

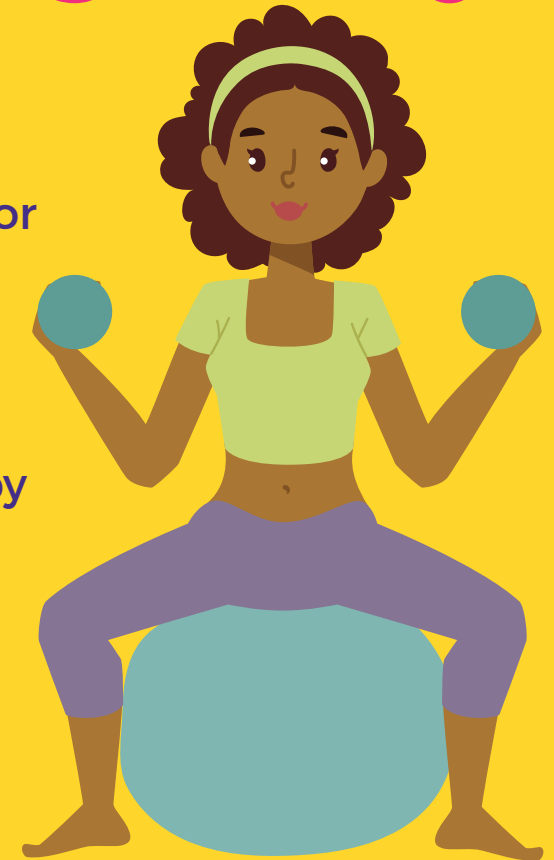


**#ReadyforPregnancy**

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# Are you ready for pregnancy?

How to prepare for a pregnancy and to be in the best shape possible for the health of you and your baby



**#ReadyforPregnancy**



Planning to have a baby is exciting, whether it's your first pregnancy or you already have children. If you're thinking about becoming pregnant, this guide will help you and your partner to prepare - both physically and mentally.

Research tells us that if parents are fit and well before pregnancy, your baby is more likely to be healthy. It's important to think about your diet, exercise, and mental health.

# Looking after your body

An easy way to improve your health is to take regular exercise to boost fertility levels.

If you do it together, it can be more fun and make it easier to stick to.



Eating a healthy diet will help you to maintain a healthy weight, and ensure your baby grows and develops well.

Aim to eat five or more different types of fruit and vegetables every day, as well as protein such as lean meat, beans, or tofu.



# Looking after your mind



Trying to get pregnant – or being pregnant, can be stressful. Take time to look after your mental health.

Spend a few minutes each day doing something that makes you

feel happy or peaceful. Try listening to music, performing yoga, or doing a favourite hobby.

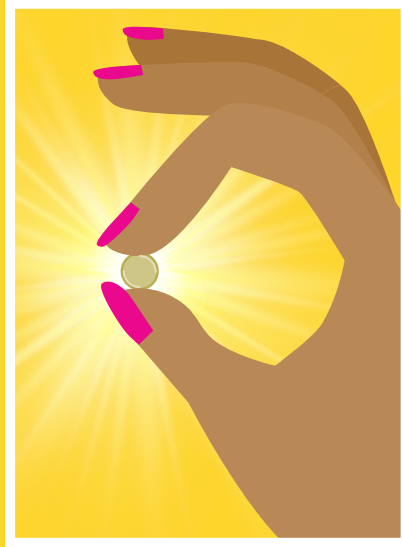
It's quite normal to feel vulnerable and anxious. It helps to talk about your feelings.

Make sure that you ask for help, whether from your partner, a friend, or from your GP. If you have a mental health problem and are planning a pregnancy, you can contact the specialist perinatal mental health team for advice for you and your baby before or during your pregnancy.



## What else you can do

Taking folic acid every day can reduce the risk of your baby having a neural tube defect, when the brain, spine, or spinal cord doesn't develop properly, such as spina bifida.



This is especially true while you are trying to get pregnant and during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Make taking your tablet part of your daily routine.

Taking 10 mcg of vitamin D every day can keep your bones and muscles healthy and give your baby enough vitamin D for the first few months of life.

This is particularly important if you have dark skin, you're indoors most of the day, or if you usually wear clothes that cover up most of your skin.



If you catch flu while pregnant, you are at a much higher risk of becoming seriously ill. This can result in an increased risk of premature birth or a baby who is seriously below birthweight.

Having a flu jab while you're pregnant helps to protect against this. You will also be offered a whooping cough vaccine during pregnancy.



The flu vaccine antibodies you make will also pass across the placenta and help protect your baby in the first few months of life, when babies are at their most vulnerable.



## What you should avoid

There's no known safe level of alcohol in pregnancy, so it's best to avoid it completely while trying to get pregnant, and during pregnancy.

Try swapping your usual drink for a fancy soft mocktail or fruit juice with fizzy water.



Smoking halves your chances of becoming pregnant, and harms both your baby and you. Breathing in someone else's smoke is also a risk.

Ask your pharmacist, GP or midwife about the support available to cut down or quit.



# Overcoming the challenges

Breastfeeding is a skill that both you and your baby will learn together. Research has shown that having support from your partner can make a real difference to your success. While pregnant, find out where you can get help and support locally, such as drop-in breastfeeding clinics.



Looking after a young baby is hard work both physically and mentally. It helps to talk about your feelings. Make sure you access support from family, friends, or online support groups.



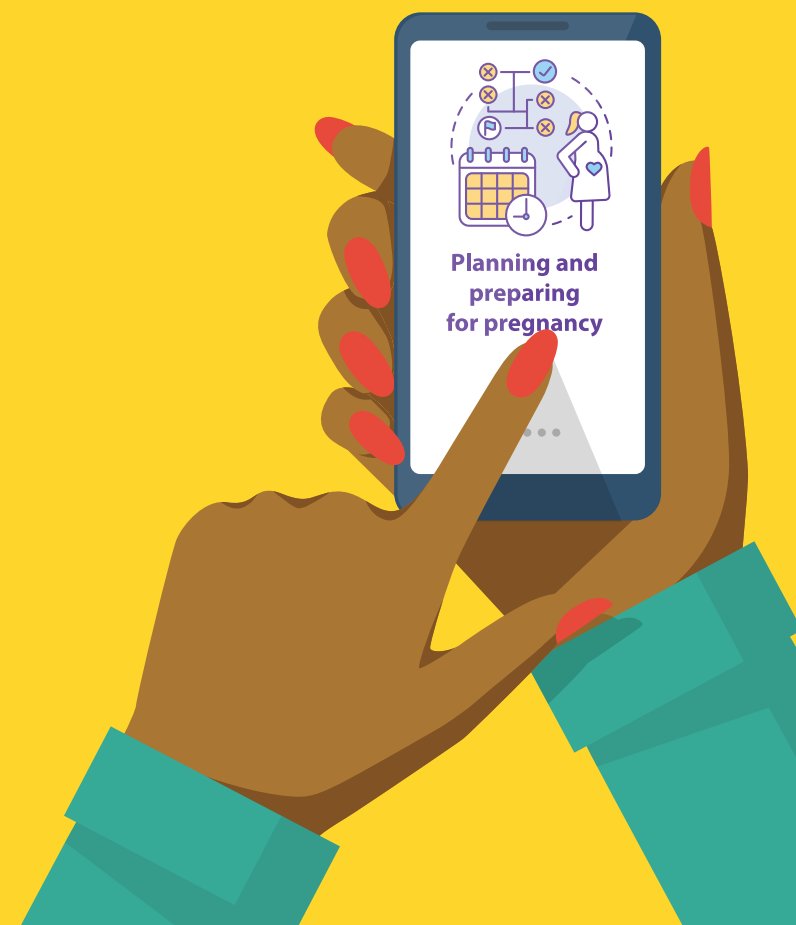


## Support is available

It's normal to have concerns about your baby's health, both during pregnancy and once your baby is born. If you have an existing health condition such as diabetes or epilepsy, ask for advice from your specialist, as you may need to adjust your medication.



Planning to have a baby can be exciting. It can also be an anxious time for both parents-to-be. You're making plans for a huge change in your life. Your pharmacist, GP or midwife can give you information on a wide range of subjects. There's lots of information and support online, as well as online forums to chat with other parents.



For more information visit:

- [frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/maternity](https://frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/maternity)
- [healthysurrey.org.uk/children-and-families/ready-for-pregnancy](https://healthysurrey.org.uk/children-and-families/ready-for-pregnancy)
- [seshealthandcare.org.uk/ready-for-pregnancy](https://seshealthandcare.org.uk/ready-for-pregnancy)
- [medway.gov.uk/readyforpregnancy](https://medway.gov.uk/readyforpregnancy)
- [what0-18.nhs.uk/pregnant-women/planning-pregnancy](https://what0-18.nhs.uk/pregnant-women/planning-pregnancy)
- [bobstp.org.uk/workstreams/maternity/planning-your-pregnancy](https://bobstp.org.uk/workstreams/maternity/planning-your-pregnancy)

You can also search **#ReadyforPregnancy** on the social media channel of your choice.

Brought to you by the following local maternity systems (LMS):

- **Frimley LMS**
- **Surrey Heartlands LMS**
- **Sussex LMS**
- **Kent and Medway LMS**
- **Hampshire and Isle of Wight LMS**
- **Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West LMS**

This campaign has been co-ordinated by NHS South East Clinical Delivery and Networks.

