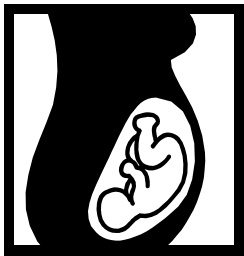


Are All Pregnancies Planned?

- **Almost half of all pregnancies are unplanned.**
- The first 3 months is very critical in the development of an unborn baby.
- Because many women find out they are pregnant several weeks after conception, it is never too early to make changes that can protect you and the health of your unborn child.



Birth Control Methods

- Talk with your doctor about what birth control methods will help you prevent an unplanned pregnancy.
- If you think your birth control method might not have worked, consult with your doctor immediately.

If you do become pregnant, you can do a few things to ensure that you have a healthy baby

- **Exercise moderately (e.g., walking, swimming).**
- **Avoid high temperatures because they could affect your unborn child (e.g., hot tubs, saunas).**
- **Wash your hands often and always after handling raw meat.**
- **If you have a cat, try to avoid the litter box. This will help reduce your risk of a parasitic infection (toxoplasmosis), a known cause of serious birth defects.**
- **Check with your doctor about prescribed medications — some can harm unborn babies (e.g., some drugs for seizures and acne).**
- **Prenatal care, proper nutrition, and taking folic acid are very important for you and your baby's health. Check with your doctor if you are planning to become pregnant.**
- **Avoid using substances that can harm your baby such as alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs.**

What Amount of Alcohol Can Affect an Unborn Baby?

Although no amount of alcohol is considered safe during pregnancy, it is known that drinking 8 or more drinks a week or 5 or more drinks in one day will affect an unborn baby. At this time, the possible effects of lesser amounts of alcohol on an unborn baby are not known with certainty.

Beer, Wine and Hard Liquor, Are They Different?

It does not matter whether it is beer, wine, or hard liquor—all contain alcohol and all can harm an unborn baby.

How Much Alcohol is in a Drink?

1 drink = 12 oz. can/bottle of beer



1 drink = 5 oz. glass of regular wine (12%)



1 drink = 1 ½ oz. of hard liquor e.g., vodka, gin, bourbon (straight or in a mixed drink)



1 drink = 12 oz. wine cooler



Healthy Choices

Food and Vitamins

- Eat healthy before and during your pregnancy.
- Consult with your doctor about vitamins.
- Avoid fish with high levels of mercury (e.g., swordfish).
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water per day.

Exercise

- Women who are pregnant should exercise 30 minutes every day to avoid excessive weight gain and obesity.
- Exercising during your pregnancy may not only reduce the risk of a C-section, but it is also associated with better pregnancy outcomes.

Alcohol

- While drinking large amounts of alcohol can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), women who drink lesser amounts can give birth to children who do not have FAS, but who still have developmental problems.
- Drinking alcohol when pregnant can cause pre-term births, brain damage, and other developmental problems for children.

Cigarettes

- Smoking is associated with the premature rupture of a woman's bag of water, which is the leading cause of premature delivery.
- If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, it is advisable to stop smoking.
- Second-hand smoke affects the health of newborns and young children.

Final Thoughts...

- **To prevent getting pregnant, use birth control methods correctly.**
- **If you are seeking to become pregnant, planning will help you and your unborn baby be healthy.**
- **The safest thing is not to use alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs that might affect an unborn baby.**

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Women's Health



Making Healthy Choices