



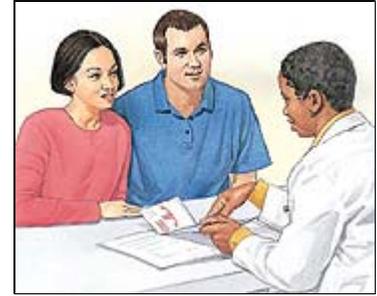
What Is Prenatal Care?

Before becoming pregnant, you may have adopted good health habits to prepare for your baby. But if you didn't, start today. One of the first steps is learning how to take care of yourself. See your healthcare provider as soon as you think you may be pregnant. Then, continue prenatal care throughout your pregnancy.

Prenatal Care Helps You Have a Healthy Baby

During prenatal care:

- Your healthcare provider assesses the health of your pregnancy. A "due date" is determined. This is when your doctor predicts you will deliver your baby.
- The progress of your pregnancy is checked. This includes your baby's growth, changes in your weight, and your overall health and comfort.
- Your healthcare provider may find new concerns and manage existing ones before problems occur.



Your healthcare provider will guide you and your partner through pregnancy.

You Are Part of a Team

When you're pregnant, you're part of a team that includes you, your baby, and your healthcare provider. Your team also may include a partner or a main support person. He or she could be a loved one, such as a spouse, a family member, or a friend. As you work toward giving your baby a healthy start, rely on your team members for support.

It's Not Too Late to Start Good Habits

What matters most is protecting your baby from this moment on. If you smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs, now is the time to stop. If you need help, talk with your healthcare provider.

- Smoking increases the risk of losing your baby or having a my -birth-weight baby. If you smoke, quit now.
- Alcohol and drugs have been linked with miscarriage, birth defects, mental retardation, and low birth weight. Avoid creqj qn'and drugs.
- Eat a healthy diet. This helps keep you and your baby strong and healthy. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions hqt "nutrition. Also stay within the guidelines you are given for healthy weight gain.
- Regular exercise will help you stay fit and feel good during pregnancy. It can also help prevent or minimize back pain. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about how to exercise safely during pregnancy.



Developing a healthy lifestyle is one of the things you can do for your child.