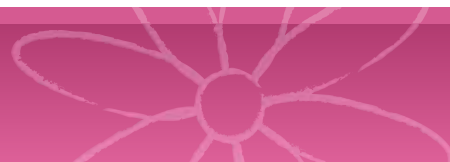


The path to pregnancy



Plan C – Preconception Check with your doctor

“Preconception health care promotion and guidance can provide prospective parents with an opportunity to prevent the preventable and to know they did all they desired to encourage a healthy pregnancy and infant”

Preconception Health Promotion: A focus for Women's wellness. March of Dimes, 2003

As part of your Path to Pregnancy, it is important to visit your doctor to discuss your intention to conceive and your desire to address issues that may hinder conception or endanger the pregnancy. There are a number of medical conditions (such as diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure), medications, occupational and lifestyle issues that may need to be considered in this context. Also, a number of medical tests are important prior to conceiving. These include testing for certain infections or immunities that can affect fertility and the outcome of your pregnancy. Your doctor will also be interested in your general health and reproductive health history, as well as that of your partner and family. If you or your partner have a history of birth defects in your families, or have a high risk of a genetic disorder based on ethnic background or age, your doctor may refer you to a genetic counsellor.

A Preconception Check will need to cover a number of health issues. It can be divided into 4 main areas as briefly outlined below:

(Do not worry if you can't understand the list below – your doctor can discuss it with you and will determine which tests you may need.)

1. Medical assessment

- Your medical history and current health problems
- Your reproductive and obstetric history, including menstrual cycle problems
- Your family history
- General physical exam including body mass index (BMI) & blood pressure (BP)
- Pap smear update
- Environmental toxin assessment (from work, home, hobbies, food, air and water)
- Medication risk assessment (including non-prescription drugs)
- Infectious disease risk assessment

2. Vaccination update

- If required - rubella, varicella (chickenpox), hepatitis B (at least 1 month wait is required before trying to conceive)
- Others as determined by your doctor

3. Screening

- HIV/AIDS
- STDs such as chlamydia, syphilis
- Other infections
- Genetic disorders if indicated
- Blood tests, urine screens and possibly vaginal/cervical swabs will form part of your preconception check (e.g. check for rubella immunity, thyroid function, iron or iodine deficiency, infections, blood sugar control etc)

4. Counselling and recommendations

- Dental check up
- Menstrual cycle education
- Food preparation guidance (i.e. prevention of food-borne infections)
- Diet and nutrient consumption guidance
- Nutrient supplementation recommendations

The path to pregnancy



- Smoking and alcohol cessation guidance
- Toxin avoidance recommendations (e.g. pesticides, paints, solvents, fish high in mercury)
- Weight loss and weight management
- Exercise recommendations
- Stress management
- Emotional, mental and relationship support

This list is a guide only and does not replace the advice and guidance of your doctor or health care professional.

REMEMBER – ANY health-related concern may impact your fertility, your pregnancy or the child you conceive. It is important you discuss ANY concerns openly with your doctor.

For more information see the “*Preconception Care*” and “*What can impact my fertility?*” sections on the site.