Give Your Baby a Healthy Start

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Here is Information You Can Use Now to Prepare for Your Special Delivery!

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Expecting a baby? Ensuring that your baby boy or girl has a healthy start to life begins with good prenatal care. Prenatal care refers to the care you receive for yourself and your baby during your entire pregnancy. Following a prenatal care plan can positively impact both you and your baby’s health by minimizing pregnancy complications, decreasing the likelihood of birth defects and easing postpartum recovery. It’s important to begin prenatal care early - and see your doctor regularly - to get the maximum benefit for you and your developing baby.

The first step in promoting your growing baby’s good health is to establish healthy habits for yourself, before you become pregnant: a nutritious diet, regular exercise, and avoiding harmful substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and certain medicines and foods. Women who are planning to become pregnant should talk with a doctor or midwife for advice on lifestyle changes and healthy practices that will contribute to a healthy pregnancy.

Once you are pregnant, getting good nutrition, plenty of exercise, sleep and avoiding stress are good guidelines to follow. Babies born to mothers who do not receive prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birthweight and five times more likely to die than those born

Did You Know?

Each year, about 10,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer.

- Women should begin having regular Pap tests about three years after the first time they have intercourse, or no later
A variety of health and lifestyle factors can cause premature birth or slow the baby's growth and development during pregnancy. Be sure to discuss these factors with your doctor or midwife.

Giving your baby an early foundation for good health is one of the greatest gifts. If you're planning to start a family, begin with a pre-conception checkup. Your doctor or midwife can help screen for certain health problems, infections, make sure your immunizations are up to date, as well as discuss your nutrition and lifestyle habits, medications and certain foods and beverages to avoid during pregnancy. Your doctor or midwife will establish a regular schedule of check-ups and various screenings. It's important to follow this plan, and comply with your doctor's instructions for your medical care and personal health habits. Specific lifestyle choices an expectant mother can make to reduce the chances of having a low birthweight baby include avoiding tobacco and alcohol, getting adequate rest and nutrition, managing stress, and taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid (0.4 mg). It’s also important to work with your doctor or midwife to manage any chronic conditions that can affect your pregnancy and your baby's growth, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or thyroid disease.

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