

# **Thinking of having a baby?**

It is important to become as fit and healthy as possible before getting pregnant. This is good for you and for the baby. The healthiest babies are born when the pregnancy is planned and so good contraception is essential until you decide you want to start a family.

## **Getting fit for pregnancy**

### **What Weight should I be?**

It is good not to be too thin or over weight. You can find out your best weight at

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/BodyMassIndex.aspx>

Being overweight can lead to complications such as still birth or having a caesarean section.

### **Should I stop smoking?**

Yes you are strongly advised to stop smoking before getting pregnant. Ask for help at your Doctors surgery or go to <http://www.camquit.nhs.uk/>. Smoking while you are pregnant can put the life of your baby at risk and increases your risk of chest and heart disorders as well as aging your skin.

Wanting to have a healthy baby is a good way to be motivated to give up smoking and to stay a non-smoker as it is also healthy for the new child.

### **What should I eat and drink?**

Aim to eat a healthy, balanced diet with fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, foods with calcium and iron. You need to avoid Vitamin A supplements and products such as liver or liver pates, undercooked meat or eggs, certain cheeses and too much tuna or caffeine- tea, coffee, colas or chocolate. Ask your practice nurse for a full list of foods to avoid.

### **What about illicit (street) drugs?**

Drugs can harm both you and the baby. You are strongly advised to stop illicit (street) drugs before you get pregnant. Many people require help to come off drugs, if you would like help contact

<http://www.cambsdaat.org/>

### **And Alcohol?**

The Department of Health recommends that if you are trying to get pregnant you should reduce your drinking to 1-2 units once or twice a week, or better still do not drink alcohol at all. If you need help with drinking then your GP can advise you about this.

### **I have a Long Term Medical Condition and take medication regularly, is this OK?**

If you have a long term medical condition such as Diabetes, Epilepsy, Thyroid troubles, or Rheumatoid Arthritis it is important to discuss your condition and medication with the usual

doctor who looks after you. This is important as some medicines are harmful to a growing baby and some medical conditions need special care during pregnancy.

### **I am worried I have a condition that runs in the family.**

You may benefit from talking to someone who specialises in genetics. For some conditions such as Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassaemia you may be helped by having a blood test before you get pregnant. Do go and see your Doctor (GP) to discuss both of these problems.

### **Can I take medicines I have bought myself?**

Some medicines are safe in pregnancy, such as paracetamol but some such as ibuprofen are not. Many herbal remedies are also not safe in pregnancy, so always ask the pharmacist before you take any medication.

### **Do I need Vitamin Supplements**

You should take Folic acid 400 mcg a day from when you start trying to have a baby until you are 13 weeks pregnant. If you have some medical conditions such as Diabetes or Epilepsy or have had a baby before with spina bifida you should take a higher dose, please talk to your GP about this. You should only take Vitamins that are for pregnant women to avoid taking too much vitamin A. All pregnant women need Vitamin D. Healthy Start multivitamins are a brand of vitamin recommended by the NHS. This website tells you where to get these vitamins.

<http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/healthy-start-vitamins/>

### **Am I safe to care for my cats?**

There are germs in cat faeces (poo) that can harm a baby so always wear gloves and wash your hands after handling the cat litter tray. Some lambs can carry germs that can harm a baby so avoid contact with lambs and sheep.

### **Do I need any Immunizations (injections) before I get pregnant?**

Make sure you are immune to catching German Measles (Rubella). You may be at risk from catching Hepatitis B, if so you would benefit from having the Hepatitis B vaccine. Your Practice nurse will be able to tell you if you need any of these injections before you try to become pregnant.

### **What about work?**

You may think that your job may be risky when you are pregnant. You should discuss this with your employer before you get pregnant. If you do not want your employer to know you are thinking about getting pregnant, but have a concern about being pregnant at work, then you can contact the Health and Safety Executive for advice on their telephone helpline 08453450055 or at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

For further help look at [www.patient.co.uk/planningtobecomepregnant](http://www.patient.co.uk/planningtobecomepregnant)