

# Pre-conception checklist for women

There are many things you can do to improve your chance of conceiving a healthy baby. Here's a list of proven ways to get your body ready for pregnancy.

- Manage your weight
- Get into a good exercise routine
- Eat well
- Cut out alcohol, smoking and recreational drugs
- Reduce caffeine intake
- Track your ovulation
- Start taking pre-pregnancy supplements
- Reduce exposure to harmful chemicals in the home and workplace
- Get a dental check-up
- Manage health conditions
- Don't leave it too late
- Book a pre-conception health check with your GP

Visit [www.yourfertility.org.au](http://www.yourfertility.org.au) for information and a range of videos, interactive tools and personal stories to help improve your chance of becoming pregnant and having a healthy baby.

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Being in the healthy weight range increases your chance of conceiving and having a healthy baby. If you're overweight, losing even a small amount of weight (3-5kg) can improve your fertility and reduce the risk of pregnancy complications.



Exercising regularly improves general health and boosts fertility. Try for 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity, such as brisk walking or jogging, every day.



Eating a well-balanced diet including a variety of healthy foods will help get your body baby-ready. The Mediterranean diet is a great example of a well-balanced diet.



Smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs can cause fertility problems and increase the time it takes to conceive. They can also affect the quality of your eggs and the health of your future baby.



Some studies have found that women who drink large amounts of caffeine may take longer to become pregnant, so aim for 200mg (about two cups of coffee) or less per day.



Timing sex for pregnancy can be tricky, so start tracking your menstrual cycle to figure out how long it goes for and when you're likely to ovulate. Some women notice their vaginal mucus becomes clear, slick and slippery a few days before they ovulate. This is the best time for sex to conceive. Try the ovulation calculator at [www.yourfertility.org.au](http://www.yourfertility.org.au)



Taking the recommended doses of folic acid (at least 400 micrograms a day) and iodine (150 micrograms a day), at least one month before conception reduces the risk of some serious birth defects.



Some chemicals found in everyday products can affect women's reproductive health and reduce the chance of getting pregnant. For a list of chemicals to avoid check out [www.yourfertility.org.au](http://www.yourfertility.org.au)



Gum disease can affect your health during pregnancy and the health of your baby. See your dentist for a check-up before trying to conceive.



Some medical conditions affect fertility including PCOS, endometriosis, diabetes and sexually transmitted infections like chlamydia. Get advice from your doctor about medical conditions and any medications you are currently taking.



Women younger than 35 have a better chance of getting pregnant and having a healthy baby than older women. So, if you're in a position to start trying, sooner is better than later.



See your GP to make sure you are as healthy as possible before trying for a baby. Your GP can also check your vaccinations are up to date so you have immunity against infections that could harm a baby.