



Planning ahead

Get ready for a healthy pregnancy



If you're pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, it can be a very exciting time. And it's important to have a healthy start for both you and your baby.

First step: check in with your doctor

Before you get pregnant, take time to schedule a visit with your Ob/Gyn. If you don't have one, just log in to your member website at [aetna.com](https://www.aetna.com). Then choose "Find Care." During this important checkup, you and your doctor can discuss prenatal care, including vitamins and any necessary health screenings.

Check this fact sheet often

You'll find tips for staying healthy during pregnancy. It's a great way to give your baby the best start in life.

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5 tips for a healthy start

1 Make your meals count

Folic acid is an important nutrient, and the best time to start taking it is before you get pregnant. This can help prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord.

2 Fuel your body with safe foods

You may want to be cautious about certain kinds of fish, unpasteurized cheese and deli meats. Talk to your doctor about food safety during this special time.

3 Stop any kind of smoking

Women who smoke during pregnancy have a higher risk of having a miscarriage, a preterm birth and a low-birth-weight baby. Quitting smoking is one of the most important health changes you can make.

4 Say no to drugs and alcohol

If you drink or use marijuana or other drugs while pregnant, you put your baby at risk for:

- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders
- Drug addiction or drug withdrawal

5 Move those muscles

It's great to keep moving. Regular activity can help lower your risk of pregnancy problems and even ease back pain. Check with your doctor about exercising during your pregnancy.

Other ways to stay healthy

Take special care if you have diabetes

If you have diabetes, you may have certain health risks. These include a higher risk of miscarriage or stillbirth, or having a baby with birth defects. Try to get your blood sugar under control before you get pregnant.

Keep your blood pressure in check

High blood pressure may put you at higher risk for certain problems during pregnancy, which can affect your baby's growth. Talk to your doctor about ways to keep it under control.

Check your medicine cabinet

Bring a list of all prescribed and over-the-counter medicine with you when you go to the doctor. It's also good to update vaccines before you conceive. Some are safe, but others may not be.

Talk to your doctor before traveling

Before you travel, talk about your pregnancy plans and Zika risk. Zika is a virus spread when an infected mosquito bites you. Learn more at cdc.gov by searching for "Zika and pregnancy."

Take care of your pearly whites

Many changes in your body can affect your teeth and gums. And studies show that women with no dental care have a higher risk of delivering a preterm baby.¹ So it's important to see your dentist regularly.

For other health tips, log in to your member website at aetna.com. Then select "Stay Healthy" to explore the Healthwise® Knowledgebase health information resource.

¹American Public Health Association. An examination of periodontal treatment, dental care, and pregnancy outcomes in an insured population in the United States. American Journal of Public Health. January 2011; 101 (1): 151 – 156. Available at: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3000729. Accessed November 13, 2018.

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