



Preconception health

It Takes a Village: Giving our babies the best chance



Utah Department of
Health & Human Services
Health Equity

What is preconception health?

It focuses on women and men taking steps now to protect the health of a baby they might have sometime in the future.¹



What is preconception health?












- It emphasizes a woman being healthy before she becomes pregnant.¹
- It promotes the health of women and girls of reproductive age.¹



Why is preconception health important?

- Prenatal care starts too late to prevent many of the poor pregnancy outcomes.²
- Women who have better health before pregnancy have healthier outcomes.³
- Unhealthy behaviors and certain exposures during the first few weeks of pregnancy can negatively affect the baby's development and pregnancy outcomes.³



| Conceptus | | Embryonic development (weeks) | | | | | | Fetal period (weeks) | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|----------------------|----|---------------------------|----|--|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 16 | 20-36 | 38 | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | | | | | |
| | | Neural | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | Heart | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Upper limbs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Lower limbs | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Ear | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Eye | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | Palate | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Teeth | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | | | External genitalia | | | |
| Loss | Major abnormalities | | | | | | Functional and Minor abnormalities | | | | | | |



Why is preconception health important?

- Each mother-to-be has a personal relationship with her *fonua* or *fanua* or land and environment.
- Starting well before pregnancy, even as a young woman, the mother-to-be can have positive exchanges with her *fonua* or *fanua* or land and environment.



Why is preconception health important?

- Fathers have an important role in caring for the *fonua* or *fanua*, meaning both the land and the placenta.⁴
- Fathers, the family, and the community care for the health of all women, mothers-to-be, and the environment.



Why is preconception health important?

- Caring for the *fonua* or *fanua* will reciprocate that care so mothers and their bodies are prepared to have the healthiest pregnancy possible for when that time comes.
- When that time does come, mothers are prepared to create their baby's placenta or *fonua* or *fanua* and become its nourishing environment or *fonua* or *fanua*, from which the baby will receive the nourishment needed to sustain life.



How can I be as healthy as possible before pregnancy?⁵

- Schedule a preconception health visit
 - Visit your doctor at least 3 months before you become pregnant.
 - This gives you the chance to talk about your plan to get pregnant.



How can I be as healthy as possible before pregnancy?⁵

- Know your health history and your family health history
- Give the doctor as much information as possible
 - Past pregnancies, preterm births, miscarriages, etc.
 - Medical conditions and current medications
 - Mental health history
 - Home and workplace environment



How can I be as healthy as possible before pregnancy?⁵

- Get to your healthy weight
 - “Being overweight or obese can make it harder to get pregnant and increase your risk of experiencing problems.”⁵
 - Pacific Islanders have the highest maternal obesity rate in Utah (52.7%).⁶



References

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