**GETTING PREGNANT**

**Birth Control**
- You can try to conceive right after you stop taking birth control pills or wearing the patch.
- You may not have regular periods for 1-2 months.
- You can try to conceive right after your IUD is removed.
- It can take 3 months to one year to ovulate (~release an egg) regularly after your last Depo-Provera shot.

**The Best Time to Get Pregnant**
If your periods are every month, you will ovulate (release an egg) 14 days after the first day of your last period. A woman’s egg is fertile for 12-24 hours after it is released. Sperm can live up to 72 hours after it is released in a woman’s vagina. The best time to have sex is a few days before and the day of ovulation.

**Ways To Help You Determine When You Are Ovulating**
- **Temperature Method** — Take your temperature every day. Your temperature will rise by up to 1°F just as you release an egg.
- **Cervical Mucus Method** — The mucus in the vagina gets thinner, slippery, clearer, and more plentiful just before ovulation.
- **Home Ovulation Prediction Kit** — It tests the urine for lutenizing hormone (LH). The elevation in LH causes the ovaries to release eggs each month. Use the kit about 10 days after the start of your last period.

**ARE YOU PREGNANT?**
You may be pregnant if you:
- Have missed one or more periods
- Need to urinate frequently
- Feel sick by certain tastes or smells
- Crave odd foods
- Feel nauseated or vomit
- Feel very tired
- Are very emotional or tearful
- Become constipated
- Have increased vaginal discharge
- Your breasts are more tender and swollen than usual

**How To Make Sure**
Home pregnancy tests check your urine for hCG. hCG is a hormone that is present only when you are pregnant. These tests are 98% accurate.

**Calculating The Due Date**
Take the [first day of your last period], subtract [3 months], and add [7 days].

**A Pre-Pregnancy Guide**

Do you dream of having a child one day?

If the answer is **Yes**, then **now** is the time to start planning and preparing.

You may be pregnant for several weeks before you even realize it. During those early weeks, your baby’s vital organs are beginning to form.

By being prepared for this possibility you and your partner will give your baby the best possible chance for a healthy start in life.
Are You Ready Emotionally?
Some questions to consider before you get pregnant:
- Why do you want to have a baby?
- Are you being pressured by your partner, family, or friends to have a baby?
- Do you and your partner want to have a baby now? How will a baby affect your relationship?
- How will a baby affect your career goals?
- Are you prepared to raise a child who is sick or has special needs?
- Do you and your partner have religious or ethnic differences? Have you discussed how you will raise your child?
- If you are not in a relationship, are you prepared to be a single parent? Who will support you?
- What will you do for childcare?
- Are you ready to give up sleeping in?
- Do you see yourself as a full-time parent?
- What did you like about your childhood? What do you want for your child?

Are You Ready Physically?
The healthier and happier you are, the easier it will be to become pregnant. Here’s how to get started:
- Take daily prenatal vitamins that contain 400 micrograms of folic acid. This reduces the risk of certain birth defects of the brain & spine.
- Get a check-up. The doctor will:
  - Ask about the health of your partner, you and both of your families.
  - Explain how your medical conditions will affect your pregnancy.
  - Update your immunizations.
  - Review your medications.
- Have a dental check-up, since x-rays should be avoided when pregnant.
- Stop smoking. Smoking makes it harder to get pregnant. It increases the risk of miscarriage, premature or small baby, and crib death.
- Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Dad & mom must stop drinking alcohol & using “street” drugs.
- Dad & mom must avoid hazardous chemicals.
- Eat a balanced, healthy diet.
- Achieve your ideal weight. If you are overweight, you are more likely to develop high blood pressure and diabetes during the pregnancy. If you are underweight, you are more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby.
- Food safety rules:
  - No raw or undercooked fish, shellfish, or eggs. Limit swordfish to once a month.
  - Wash raw vegetables & fruit.
  - Avoid unpasteurized dairy products, like soft cheeses.
- Do not change cat litter or, if you must, wear gloves. Do not allow your cat to eat raw meat or rodents.
- Only have sex with one person who doesn’t have any other partners.

Are You Ready Financially?
The time to start thinking about the costs of having a baby are before you get pregnant.
- Look at your budget. Compare what you spend with the amount of money you have coming in each month. How much is left over? You need to make room in the budget for things your baby will need, such as diapers, baby food, crib, toys, child care, clothes, car seat, and medical care.
- Find out about the maternity leave policy at your work.
- Check out your health insurance. Find out if it covers:
  - Prenatal care?
  - Which prenatal tests?
  - Your doctor?
  - A pre-pregnancy planning visit?
  - Which delivery options?
  - Hospital costs for the baby?
  - Anesthesia?
  - Sick and well baby visits?
  - How much is the co-payment?
  - How much is the deductible?
- Find out your community’s benefits to low-income families.