



Healthy Beginnings

Having a Healthy Pregnancy After Age 30



In January 2016, the CDC reported that women are continuing to have babies at an older age. In 2000, the average age of first-time moms was 24.9, and in 2014 it was 26.3. Researchers think that more women going to college and more focus on careers may play a role in the older age of first-time moms. (www.cdc.gov). If you are in your 30s and thinking about getting pregnant, consider these facts and talk to your doctor about ways to have a healthy pregnancy.

How does age affect the body's ability to get pregnant? Females are less able to become pregnant after age 32 and even less able to become pregnant after age 37. Females become less able to get pregnant as they age because they are born with all the eggs they will ever have. This number of eggs decreases as females age, because every time a female gets her period, she loses eggs. Problems that can affect fertility, such as endometriosis and uterine fibroids, become more common as females get older, as well.

Older females are more likely to have

health problems than younger females. For example, high blood pressure is a condition that is more common in older females. If you are older than 35 years, you also are more likely to develop high blood pressure for the first time during pregnancy. The risk of developing diabetes or gestational diabetes (diabetes you get when you are pregnant) increases as females age, as well. These pregnancy conditions can create complications that may affect the health of the mother or child.

Risks of having a child with a birth defect caused by missing, damaged, or extra chromosomes is greater in older females than in younger females. For example, having a baby with Down Syndrome is more common among older females. Tests to find out a female's risk of having a baby with birth defects should be offered during pregnancy.

Older females are more likely to have multiple pregnancy (twins, triplets, etc.) than younger females. Multiple pregnancy can be exciting, but it can cause serious problems, including preterm birth, preeclampsia, fetal growth problems, and gestational diabetes. The risk and severity of these problems increase with the number of babies. (www.acog.org).

What can I do before and during pregnancy to increase my chances of having a healthy baby? Talk to your doctor before you become pregnant, and get regular prenatal care if you do become pregnant. Check out pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter for some preconception health information. (www.acog.org)

Diana Haldenwang
Executive Director
Ext. 225

Theresa Gorgas
Director of Finance and Administration
Ext. 227

April Owens
Perinatal Coordinator
Ext. 222

Kayleigh Riesel
Perinatal Associate
Ext. 228

Lynne Gates
Health Insurance Programs Coordinator
Ext. 224

Cheryl Perkins
Health Benefits Specialist
Ext. 244

Filomena Facciolo
Health Benefits Navigator
Ext. 242

Gerda Mortelette
Small Business Specialist
Ext. 243

Pat Hamer
Program Support Specialist
Ext. 221

The mission of the Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network is to improve birth outcomes and maternal, child and family health.

Preconception Health: Tips for Moms and Dads



Are you thinking about having a baby? Someday? Did you know that how healthy *you* are before you have sex and create a baby has an effect on the future health of your baby? Here are some tips for both males and females about being as healthy as you can be now, for the baby you'll have in the future.

Dads' Preconception Health

In light of June being Men's Health Month, here are some tips for future dads. Even though the female carries the baby in her body throughout a pregnancy, we do know that when males come in contact with certain chemicals before his sperm fertilizes an egg, it can lead to some problems with a female becoming pregnant, and also slightly raises the risk of certain birth defects in his future child. 1 out of every 3 cases of infertility (a female not being able to get pregnant) may be caused by problems with the male's sperm. ***So what chemicals should you avoid if you're planning to have a child?***

- **Check your medications.** Certain medications used to treat stomach problems and infections may affect the health and number of sperm a male makes. Steroids used to treat asthma, arthritis and skin conditions may also affect male fertility. Chemotherapy and radiation could also cause a major change in sperm health and number.

- **Your workplace may have an effect on your sperm.** According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, constant contact with certain pesticides, chemical fertilizers, lead, nickel, mercury, and radiation, among other chemicals, can lower sperm health and count and possibly lead to infertility or miscarriage.
- **Eat better and get more (and better quality) sleep.** Find out what your healthy weight should be here: (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm) and make nutrition and exercise changes to get there. Some studies show that males with low sperm count may not get enough zinc in their diet. Meat, wholegrain cereals, seafood, eggs, brazil nuts, and mushrooms are high in zinc and could increase your fertility.
- **Avoid alcohol and other substances.** Stop using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and any recreational drugs. Too much alcohol may reduce zinc levels, and drugs decrease sperm quality. Marijuana has been proven to affect sperm health and count.

Moms' Preconception Health

The first few weeks of pregnancy are the most important to the development of the baby, so if you are trying to have a baby or could possibly become pregnant, be aware of the effects of certain activities and substances. Being healthy now will help the health of you and your baby, in the long-run. Before you become pregnant you want to make sure to cut out any habits that are harmful to your baby.

These habits include:

- **Smoking** – Smoking during pregnancy can result in preterm delivery and low birth weight, and even infant death. Smoking during pregnancy also puts babies at a higher risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) after they are born.
- **Drinking Alcohol** – There is no safe amount

Preconception Health Continued

of alcohol to drink while you are pregnant, no safe type of alcohol to drink while you are pregnant, and no safe window of time to drink alcohol while you are pregnant. The recommendations are still very clear that it is not safe to drink alcohol during pregnancy. No matter what type of alcohol it is, or how far along a pregnancy is, even small amounts of alcohol are always passed, through the placenta, to the baby, and can cause damage to growing cells.

- **Recreational Drug Use** – Drug use during pregnancy can increase the chance of miscarriage, low birth-weight, premature birth, developmental delays, and behavioral and learning problems.
- **Prescription Drugs** – There are many prescription drugs that can cause birth defects. Talk with your provider about any and all prescription drugs you are taking.
- **Hazardous Chemicals** – There are some chemicals that can also hurt a baby before they are born. Be aware of pesticides in food (look for the USDA Certified Organic label!) and chemicals at home and in the workplace.
- **Stress** – Stress has been linked to late or missed periods which can cause difficulty getting pregnant. Limit your amount of stress as much as possible. Try exercising, yoga, deep breathing, meditation, and getting 7-8 hours of good-quality sleep a night, to reduce stress. (www.americanpregnancy.org)
- **Herbs (Supplements)** – Discuss any herbal or natural remedies you may be using with your healthcare provider. Some are not safe to use during pregnancy. For example, oregano oil may be harmful to a growing baby. (www.mercola.com)
- **Caffeine** – Some studies have shown a link between high levels of caffeine intake and trouble becoming pregnant. A few studies have shown that there may be an increase in miscarriages among females who consume more than 200 mg (one 12oz cup of coffee) a day versus those who do not consume



any caffeine.

So what can you do to be healthy before pregnancy?

- Exercise, eat healthy, and get plenty of sleep.
- Practice relaxation techniques.
- Track your menstrual cycle and become in tune and aware of your body.
- Read books on pregnancy and child birth. Being well-educated and prepared will help you be confident and informed when making decisions during your pregnancy! (www.americanpregnancy.org)

**Need help and support
getting healthy?
Call the Community
Health Workers at
(315) 272-2661.**





We'd like to hear from you!
 Send information about upcoming events or ideas for future articles to: MVPN Newsletter, 1000 Cornelia Street, 2nd Floor, Utica, NY 13502; Fax: 732-5640; Email: dhaldenwang@newfamily.org

Community Health Worker Services

Community Health Workers help women of child bearing age improve their health, as well as the health of their family. They are an outreach and home visiting program serving Oneida and Herkimer County residents. If you need help getting health insurance, finding a doctor, getting housing, nutrition, or food stamps, call them today.



(315) 272-2661

New York State WIC Program

Healthy Food, Healthy Families, Healthy Future

- *Healthful Foods at No Cost
- * Health & Nutrition Information
- * Breastfeeding Information & Support
- * Health & Immunization Screenings
- * Recipes, Educational Materials
- * Nutrition Counseling
- * Referrals to Community Services

To see if you're eligible, call 1-800-522-5006 to find the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office nearest you!

The Baby Weight Station at Oneida County Health Department

- Get answers to your questions from a Certified Lactation Counselor
- Check your baby's weight

We want to work with you to solve problems and build confidence so you can breastfeed as long as you would like!

Drop in Fridays 1-4 or call for an appointment.

Oneida County Health Department
 406 Elizabeth Street, Utica New York

Please call 798-5906 or 798-5747 for more information or to make an appointment!



Utica Community Health Center

Family Medicine, Routine Preventive Exams, Well Child Visits, Immunizations, Women's Health, Lab Services, Chronic Disease Management, Cancer Screenings, Behavioral Health Services Available for Primary Care Medical Patients



Accepting Medicaid, Medicare, Child Health Plus, Private Insurance and Sliding fee scale

1651 Oneida Street, Utica

Pregnant?

Protect yourself and your baby.

Get early prenatal care.

Prenatal Care - Medicaid Prenatal Services Program

Early and regular check-ups are important to you and your baby's health.

Medicaid Prenatal Services Program offers complete pregnancy care and other health care services to women and teens who live in New York State.

And there's no cost to eligible women who participate in Medicaid Prenatal Services!

Call MVPN at 732-4657 or toll free at 1-877-267-6193 for more information.