your partner ready to start planning a pregnancy?

## Finally

It can take couples a while to fall pregnant. Relax and enjoy the time with your partner, knowing you have done everything you can to prepare for a healthy pregnancy. Good luck.



## PlaN Clinics

Contact MotherSafe at (02) 9382-6541 or website [www.mothersafe.org.au](http://www.mothersafe.org.au) for dates and venues.



## General Pregnancy References & Information Sources

- Royal Hospital for Women Sydney:  
[www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/RHW](http://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/RHW)  
Ph: (02) 93826111
- MotherSafe: [www.mothersafe.org.au](http://www.mothersafe.org.au)  
Ph: Sydney Metro (02) 93826539  
NSW non-metro 1800647848
- Immunise Australia:  
<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/> Ph: 1800671811
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention -  
Preconception Care:  
[www.cdc.gov/preconception/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/preconception/index.html)
- NSW Genetics Education: [www.genetics.edu.au](http://www.genetics.edu.au)
- NSW Health: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/)
- Australian Health: [www.yourhealth.gov.au](http://www.yourhealth.gov.au)
- Perinatal Psychiatry: [www.womensmentalhealth.org](http://www.womensmentalhealth.org)
- Depression: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)  
Ph: 1300 224636

## Quit Smoking Resources

- QUIT Program [www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au) Ph: 137 848

## Alcohol Guidelines

- Australian Government Guidelines:  
[www.alcohol.gov.au](http://www.alcohol.gov.au)
- Royal Hospital for Women Melbourne:  
<http://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/pregnancy-drugs-alcohol/>

## Nutrition

- Australian Food Standards:  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Nutrition Australia: [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)
- Dieticians Association: [daa.asn.au](http://daa.asn.au)

## Social support

- Family planning: [www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au)  
Ph 1300658886
- Domestic Violence Line: Ph:1800656463
- Telephone Interpreter Service: Ph: 131450



## **Planning For A Healthy Pregnancy**

### Lifestyle

Before you fall pregnant it is important to be as healthy as you can be. A healthy body and lifestyle mean a healthier start for your baby and can optimise your pregnancy. The following are a list of recommendations to consider before you fall pregnant. They may even assist you in falling pregnant!

- Healthy weight (a recommended BMI 20-25)
- Quit smoking
- Consider your alcohol intake: no alcohol is recommended during pregnancy
- Street drugs - giving these up before you fall pregnant gives your baby the best start to life
- Caffeine - present in coffee, tea, cola, chocolate & energy drinks. Reduce daily intake to <200mg (equal to 2 espressos)
- Healthy diet - A well balanced diet is important before, during and after your pregnancy. There are certain foods that should be avoided when you are pregnant. It is also important to observe good hygiene during food preparation.
- Exercise - developing a regular exercise program before you fall pregnant means you will be more likely to continue. Exercise has positive benefits on your physical and mental health

### Vitamin & Mineral Supplementation

There are many multivitamins and minerals specifically designed for pregnancy and breastfeeding. It is important you take 0.5mg folic acid **before** you fall pregnant as much of baby's development is in the first few weeks and you may not even know you are pregnant. A well balanced diet can provide you with most of the nutrients needed prior to and during pregnancy, but some supplements may be required.

The vitamins and minerals that are necessary for a healthy pregnancy, mother and baby include

- Folate (or folic acid)
- Iodine
- Iron
- Vitamin D
- Calcium

### **Medications**

Certain medicines prescribed by the doctor or bought in the chemist or supermarket may not be safe while you are pregnant. We suggest you make a list of any regular medications and find out the safety of these from your local doctor or call MotherSafe before you fall pregnant. In making this list you should include all prescription medications that have been prescribed by a doctor as well as those you have bought from a chemist, supermarket, and health food store or have been recommended by a naturopath.

While some medications are not considered safe when planning or during pregnancy, other medications are okay to continue during a pregnancy and can be of benefit to you and your baby to keep you in good health for the pregnancy.

Some herbal medicines, traditional medicines, homeopathy products and nutritional supplements may be harmful to you and a developing baby and it is important to check this before you fall pregnant.

### **Immunisations & Blood Tests**

You should know your vaccination status and immunity when you are planning a pregnancy. A simple blood test can reveal whether you have had immunisations and are immune to certain infections that otherwise could be harmful to a pregnancy. Remember that you must wait 1 month before trying to get pregnant after receiving chickenpox and rubella vaccinations.

Confirm that you (and your partner) are immune to the following:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis (DTP)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Varicella (Chicken pox)
- Influenza (Fluvax)

Your doctor or midwife would also like to know that you are generally healthy before falling pregnant so they may arrange other tests including:

- Thyroid function test
- Fasting blood sugar levels and glycosylated haemoglobin (a test for diabetes)
- HIV
- Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C
- Screening for sexually transmitted infections
- Full blood count (for iron and thalassaemia screening)

Knowing this information in advance may help you sort out any problems before you fall pregnant.

### **Medical History**

Your medical history is also important to consider when planning a pregnancy. Discuss with your doctor if you have a history of any of the following:

- Heart conditions
- Asthma/Respiratory Illness
- Endocrine/Hormone problems (including diabetes or thyroid problems)
- Migraine /Neurological problems (e.g. Epilepsy)
- Kidney problems
- Mental illness (depression, eating disorders, anxiety, schizophrenia)
- Blood problems (bleeding or clotting problems)
- Gynaecological problems

### **Health Check-Ups**

It is important to know that your general health is good before you fall pregnant. If you have any known medical conditions you should ensure you have the condition managed by your GP or specialist prior to falling pregnant. Even if you have no other medical conditions it is still important to have the following health checks up-to-date before falling pregnant:

- Women's health check up
  - Breast check
  - Pap Smear
- Dental check up
- Skin check

### **Family History**

Knowing about the medical history of your family can be beneficial when planning a pregnancy. It is also important to find out if there are any of the following problems in your family, specifically to do with pregnancy and reproduction:

- Birth defects
- Fetal abnormalities
- Developmental delay/learning problems
- Miscarriage or stillbirth
- Pregnancy complications
- Complicated labours

If you know you have a family history of a genetic disorder e.g. cystic fibrosis, genetic testing may be available. It may take a while to obtain results from some of these genetic tests, so allow yourself plenty of time to get results and information while you are planning your pregnancy. Spending a little time while planning may save a lot of stress once you are pregnant.

If you ticked any of the above you may need to discuss this with your GP before you fall pregnant. Your GP may refer you for genetic counselling or to other specialists to discuss these issues further.