



Health
Canada

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Our community supports a



Planning a Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a special time for you, your family and your community.

Planning your pregnancy gives you time to make healthy choices before you become pregnant.

Some important healthy choices include:

- Taking a multivitamin containing folic acid every day if you could become pregnant.
- Choosing a variety of foods from the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide.
- Being physically active.

- Cutting down or quitting smoking if you smoke.
- Not using alcohol or drugs.
- Consulting your health care provider about prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Planning your pregnancy means that you are able to choose a good time in your own life to have a baby. You can also make sure you have the help and information you need to care for your new baby.

If you need information on planning your pregnancy, please talk to your health care provider.

Children are the centre of Inuit communities and the birth of a child is an event that is eagerly anticipated and celebrated.

All community members have an important role to play in a women's life during her pregnancy and throughout her child's life.

Advice from Elders as well as practical help from family/friends, and her partner all support a pregnant woman to make healthy choices in her life.



Planning a Pregnancy

Babies are precious, we have a responsibility to keep all our children safe and healthy.

Pregnant and Smoke-Free!

Becoming smoke-free during your pregnancy includes:

- Quitting or cutting down on the amount you smoke.
- Staying away from second-hand smoke and smoky places as much as you can.
- Making your own home smoke-free by asking your partner, family and visitors to smoke outside.

It is easier to quit or cut down on your smoking if those around you are smoking outside, or have decided to quit themselves.

Other tips include:

- Pick a day to quit. On that day get rid of your cigarettes!
- Change your routine to avoid times when you 'usually' smoke
- When you crave a cigarette try chewing gum, brushing your teeth, going for a walk, eating vegetable sticks or calling a friend.
- Try to reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke each day.
- Let your partner, family and friends know so they can give you encouragement and support – they may even decide to quit with you.
- Talk to people you know who have quit for their suggestions.

If you would like help to quit or cut down on your smoking please talk to your health care provider.

Being smoke-free is best for you and your baby during pregnancy and after your baby is born.

Smoking during pregnancy makes it hard for your baby to get enough oxygen and nutrients. This means your baby will not develop as well and is more likely to have health problems such as ear infections, colds and an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Even being exposed to second-hand smoke is bad for your baby and your own health.



Pregnant and Smoke-Free

A smoke-free environment is best for you and your developing baby.

Pregnancy and Dental Health!

Tips for dental health during your pregnancy include continuing to:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste as well as flossing every day.
- Eat well to help keep your teeth and gums strong.
- Have regular dental check-ups and cleaning.

You should not brush your teeth for 30 minutes after morning sickness. It is best to rinse your mouth with water right away and brush later.

Your gums may bleed during pregnancy – this is due to hormonal changes in your body. If this happens gentle brushing along the gum line can help.

If you have questions about your dental health, please talk with your dental professional.

Taking care of your dental health will prevent damage to your gums and teeth which can occur during pregnancy.



Pregnancy and Dental Health

Dental health is an important part of a healthy pregnancy.

Alcohol-Free Pregnancy!

There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy – even one is too many!

Alcohol affects the developing brain of your baby and will cause lifelong problems.

If you are trying to get pregnant, or are pregnant already, the healthiest choice is to stop drinking alcohol.

This means not drinking any type of alcohol including beer, wine, coolers and hard liquor.

The earlier you stop drinking during your pregnancy – the better for you and your baby. Stopping before you become pregnant is best.

It is really hard for some women to stop drinking during pregnancy. If this is true for you please speak with your health care provider to find out what help is available.

If you have any questions about using alcohol during your pregnancy, please talk to your health care provider.

Pregnant and Drug-Free!

Pregnancy is a time to stop using drugs, including some prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Consult your health care provider about prescription and over-the-counter drugs during pregnancy.

Many women worry about the effect their drug use will have on their baby during pregnancy, and on their ability to care for their newborn. They are right, drugs can harm them and their babies.

It is really hard to stop using drugs without help. The things that led a woman to drug use may still be in her life and her partner and friends may still be using.

Please talk with your health care provider about where to get help to stop using drugs.

It is easier to stop drinking if those around you drink less – or not at all. Talk with your partner, friends and family about having non-alcoholic choices at parties and community events.



Alcohol and Drug-Free Pregnancy

Taking drugs – even in small amounts – can be very harmful to your child.

Eat Well!

Pregnancy is a time to make healthy food choices. Healthy eating will help your baby grow and develop properly.

Healthy eating means:

- Enjoying country foods.
- Choosing a variety of foods from the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide everyday:
 - Vegetables and Fruit
 - Grain Products
 - Milk and Alternatives
 - Meat and Alternatives
- Limiting foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt. For example, potato chips, pop, candy and chocolate.
- Drinking at least 8 cups of water each day.

During pregnancy and breastfeeding, women need to eat a little more. You should include an extra 2 to 3 Food Guide Servings from any of the four food groups each day. Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups.

All women who could become pregnant and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding need a multivitamin containing folic acid every day.

Pregnant women need to ensure that their multivitamin also contains iron.

If you need information on healthy eating, please talk to your health care provider.

Be Active!

Regular physical activity during pregnancy can:

- Prevent tiredness, constipation and back pain.
- Improve how you feel about yourself.
- Assist you to relax and sleep better.
- Help control and may even prevent a type of diabetes that can start in pregnancy (gestational diabetes).
- Help you to have a good weight gain during pregnancy.
- Build up your energy for labour and delivery.
- Speed up your recovery after labour and delivery.

Tips on being physically active during pregnancy include:

- Going outside to greet the day.
- Start with five minutes of activity each day and gradually progress to thirty minutes a day or more.
- Ask a 'buddy' to join you. Being active with someone else is more fun!
- Avoid overdoing it, you should be able to chat while you are exercising. If you can't, try slowing down.
- Drink lots of water before, during and after exercise.

If you have any questions staying active during your pregnancy, please talk to your health care provider.

Being physically active makes you feel good and gives you more energy.

Most women can walk, square dance, hike, camp, pick berries, and go out on the land while they are pregnant. Talk to your health care provider before becoming physically active if you have not been active in the past.



Eat Well and Be Active

Pregnancy is a time to focus on making healthy food choices and being active.

A black and white photograph of a pregnant woman in profile, facing left. She is looking down at her belly, which is resting on her hands. She is wearing a dark, long-sleeved top and jeans. Her hair is pulled back, and she is wearing a ring on her finger. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Visit our website: healthypregnancy.gc.ca

Également disponible en français.