



Pregnant? Steps for a Healthy Baby

You can help prevent miscarriage, birth defects, or illness:

1. **Take a prenatal vitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid each day.** Most multi-vitamins have 400 micrograms of folic acid.
2. **Protect yourself from mosquito bites and sexual transmission of Zika.**
3. **Notify your prenatal care provider if you have recently traveled out of the country .**
4. **Get flu and whooping cough shots.** These shots are safe for you and your baby. Get flu vaccine as soon as it's available during flu season and the whooping cough shot as early as possible during your third trimester, even if you got it before pregnancy. The protection you get from these shots passes to your baby in the womb. This will help protect your baby during early life, when she is most at risk for serious complications and death from these diseases.
5. **What about other vaccines?** To further protect your baby, ask your medical provider about any other vaccines you or your family might need. For example, it's a good idea for everyone who has contact with your baby (parents, grandparents, siblings, babysitters, etc.), to also get their flu shot. Make sure they are up to date on other shots, like whooping cough and measles.
6. **Do not drink alcohol.** That includes beer, wine, wine coolers, and hard liquor. There is no safe amount.
7. **Do not smoke.** For help quitting, ask your doctor or call 1-800-NO-BUTTS. Also, avoid secondhand smoke.
8. **Do not use any street drugs, including marijuana. If needed, get counseling.** You can ask your doctor for help to get treatment.
9. **Check with your doctor before taking any drugs, medicine, or herbs.** Natural products and herbs are not always safe. You should also tell your doctor about any prescription or over-the-counter medicines you take.
10. **Limit caffeine from coffee, sodas, and energy drinks.** Do not drink more than 1 cup each day.
11. **Brush and floss your teeth.** Make a dental appointment! Dental appointments are safe and important during pregnancy.
12. **Cook your meat until it is well done.** Do not eat raw meat, seafood, or eggs. Do not eat hot dogs, luncheon meats, or deli meats unless they are reheated until steaming hot.
13. **Do not share forks, cups, or food with children.**
14. **Avoid raw milk (not pasteurized) and foods made from raw milk.** Do not eat soft cheeses such as queso fresco, feta, or brie unless the labels show they are pasteurized.



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15. **Do not eat shark, swordfish, tilefish, or king mackerel.** They have higher amounts of mercury. For other fish, do not eat more than 2-3 servings per week. For more information on fish, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/choose-fish-and-shellfish-wisely> or call 1-800-532-3749.

For help, call:
1-866-626-6847 (Teratology Information Specialist)
<http://mothertobaby.org>
16. **Wash your hands with soap and water often.**

Be sure to wash when:

 - Leaving the bathroom
 - Eating or preparing food
 - Taking care of children or pets
 - Changing diapers
 - Being around people who are sick
 - Getting saliva (spit) on your hands

If there is no soap and water, use alcohol-based hand gel (at least 60% alcohol).
17. **Avoid people who are sick.** Stay away from people who are sick with fevers, rashes, coughs, or sore throats.
18. **Avoid exposure to chemicals and fumes.** Get plenty of fresh air and wear protective clothing like gloves. Never mix cleaning fluids.
19. **Avoid exposure to lead in products such as paint, batteries, and imported pottery.** Find out more about job safety if you work with pesticides or in salons, shops for dry cleaning, auto repair, printing, graphic design, plumbing, carpentry, battery plants, funeral homes, factories, or laboratories. Ask your clinic for the handout, *Keep Safe at Work*.
20. **Do not change cat litter or work in the garden.** If you must, wear gloves. Wash your hands after taking off the gloves.
21. **Stay away from rodents and their droppings.** If you have wild rodents in or around your home, try to get rid of them. If you have a pet rodent, like a mouse or guinea pig, have someone else care for it until your baby is born.
22. **Do not douche.** Douching may cause problems for your pregnancy.
23. **Avoid raising your body temperature for more than 10 minutes,** like in a hot tub, a very hot bath, a sauna, or from heavy exercise. It is recommended not to exercise heavily for more than 40 minutes. If you have a fever, ask your doctor about medicine to lower it.
24. **Avoid x-rays unless ordered by your doctor or dentist.** Be sure to tell health care workers you are pregnant.
25. **Get help if you feel unsafe with your partner.** For domestic violence help, talk to your doctor or call 1-800-799-7233.
26. **Always wear a seatbelt.** The lap strap should go under your belly. The shoulder strap should go between your breasts and to the side of your belly. Make sure it fits snugly.