

# Road Map to Pregnancy

## Tufts Medical Center

The journey to becoming pregnant starts before you begin trying to conceive. Follow these tips in order to feel healthy and prepared for one of the most exciting times in your life!



### SCHEDULE A PRECONCEPTION VISIT

Take the time to meet with either your primary care physician or your OBGYN to review your medical history, present health questions and discuss any medications you are currently taking.



### CONSIDER WHAT HABITS NEED CHANGING

Take a hard look at your diet, weight, exercise regime and any unhealthy habits (smoking, drinking, taking drugs) that are a current part of your life. If you smoke, drink excessively or take drugs, now is the time to stop. Try and improve the quality of the foods you are eating by making nutritious food choices. A healthy pregnancy is dependent on you being the healthiest you can be.



### MEET WITH A GENETIC COUNSELOR IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

Genetic carrier screening will determine if you or your partner are carriers for serious inherited illnesses including cystic fibrosis, sickle cell and others. A genetic counselor can help you sort out reproductive choices if there is an issue. Your PCP or OBGYN will also discuss carrier screenings.



### ASSESS YOUR CAFFEINE INTAKE

Most studies show that caffeine intake in moderation is okay, however as a general rule try and limit caffeine to fewer than 200 mg per day—that's about one 12 oz. cup of coffee.



### CONSIDER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

This time can be stressful as can pregnancy. Try to have supports available to discuss the stress and learn stress reducing tricks.



### START TAKING A PRENATAL VITAMIN

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), taking 400 mg of folic acid a day for at least one month prior to conception and during your first trimester can cut your chances of a baby with neural-tube defects including spina bifida by 50 to 70 percent. Your healthcare provider can recommend a supplement and most are available at your local drugstore.



### LEARN ABOUT FOODS TO AVOID WHEN PREGNANT

Avoid uncooked seafood and meat, deli meat, raw eggs and shellfish, imported soft cheeses and fish that contain high levels of mercury including swordfish and bluefish.



### GET MOVING!

If you already have a regular fitness routine, keep doing what you are doing! Being physically active helps relieve pregnancy aches and pains, boosts energy, improves mood and helps with stress.



### BE CARE WHERE YOU TRAVEL

Review your travel destinations on the CDC website. Avoid areas of travel that have high risk of Zika infection.



### STOP BIRTH CONTROL

It is recommended you stop oral contraceptive pills 2–3 months prior to starting to conceive. When you stop the pill you can start a prenatal vitamin for adequate folic acid. If you have a LARC method (implant or IUD), make an appointment with your OBGYN for removal.