



UCL EGA
Institute for
Women's
Health



UCL

Thinking of having a baby – now or in the near future?

A Healthy Start in Life...

It is important for women and people able to carry a pregnancy, and their partners, to be as healthy as possible **before** trying to get pregnant.

Being healthy **before** trying to get pregnant means a better chance of getting pregnant and a healthier pregnancy and baby.

4

Reduce or stop smoking

Smoking is the biggest cause of pregnancy problems, including miscarriage and stillbirth. If you smoke **before** pregnancy, it can take longer to get pregnant.

Important for sperm health 

5

Get closer to a healthy weight

Being overweight or underweight **before** pregnancy can cause health problems in pregnancy and affect the future health of the baby.

Important for sperm health 

1

Start taking folic acid tablets

Start taking folic acid about two months **before** you start trying to get pregnant. Continue to take it for the first 3 months of pregnancy. This lowers the risk of the baby having spina bifida by 70%.

2

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables (aim for 5 portions a day)

What you eat **before** you get pregnant affects the growth, development, and long-term health of the baby.

Important for sperm health 

6

Quit alcohol & recreational drugs and limit caffeine

Alcohol and recreational drugs can harm the baby and too much caffeine **before** pregnancy can increase the risk of miscarriage.

Important for sperm health 

3

Exercise each week

Women who do regular, moderate physical activity **before** pregnancy get pregnant quicker and have a healthier pregnancy and birth.

Important for sperm health 

7

Speak to your GP several months before you or your partner are trying to get pregnant if...

You have any existing physical or mental health conditions or are taking regular medications.

7 steps **before** pregnancy
to help you & your baby

