To Have a Healthy Pregnancy
California Children & Families Partnership

Tips to Remember
- Start prenatal care as soon as you know you are pregnant
- Eat food that is good for you
- Exercise every day
- Take prenatal vitamins that include folic acid; it helps prevent birth defects
- Get plenty of rest every day
- Have morning sickness? Eat small healthy meals throughout the day
- Drink plenty of water
- Lower the stress in your life
- Don’t drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs
- Plan on breastfeeding your baby

Get care as soon as you think you are pregnant; go to your health clinic or doctor as soon as you think you are pregnant; get check ups at least once a month or more often if your clinic or doctor say to.

Ask to be checked for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and other diseases; STDs and other diseases can spread to your unborn baby.

Eat healthy foods while you are pregnant.
- In the first few months of pregnancy you might feel sick it helps to eat small meals several times a day
- Drink lots of water, drink milks and 100% fruit juices
- You need to eat different kinds of food every day
  - 6-11 servings of grains, breads and cereals
  - 3-5 servings of vegetables
  - 2-4 servings of fruit
  - 3-4 servings of milk and milk products
  - 3 servings of meat and/or protein foods
  - Limit fatty foods and sweets
  - Limit the amount of caffeine you get in coffee, tea or sodas

You need folic acid before and during your pregnancy
Folic acid helps prevent birth defects; you can get folic acid when you:
- Take your prenatal vitamins
- Eat cereals and grains fortified with folic acid
- Eat beans and lentils, as well as fruits and vegetables

Find out more about breastfeeding now
Breast milk is best for your baby. Breastfeeding will help keep your baby healthy and it can even help get your body back in shape.
**Have a healthy weight gain while you are pregnant**
- You will probably gain between 25 and 35 pounds
- You will need to gain a little more if you were thin when you got pregnant
- You might gain a little less if you were heavy when you got pregnant
- You will gain weight faster as your baby grows
- During the last 6 months, gaining about 1 pound a week is about right. Your doctor can tell you what is right for you.

Be sure to keep active while you are pregnant; it helps to walk and keep active in gentle ways. This can give you more energy and helps you stay healthy.

**See a dentist while you are pregnant**
Tooth decay or gum disease may cause problems for you and your baby.
- Your baby could be born too early, too small or both
- Your baby could get tooth decay later on from the germs in your mouth
- You could have pain and tooth decay
- You could lose your teeth

If it has been more than a year since your last visit to a dentist, make an appointment now.

**Do not smoke while you are pregnant**
If you are pregnant or thinking of getting pregnant, now is the time to quit smoking. When you smoke your baby smokes too.

Chemicals from the smoke may harm your unborn child; your baby may not get the oxygen and other things needed to grow healthy.

Smoking during pregnancy can cause many problems:
- You could have a miscarriage
- Your baby could be born too small or too early. Smaller babies have more problems; they are sick more and they spend more time in the hospital after they are born
- After the baby is born, s/he may have more colds, your child could also have breathing problems like asthma and allergies
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) happens more often in babies whose mothers smoke

**Quit smoking as soon as you can**
It is best for you to quit smoking before you are pregnant. But you help your baby when you stop smoking at any time. It may be easier to quit when you first get pregnant.
Even if you quit later, it helps your baby. The earlier you stop smoking the better, but it is never too late to quit. Once you have stopped smoking, don’t start again. Even after your baby is born, you should not smoke. You can keep your baby’s air clean by not starting again.

**Protect yourself and your children from secondhand smoke.**

- Secondhand smoke is what you breathe when someone smokes around you.
- You can protect your family and your unborn baby
- Make sure no one smokes around you or your children

**Get help to stop smoking**
Ask for help from your doctor, family and friends
Make a list of reasons why you want to quit
Set a quit date, the sooner the better
Ask for stop smoking materials and read them

Once you have decided to stop:
- Get support – let your friends and family know you are quitting
- It may be easier to stop all at once
- Or you can try to give up one cigarette each day until they’re down to none
- Nicotine patches or gum and other medications can help you quit
- Acupuncture and herbs may also help

**When you have the urge to smoke…** **Wait out the urge it will pass!**
- Drink water
- Take deep breaths
- Take a walk or exercise
- Eat something healthy
- Chew sugarless gum
- Promise yourself a special treat when you have finally stopped
- Call a friend

**Don’t worry about weight gain when you quit smoking**
- You actually need to gain weight during your pregnancy
- The weight should come from eating healthy foods
- Do not eat a lot of sweets and junk food
- Your doctor will talk to you about healthy foods to eat
- Healthy foods help your unborn baby to grow right
Stay active while you are pregnant

- You can take a brisk walk
- Check with your doctor to see what is right for you
- Staying active helps you and your baby keep healthy
- It can also help you from gaining too much weight

Do not drink or use drugs while you are pregnant

Whatever you smoke, drink or use may harm your baby!

- Alcohol use can cause babies to be born with small heads, heart defects and other problems
- Drug use can cause babies to have brain damage and other birth defects

Even some kinds of medicines can harm your baby!

Tell your doctor about what type of medications you take. Ask your doctor before you use any kind of medicine, even aspirin.

Stay away from these things while you are pregnant

- X-rays, unless your doctor tells you that you need them
  - Tell the technician you are pregnant
  - Ask to wear a lead apron to protect the baby
- Hot tubs, saunas, or steam rooms
- Cat litter box; it can cause an infection that could hurt your baby. Ask someone else to change the cat litter
- Meat that is undercooked

Have your doctor’s number handy

Call your clinic right away if:

- There is a big change in the way your baby moves
- You have a sudden flow of water from your vagina
- You face or hands swell up
- You have a terrible headache that goes on for days
- Your uterus tightens up more than 5 times in one hour
- You have pain or pressure in your thighs or around your vagina
- You see a change in the discharge that comes out of your vagina
- You have any bleeding from your vagina
- You have a fever or chills
- You feel dizzy

Call your doctor’s office is you have any questions, and:

- Make sure you keep all your appointments
- At every check-up, your doctor will listen to your baby’s heartbeat and make sure you and your baby are fine
- You can also get your questions answered