

ARE YOU BUMP READY?

Your guide to good
pre-pregnancy health

- Plan your pregnancy
- Prepare for a healthy pregnancy
- Top 10 Tips to be ready for a healthy pregnancy

Scan the QR
code for more
information
and additional
languages



birmingham-solihull-ics.icb.nhs.uk/pre-conception

- **Plan your pregnancy**

- **Prepare to be in the best possible health before pregnancy**

- **Top 10 Tips for a healthy pregnancy**

The information in this booklet will help you and your partner plan and prepare for a healthy pregnancy, so that you are well and your baby has the best start in life.

Plan your pregnancy

Are you ready for pregnancy?

8 in 10 women will become pregnant within a year of having regular unprotected sex, every 2-3 days.

Lots of people get pregnant when they have not planned to have a baby, or are not ready to have a baby.



How do I plan my pregnancy?

Planning for pregnancy gives you and your baby the best chance to be healthy. If you do not wish to become pregnant there are lots of different methods of contraception to prevent pregnancy until you are ready to have a baby.

You can find more information about the different types of contraception:

nhs.uk/contraception

You can access free contraception and help from your GP or Umbrella sexual health services.

umbrellahealth.co.uk

When should I have my first baby?

Having a baby is a very personal decision and the right time to have a baby will be different for everyone. Whatever you decide, it needs to be right for you and your partner.



The age at which mothers become pregnant can affect mother and baby:

- If you get pregnant when you are a teenager, your baby might be very small, born early and sadly there is a higher chance your baby might be seriously unwell.
- If you are over the age of 40, it may take longer to become pregnant and you may have more complications in pregnancy. Women over the age of 40 have a higher chance of developing high blood pressure which can cause heart or kidney problems or stroke, or diabetes which can lead to the baby being too large, having low blood sugar or being born too early. There is also a higher chance that your baby will have a serious health problem or disability.

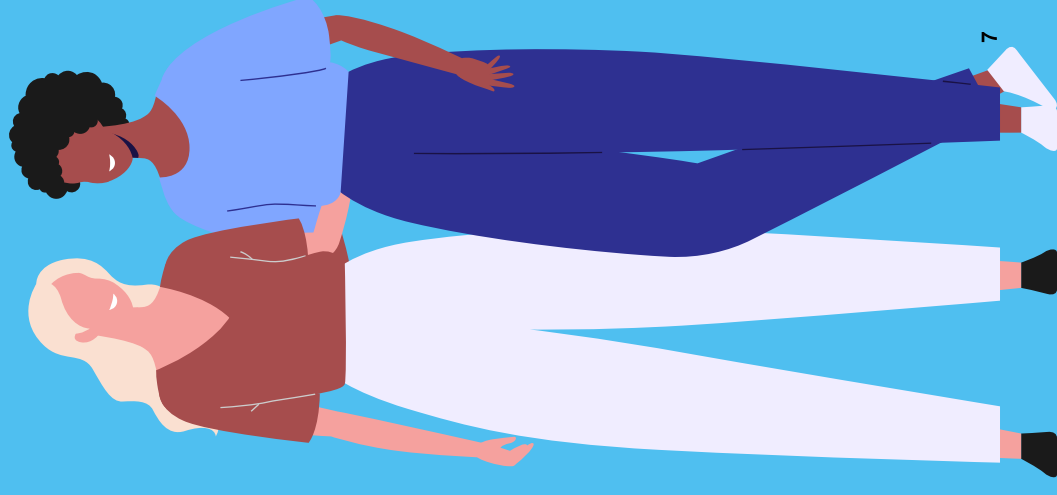
Some people may take longer than others to get pregnant. See your GP if you have been trying to get pregnant for a year, or sooner if you are over 36 years old.

Advice on how to increase your chances of getting pregnant:

nhs.uk/pregnancy/trying-for-a-baby/trying-to-get-pregnant/

If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or non-binary, you can find out more about starting a family:

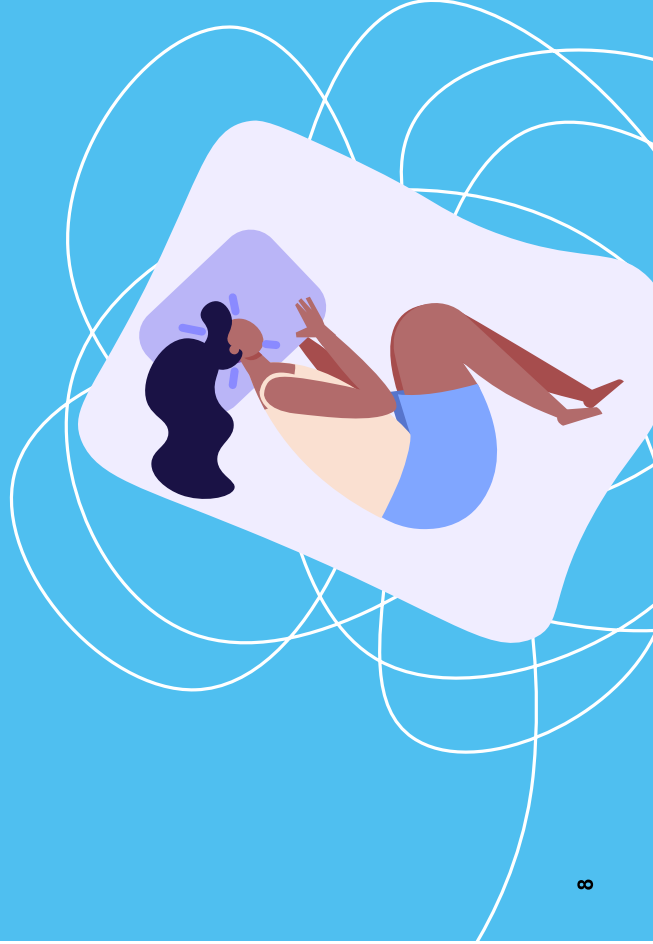
nhs.uk/pregnancy/having-a-baby-if-you-are-lgbt-plus/



Pregnancy after a baby loss

Planning a pregnancy after a previous baby loss can be full of many difficult emotions for you and your partner.

If you or your partner or family members need support, your GP and community midwife can help. Talking to others who have been through similar experiences can also be helpful.



Support organisations who can help:

Edward's Trust
edwardstrust.org.uk

Lily Mae Foundation
lilymaefoundation.org

The Miscarriage Association
miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Tommy's
tommys.org

Sands
sands.org.uk

When should I have my next baby?

It is best to wait for 12 to 18 months after giving birth before getting pregnant again. Shorter gaps between pregnancies increase the risk of early births and smaller babies.

You can become pregnant again very soon after you have had a baby. Breastfeeding can provide contraception, but it does not always work. So, it is a good idea to speak to your midwife about the contraception you want to use after pregnancy. You may be able to have your contraception of choice straight after delivery.

You can access free contraception and help from your GP or Umbrella sexual health services:
umbrellahealth.co.uk

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, without any medical reason to do so.

FGM is illegal in UK and is child abuse.

Some women who have had

FGM may find it difficult to become pregnant, and can have problems in childbirth.



If you have had FGM, you can self-refer or your GP practice or midwife can refer you to FGM Support Clinics, where women with FGM can discuss their health needs in a sensitive and non-judgemental environment. The services are provided by an all-woman team and includes assessment and treatment, emotional support and counselling, general information and access to FGM Health Advocates. If you are pregnant, your midwife should ask you if you have had FGM at your antenatal appointment. It's important to tell your midwife if you think this has happened to you so they can arrange appropriate care for you and your baby.

Birmingham and Solihull FGM support clinics:

Summerfield Health Centre

134 Heath Street, Birmingham B18 7AL
swbh.summerfieldfgm@nhs.net

City Hospital Maternity Department

Dudley Road, Birmingham, B18 7QH

University Hospitals Birmingham

Well Women's Clinic

Birmingham Heartlands Hospital,
Bordesley Green East,
Birmingham B9 5SS
0121 424 3909



**Scan the
QR code to
find more
information
about FGM.**

Prepare for a healthy pregnancy

Making sure you and your partner are in the best possible physical and mental health improves your chances of becoming pregnant, having a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Being aware of some key facts (and busting some myths!) helps you and your partner to make the right choices and receive the right care.

[nhs.uk/pregnancy/trying-for-a-baby/
planning-your-pregnancy/](https://nhs.uk/pregnancy/trying-for-a-baby/planning-your-pregnancy/)

Health conditions

If you have a health condition or disability, you should talk to your doctor before you get pregnant. You should also see your doctor if you are taking any medication or supplements for your physical or mental health before you get pregnant.

Diabetes

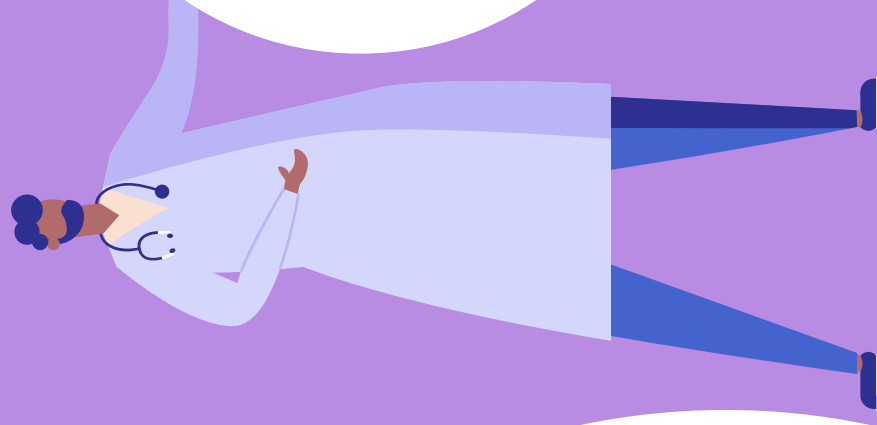
Poor control of diabetes increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth and having a baby with serious health problems. If you have diabetes and you want to get pregnant, it is very important to see your GP before becoming pregnant.

High blood pressure

If you are on medication for high blood pressure (hypertension), see your GP before becoming pregnant, as you may need a change of medication for pregnancy.

Epilepsy

See your GP or epilepsy specialist before you become pregnant, as some epilepsy medicines are not safe for the unborn baby. Talk to your doctor before you stop taking your medicine, because it can be dangerous if you have a seizure when you are pregnant.



**Do not
stop taking
any medicines or
treatments without
your doctor's advice.
Continue using
contraception until
you have had this
discussion.**

Other medical conditions

If you have any physical or mental health conditions or are taking any medication, including herbal or alternative remedies or complementary therapies, see your GP when planning your pregnancy.

Your GP can help you get the support you need to stay healthy before and during your pregnancy.

Physical disability

If you have a physical disability, you might need extra support when you are planning a pregnancy and during your pregnancy. You should talk to your doctor about what you might need.

Scan the QR code to find more information about disability, pregnancy and parenthood.



Learning disability

If you have a learning disability, you can get support to help you and your partner:

- Make your own choices about pregnancy.
- Stay healthy before and during your pregnancy.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



Sexual health

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are common, especially in people under 25. They often do not cause any symptoms.

STI can make it difficult for you to become pregnant, cause early births and affect your baby's health.

If you are worried that you or your partner may have an STI, go for a check-up early.



Umbrella sexual health service

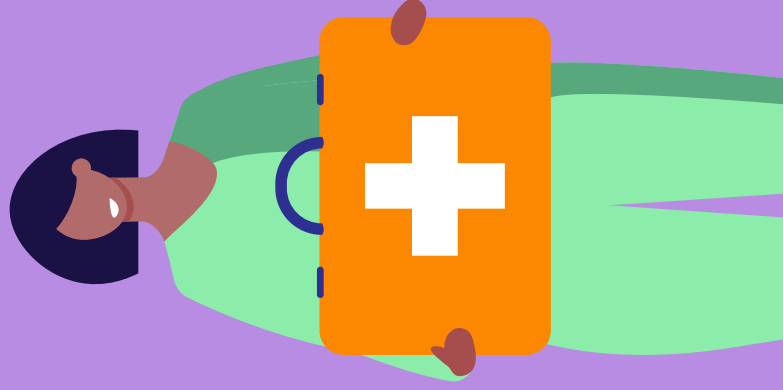
Get free STI check-ups through Umbrella. Your information will be kept private and tests can be done from home or in a clinic.

Screening

Cervical smear: If you are 25 years of age or older and thinking of becoming pregnant, make sure that your cervical smear test is up to date. If your cervical smear is due, book an appointment with your GP before becoming pregnant, as the test cannot be done during pregnancy or for three months after a baby is born.

Sickle cell disease and thalassaemia:

If your family origins make these diseases more likely, you can speak to your GP about having screening tests before becoming pregnant.

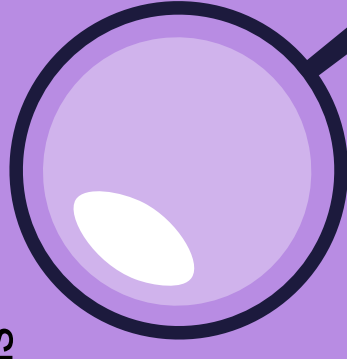


Genetics

It is helpful to know about your and your partner's family and their health to give your baby the best start to life. If you know of any hereditary conditions, learning problems or birth defects that run in your or your partner's family, contact your GP or genetics services for advice. They will give you more information to help in planning your pregnancy.

Birmingham Women's and Children's – West Midlands Genetics Services:
bwc.nhs.uk/genetics

Antenatal Results and Choices – Non-directive information and support before, during and after antenatal screening:
arc-uk.org



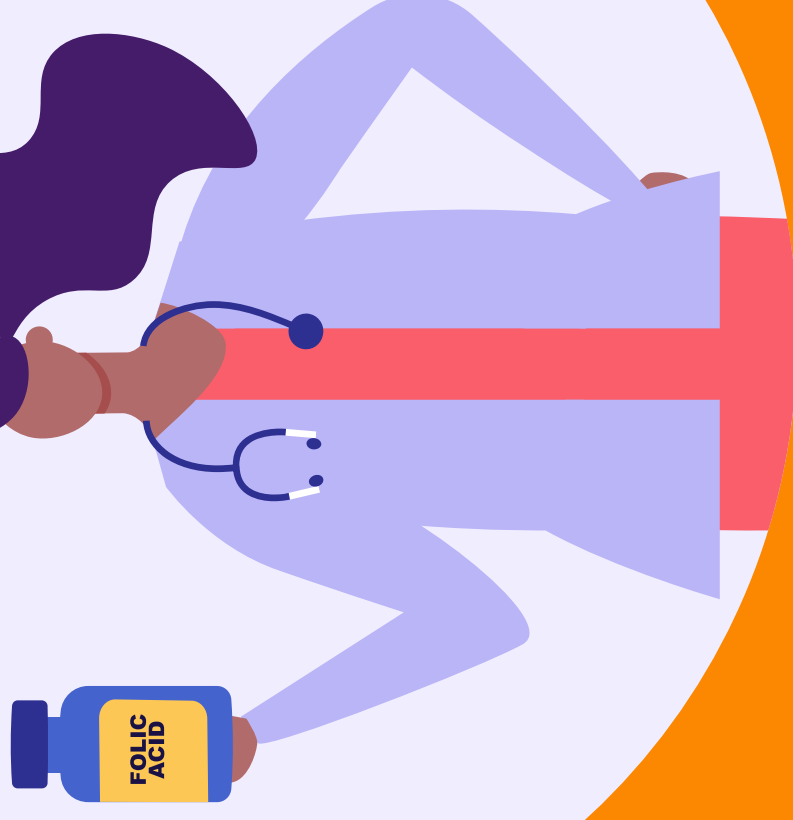
Top 10 Tips to be ready for pregnancy

1. Start taking folic acid

It is important to take 400 micrograms of folic acid every day while you are trying to get pregnant and during the first 3 months of pregnancy, even if you have a healthy diet. Folic acid reduces the risk of your baby being born with brain or spinal cord problems.

You can buy folic acid over the counter and should take it daily before you get pregnant.

If you have any medical conditions or are overweight, please see your GP as you may need a higher dose of folic acid.



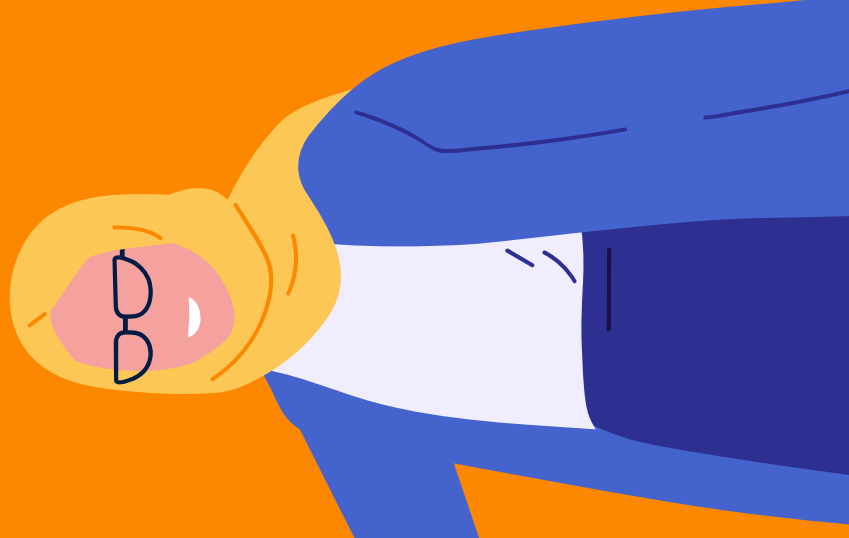
2. Start taking vitamin D

Taking a 10 micrograms vitamin D before you become pregnant is recommended. Vitamin D is important for healthy bones, teeth and heart for you and your baby.

You can buy vitamin D supplements over the counter. If you are taking multi-vitamins, make sure that they contain both folic acid and vitamin D.

Iron

Your GP might give you iron medication if you have anaemia due to low iron levels.

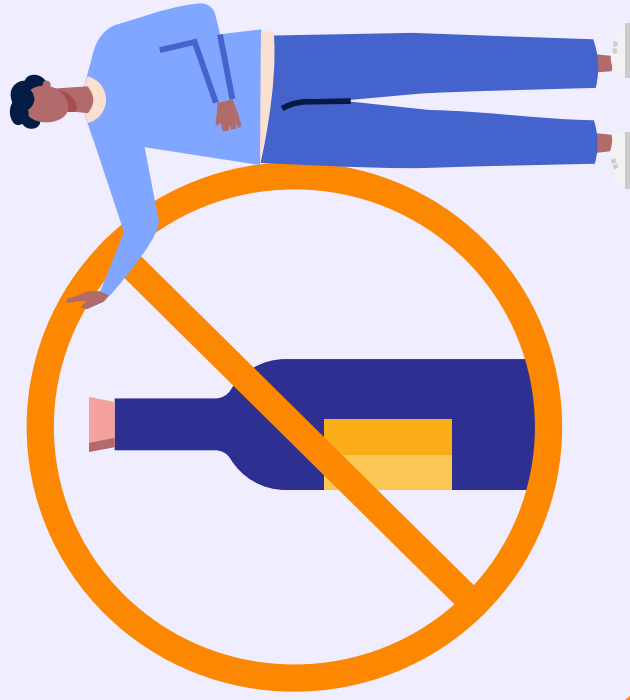


**Taking folic acid and
vitamin D during
pregnancy
is beneficial for you
and your baby.**

3. Stop alcohol

Alcohol reduces your and your partner's chances of getting pregnant and increases the risk of birth defects in your baby.

It is best to avoid alcohol completely when you are trying for a baby and during your pregnancy.



If you or your partner need help with alcohol use, please seek advice from Change, Grow, Live (for those over 18 years) and Aquarius (up to the age of 25 years):

changeandgrowlive.org/drug-and-alcohol-service-birmingham

aquarius.org.uk/our-services/young-peoples-services/birmingham-yp/

4. Stop smoking

Smoking and exposure to smoke reduces your and your partner's chances of becoming pregnant and increases the risk of baby loss, early delivery, smaller babies, cot death and childhood illnesses. If you or your partner smoke, aim to quit before you become pregnant.

Although quitting smoking can be difficult and can take time, you can get support from GPs and pharmacies who provide stop smoking services.

[birmingham.gov.uk/
info/50263/
supporting_
healthier_lives/
1364/help_to_
stop_smoking](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50263/supporting_healthier_lives/1364/help_to_stop_smoking)



5. Do not take illegal drugs

If you use any drugs or illegal substances, you must stop using them before becoming pregnant. These substances harm you and your unborn baby. If you get pregnant while taking illegal drugs, you should talk to your doctor.

If you or your partner need help, your GP can refer you to Change, Grow, Live or Aquarius services.

[changeandgrowlive.org/drug-and-alcohol-
service-birmingham](https://changeandgrowlive.org/drug-and-alcohol-service-birmingham)

[aquarius.org.uk/our-services/young-
peoples-services/birmingham-yp/](https://aquarius.org.uk/our-services/young-peoples-services/birmingham-yp/)

6. Eat a healthy diet

You do not have to 'eat for two' when planning pregnancy or during pregnancy. A healthy diet when preparing for pregnancy is the same as a balanced diet for good health. Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day and include high fibre foods, such as beans and lentils, and 'good' fats such as oily fish, seeds and nuts.

You should limit how much caffeine you drink or eat in pregnancy as too much caffeine can cause complications.

Eatwell Guide:
nhs.uk/Live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide

South Asian Guide:
mynutriweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Untitled-700-x-700-px.pdf

African and Caribbean Guide:
diversenutritionassociation.com/new-page-1



7. Be physically active

Being active will help you and your partner with getting pregnant and having a healthy pregnancy. Keeping fit can also help you when it is time to give birth to your baby.

You should try to do 30 minutes of physical activity like brisk walking or swimming at least 5 times a week. You can start gradually, by going for a walk or climbing stairs.

Be Active scheme

It is a free scheme in Birmingham that offers:

- Swimming
- Gym sessions
- Exercise classes
- Outdoor activities

birminghamleisure.com/be-active-passport-to-leisure



Weight

Eating well and being active can help you achieve a healthy weight before pregnancy and make it easier to get pregnant.

A Body Mass Index (BMI) between 18 and 25 improves your chances of getting pregnant and having an uncomplicated pregnancy and delivery.



If you are overweight or obese, even losing even 5-10% of your weight before pregnancy, will help you and your baby.

Being underweight can also cause complications in pregnancy, such as baby loss, small babies and babies born early.

Scan the QR code to find support to help lose weight from Birmingham City Council.



If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, your GP can refer you to the NHS Digital Weight management service.

8. Book a dental check-up

Having healthy teeth and gums is important to avoid pregnancy complications such as bleeding gums and early births.

To keep your teeth and gums healthy:

- Brush twice every day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Limit your intake of sugary foods and drinks.
- Eat healthy meals and snacks.

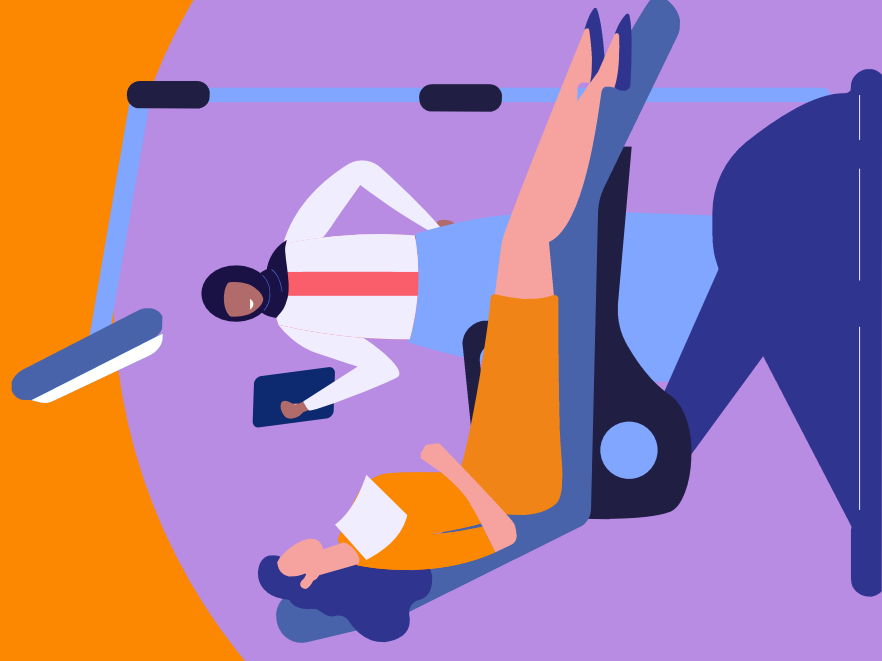
It is a good idea to visit your dentist for a check-up if you are planning to become pregnant.

All visits to the dentist are free when you are pregnant or have a young baby.

If you need to find a dentist, you can use the Find a Dentist search tool on the NHS website.

nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist

If you have a toothache or a dental problem phone NHS 111.



9. Arrange workplace safety assessment

Some jobs may expose you to harmful substances which can be a risk to your pregnancy. You can discuss your plan for pregnancy with your employer, as changes in your work might be necessary to help you and your baby stay safe.



For more information,
visit Health and Safety
Executive website:
[hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

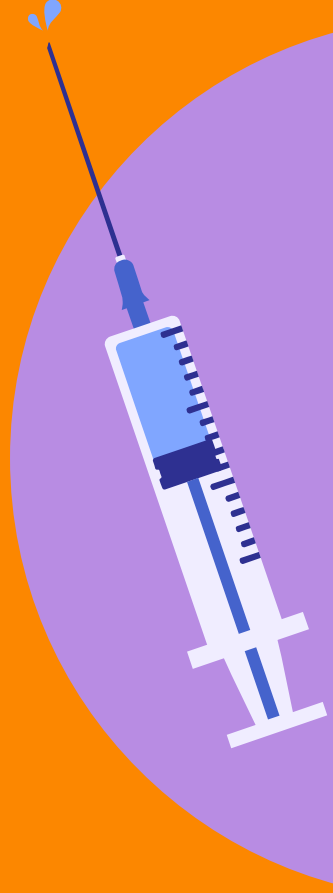
10. Book an appointment with GP to discuss:

Vaccinations

Catching the flu or the whooping cough while pregnant, makes you and your baby more likely to become seriously ill. You will be offered vaccines to protect against these illnesses during pregnancy.

It is also important to make sure you have had the Rubella vaccination in childhood, as getting rubella while pregnant is harmful for your baby. Please speak to your GP or practice nurse for more information.

[nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vaccinations)



Emotional and mental health

Planning your pregnancy and becoming a parent are life-changing events and it is normal to feel lots of different emotions along the way. Your emotional wellbeing is important for the development of your unborn baby and will give your baby the best possible start in life.

Having a supportive network of people around you is important.

If you have any concerns about your physical and emotional safety, any mental health difficulties, or if you are experiencing domestic or partner violence, speak to a professional for support before you plan to become pregnant.

If you have a mental health condition and are worried about becoming pregnant, or if you are taking medication for a mental health condition, discuss with your GP or mental health team before becoming pregnant. Your medicines might need to be changed or you might need support from a specialist team during and after pregnancy.



**Safer
Beginnings**



**Baby
Buddy**

You can get help with planning your pregnancy from Best Beginnings and the Baby Buddy app. The app has lots of information to help you when you are pregnant and until your baby is 1 year old.

Useful resources

Contraception options	nhs.uk/contraception
Umbrella sexual health services	umbrellahealth.co.uk
Increase your chances of getting pregnant	nhs.uk/pregnancy/trying-for-a-baby/trying-to-get-pregnant/
Starting a family if you are LGBT+	nhs.uk/pregnancy/having-a-baby-if-you-are-lgbt-plus/
FGM and pregnancy	https://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Pregnant-Women-Leaflet.pdf
NHS pregnancy guide	nhs.uk/pregnancy/trying-for-a-baby/planning-your-pregnancy/
Physical disability and pregnancy	birthrights.org.uk/factsheets/disability-and-long-term-health-conditions-and-maternity-care
Learning disabilities and pregnancy	bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/ learning-disability-services-supportfor-pregnancy
West Midlands Genetics Services	bwc.nhs.uk/genetics

Antenatal results and choices	arc-uk.org
Quit smoking support	birmingham.gov.uk/info/50263/supporting_healthier_lives/1364/help_to_stop_smoking
Drug and alcohol misuse support	changegetlively.org/drug-and-alcohol-service-birmingham
Substance misuse support	aquarius.org.uk/our-services/young-peoples-services/birmingham-yp/
Be active scheme	birminghamleisure.com/be-active-passport-to-leisure
Find a dentist	nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist or contact NHS 111
Vaccination guide	nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vaccinations
Workplace safety and pregnancy	hse.gov.uk
Emotional support from Safer Beginnings	bestbeginnings.org.uk/safer-beginnings
Emotional support from Baby Buddy	bestbeginnings.org.uk/baby-buddy

Top 10 Tips to prepare for a healthy pregnancy

1. **Start folic acid**
2. **Start vitamin D**
3. **Stop alcohol**
4. **Stop smoking**
5. **Do not take illegal drugs**
6. **Eat a healthy diet**
7. **Be physically active**
8. **Book a dental check-up**
9. **Arrange workplace safety assessment**
10. **Book an appointment with your GP practice to discuss:**
 - Physical and mental health conditions or medicines
 - Vaccinations
 - Sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing
 - Cervical smear test
 - Genetic advice

Scan the QR code for more information and additional languages



birminghamshullhullics.icb.nhs.uk/pre-conception