

## Prenatal Care



Prenatal care is very important to the health of you and your baby. Even before you know you are pregnant, it's important to adopt healthy habits. If you are trying to get pregnant, make sure you take folic acid every day to reduce the risk of birth defects. Also, avoid alcohol, smoking and drugs while you are seeking pregnancy and eat a well- balanced, nutritious diet.

When you do find out that you are pregnant, getting prenatal care as early as possible is very important. You can greatly reduce the risk of complications during your pregnancy and insure a good outcome for your baby by seeing a healthcare provider regularly.

At first you will visit your healthcare provider every month for prenatal check ups, then when you are thirty two weeks pregnant, you will schedule prenatal visits every two weeks, and after you are thirty six weeks along in your pregnancy, you will have weekly prenatal visits. This will insure that everything is going well for you and your baby throughout your pregnancy. Many complications that could be dangerous for you and your baby can be detected early and treated successfully if you see your healthcare provider regularly throughout your pregnancy.

Your provider will start you on a prenatal vitamin that is right for you, one with folic

acid and all the vitamins and minerals your baby needs. She or he will also measure to make sure the babies size is equal to the babies age. Your blood pressure and urine will be checked at every prenatal visit, as well as the babies heartbeat. It's so exciting to listen to your babies heartbeat! All of these tests are very important screenings and will help to keep you healthy and your baby safe.



Keeping regular prenatal appointments establishes a relationship between you and your healthcare provider or clinic before you go into labor, which is helpful in relieving fears. It provides you with an opportunity to ask questions all along the way as your body, your emotions and your roles change. You will get personal answers about exercise, weight gain and the discomforts of pregnancy. Your provider will urge you to avoid alcohol, smoking and drugs, which is extremely important when you are pregnant. She or he will encourage you to eat well, including protein, calcium and iron in your diet every day.

There are many benefits of early and on-going prenatal care for you and your baby.

Adapted from materials created in 2003 by WMPG radio and Portland Public Health (Maine) as part of Sound Partners for Community Health (A program of the Benton Foundation, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation).  
Funding also provided by the National Library of Medicine  
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A Healthy Roads Media ([www.healthyroadsmedia.org](http://www.healthyroadsmedia.org)) project

Prenatal Care (English) – Created 8.05 (Reviewed 3.09)