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# Important pregnancy facts for women



## Beginning Right<sup>®</sup> Maternity Program

[www.aetna.com](http://www.aetna.com)

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We encourage a preconception visit with your Ob/Gyn before you get pregnant. This medical checkup helps make sure you're healthy when you get pregnant. Steps include taking prenatal vitamins and going over medicine for safety. Your Ob/Gyn will check your health and may screen for any new health problems.

It's best to start prenatal care as soon as you know you're pregnant. Talk to your doctor about the information below.\*

## The importance of folic acid

The best time to start taking folic acid is before you get pregnant. This can help prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord. Try to get at least 400 µg to 800 µg of folic acid every day. You can find folic acid in:

- Most prenatal vitamins
- Dark green leafy vegetables, beans, nuts, fortified breads and breakfast cereals

## Avoid certain fish during pregnancy

Some fish contain high levels of mercury. Eating these fish during pregnancy can harm your unborn baby.

- Don't eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish and sushi.
- Don't eat more than 12 ounces of canned tuna each week.

## Stop smoking for your health and the health of your baby

Women who smoke during pregnancy have a higher risk of miscarriage, preterm birth and having a low-birth-weight baby. Quitting smoking is one of the most important healthy changes you can make.

## Say "no" to drugs and alcohol

If you drink or take drugs while pregnant, you put your baby at risk for:

- Fetal alcohol syndrome, which can cause lifelong physical and mental problems for your baby
- Drug addiction or drug withdrawal

## Pregnancy risks for women with diabetes

If you have diabetes, you may have special health risks during pregnancy. This could include a higher risk of miscarriage or stillbirth, or having a baby with birth defects. The best time to get your blood sugar levels under control is before you get pregnant.

## Control your high blood pressure

Women with high blood pressure have a higher risk of certain problems during pregnancy. These can include problems with their baby's growth. Work with your doctor to find ways to keep your blood pressure under control.

## Medicine, vaccines and pregnancy

The best time to talk to your doctor about medicine and vaccines is before you get pregnant. Bring a list of all prescribed and over-the-counter medicine to your preconception or first prenatal visit to review with your doctor. Ask your doctor if you can still take your prescribed medicine. Also ask about vitamins, herbs and other medicine you can buy over the counter.

Try to update all of your vaccines prior to conception. If you do need a vaccine, wait one month after having it to become pregnant. Some vaccines are safe during pregnancy, and others, like rubella and chickenpox, should be avoided.

## Sign up for Beginning Right today

You have two options:

Choice #1: Call us at **1-800-CRADLE-1 (1-800-272-3531)**, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET.

Choice #2: Log in to your secure member website at **www.aetna.com**. Look under "Health Programs" and choose "Maternity program."

You can also Ask Ann, our virtual assistant, about the Beginning Right program. Log in to your member website and chat with her anytime.

And remember — there's no extra cost.

\*You may have access to the Healthy Lifestyle Coaching program, which will help you be your healthiest before you get pregnant. Call the number on the back of your insurance card to find out.

## Health insurance plans are offered, underwritten and/or administered by Aetna Life Insurance Company and its affiliates (Aetna).

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