

Healthy Pregnancy:

PRECONCEPTION THROUGH DELIVERY

Creating a life is one of the most joyful experiences a mother can have. When your body goes through pregnancy, many changes happen so quickly, but the good news is there is a lot you can do before you become pregnant, as well as throughout labor and delivery. Just as with planning your wedding, before you conceive you need at least six to 12 months to prepare.

You Are What You Eat

With the rise of disorders like autism and ADHD, you can't ignore what you are eating and exposing yourself to prior to conception. This is a perfect time to improve your diet. Adding prenatal multi-vitamins free from dyes and toxic preservatives is good but it shouldn't stop there. You need to make better lifestyle choices, such as adding organically-grown grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts and sources of pro-




tein. Organic is important because, according to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), "Eating just five servings of fruits and vegetables from the 12 most contaminated would cause you to consume an average of 14 different pesticides a day."

If you have a history of digestive problems, food allergies, bloating or yeast issues, consider a natural detox and digestive tract clean up – assisted by someone who is well-informed. Good sources of fiber include ground flax seed, psyllium husks, bran, whole grains, nuts and seeds. You will pass on your intestinal flora to your baby even if it is sub-par. Since probiotics decrease intestinal absorption of certain chemicals by facilitating their excretion, after cleaning up your gut you should implement probiotics in your diet. A 2006 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stated the average American had 116 of 148 synthetic toxins in their blood.


There are many ways to reduce your use of chemicals, but here are some common ones:

- Switch to greener cleaning and personal care products.
- Use green dry cleaners and carpet cleaners.
- Consume filtered water and other fluids using stainless steel or glass bottles.
- Lots of fish and sushi have large amounts of mercury; use a mercury-free source of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Minimize exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and keep cell phones in purses instead of pockets.
- If you plan to remove your mercury-based amalgam dental fillings, do it at least six months prior to conception (select a dentist trained in removing the fillings safely).
- Avoid bedding and clothing with flame retardants that may contain high levels of antimony and toxic substances.
- Optimize your cardiac health—begin or continue your exercise routine. Exercise encourages good bowel movements as well as improving circulation. Walking 15 to 45 minutes four to five times a week and/or incorporating prenatal yoga, swimming or a stationary bicycle are all good exercises.
- Minimize intrusive procedures during labor such as multiple ultrasounds, induction, pain meds, epidurals, early cord clamping, etc. by researching and discussing these with your midwife or doctor.
- Maintain good blood sugar levels by eating six small meals a day.



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Pregnancy Health Care Team

Start building a pregnancy health care team early during your pregnancy. Interview midwives and/or obstetricians until you find one who makes you feel comfortable and empowered. Interview doulas, lactation consultants, prenatal instructors, family wellness chiropractors and pediatricians early. Discuss your views on health openly.

Nutrition Pointers for Baby

Consider breast-feeding your baby. Not only is this great to bond but it's one of the best ways to provide optimal nutrition. Minimize the possibility of food allergies by postponing solid foods until at least 6 months. Start with organic vegetables then introduce fruits. Make sure you wait at least four days between new food introductions to make sure there are no reactions. Don't introduce grains until your baby has teeth, when the digestive enzyme is present to break grains down. If mom has a history of eczema, food allergies and/or celiac, then avoid dairy, soy, gluten and grains.

The Benefits of Chiropractic Care

Beginning regular chiropractic care early with a family wellness practitioner will prepare you for childbirth. It will optimize your nerve and immune system function and specific adjustments will balance your pelvic muscles and ligaments. Birthing can be strenuous for mother and baby, so both of you should be checked by a chiropractor who specializes in pediatrics to support strong nerve and immune system function.

If your baby is in an abnormal position, prenatal specialized chiropractors can perform the Webster Protocol which will help improve the room in the pelvic area allowing the baby to naturally turn into the correct position. In a practice-based study, 70 percent of pregnancies presenting with an abnormal position of the fetus reported a correction to the vertex or head-down position using the Webster technique.

All-in-all, it's important to evaluate all your lifestyle choices early so you can pass on the best to your children. It is a small sacrifice for their health and well-being – but they're worth it.

Dr. Katie Greeley is a family wellness doctor of chiropractic and mother of two. She is Webster and Pediatric technique certified by the Academy of Chiropractic Family Practice and the Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics (C.A.C.C.P.). Dr. Greeley has participated in numerous practice-based research projects. She is a featured guest speaker at numerous events on natural alternatives topics.

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