

Get Pregnant Faster: Top 9 Tips for a Successful Conception



Once you've made the big decision to grow your family, you probably don't want to wait long, right? If that's the case, then it's important to start planning *now*. Because the key to getting pregnant fast is not just about having sex all the time or at the right time – it's also about creating the perfect environment, so that when sperm meets egg, a healthy embryo grows into a healthy baby.

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to get pregnant faster:

1. Stop Taking Birth Control

If you've been popping those little white pills for a while, take a pass on your prescription a few months before you officially start trying. That goes for other forms of hormonal birth control too (You should stop getting *Depo-Provera*, injectable shots of progesterone about nine months before you want to try getting pregnant).

Birth control affect the function of your hormones. After you've been using birth control for a while, it may take your body a few cycles to start ovulating regularly and be primed for pregnancy. Plus, this gives you time to track your cycle to figure out exactly when you ovulate (we'll talk more about this later), which is key for timing your baby-making.

2. Get a Preconception Checkup

On the cycle before you start trying, it's recommended to get a preconception checkup to go over your medical and family history, and to identify any underlying medical problems and genetic risks. This goes for **both you and your partner**. If you have any health issues that could affect your chances of conceiving or that could make a pregnancy more risky, it's important to get those under control now.

If it's time for you to update your vaccines, it's important to do so before you are pregnant. A few specific vaccinations, such as the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella), varicella (the virus that causes chickenpox), or hepatitis A vaccines increase the risk of birth defects. Experts advise that you wait at least 28 days after receiving some of these vaccinations before trying to conceive.

3. Start a Prenatal

The first few weeks of pregnancy are a really important time for fetal health and development, so it's important to ensure that you're in the best of health ***even before pregnancy*** to give your baby the best start in life. This also helps create a more fertile environment conducive in supporting a pregnancy. If you're pregnant or hoping to conceive, prenatal vitamins can help fill any nutritional gaps.



Ask your doctor about prenatal vitamins that have Folate (Folic Acid) and Choline, which help protect against some birth defects, such as spina bifida. These essential b-vitamins work during the early stages of pregnancy, so that's why it's important to make sure you're getting enough even before you get pregnant. However, not many prenatal vitamins include Choline despite it being so important in baby's early development, so make sure to choose a supplement that provides the right nutrients you need (a brand called ***Proception Plus*** has both these B-vitamins).

4. Be at Your Ideal Body Weight

Achieving a normal weight before you become pregnant is important because being overweight, obese or underweight pre-pregnancy affects hormone levels, and can make it harder for you to get pregnant, and can also lead to health risks for you and for your baby.

Pre-pregnant obesity is associated with increased maternal risk for hypertension, gestational diabetes, thromboembolic disease, and cesarean delivery. Babies of obese moms are at higher risk for developing neural tube defects, macrosomia (large head), and being born preterm or stillbirth.

On the other hand, *underweight moms-to-be* are at risk for anemia and may have difficulty conceiving due to lower fertility, while eating disorders specifically may increase the risk of miscarriage, obstetric complications, and postpartum depression. Babies of underweight moms are more likely to experience growth restriction and low birth weight.

The ideal BMI for conception is 20-25. Proper nutrition and calorie intake, regular exercise, stress management, and adequate sleep will contribute to helping you achieve and maintain a healthy weight conducive to a successful pregnancy.

5. Put a Stop to Vices: Smoking, Alcohol, and Hard Drugs

Vices can be difficult to let go of, but if there's any reason to quit – pregnancy is it!

There is no “safe” level of smoking while pregnant, so it's best to quit early on. Cigarettes are bad for the baby as they limit the oxygen and blood flow through the placenta which is the baby's sole source of nutrients. Smoking also poses risks to the baby after birth as second-hand smoke increases the risk of a host of problems, including increasing the risks of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, respiratory problems, birth defects, and even Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.



Experts are still unsure how much, if any, alcohol is safe to drink when pregnant. Therefore, the safest route is not to drink at all as alcohol passes from mother to baby through the placenta. When your baby is growing inside you, one of the last organs to develop is the liver, which is responsible for processing alcohol. Without a liver, your baby can't remove the alcohol and too much exposure can seriously affect your baby: drinking in the first three months can increase your risk of miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. Heavy drinking can lead to fetal alcohol syndrome.

Using illicit (illegal) or recreational drugs, such as cannabis, cocaine and other drugs such as ecstasy, ketamine and amphetamines may contribute to fertility problems. This means that if you or your partner take drugs, you may find it more difficult to get pregnant. Illegal or recreational drugs can also cause serious problems in pregnancy.

These vices can also affect your partner's health – it can lower testosterone levels, decrease sperm count and quality, and cause difficulty in having erections and sex. It takes two to make a baby, so it's important that both parents are in their best health condition before trying to conceive.

6. Understand Your Ovulation Cycle

The biggest mistake most couples make is not knowing exactly when they ovulate. No matter how often you and your partner get horizontal, if you skip the days when your fertility is at its peak, you won't get pregnant. FYI: For the most approximate way to determine when you ovulate, subtract 14 from the length of your cycle.

Today, most doctors recommend using ovulation predictor kits (OPKs) for a more accurate measure of ovulation. Though you can still use basal body temperature (BBT) charting, OPKs give you advance warning that your egg is about to be released, so you can plan accordingly. OPKs work by detecting a surge in luteinizing hormone (LH) in your urine, which occurs about 36 to 48 hours before you ovulate.



There are two basic types of OPKs available: Those you use only around the week before you ovulate (these are better for women with very regular cycles, since you need a rough idea of when you ovulate to know when to start using the kit) and those you use every day of the month (a better choice for women with less regular cycles; they're also a bit pricier).

7. Have Sex When You Ovulate (and Keep It Fun)

Having sex when you're trying to conceive can seem like a chore – something you *have to do* – which can lead to additional stress that can negatively affect your chances. If you don't have any known fertility issues, don't worry about timing sex at first. Instead, have frequent unprotected sex throughout your cycle. Have it often and for fun. Be spontaneous and passionate. After all, sex is what will likely get you pregnant.

However, *proper timing* is also important if you want to increase your chances. Sperm can stick around in your uterus and fallopian tubes for two to three days, but your egg only lasts for 12 to 24 hours after it's released. So having sex before you ovulate boosts the chances that there'll be sperm around to greet your egg as soon as it debuts.

For a typical 28-day cycle (where you ovulate on day 14), start having sex a few times a week as soon as your period ends. Getting busy that often ensures you won't miss your most fertile time, especially if your cycle length varies from month to month. Starting around day 10, make a point to have sex every other day. When you have a positive result on your OPK (around day 12), have sex that day and the next two days—these are your most fertile days out of the month and your best times to conceive.

8. Get Ready to Test

The earlier you know you're pregnant, the sooner you can see your doctor to start prenatal care and make sure your eating, drinking, and other habits are as healthy as possible. While there are test kit brands that allow you to start testing super-early (as soon as 10 days after you ovulate), you'll get the most accurate results if you wait until the day you expect to get your period.

Home pregnancy tests work by detecting levels of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) in your urine. Levels of this hormone, produced by the placenta, continue to rise in early pregnancy. Tests marketed as "early results" or "early response" may be more sensitive at detecting lower levels of hCG earlier.



Testing too early is likely to yield what experts call a "false negative" result—where the test says you're not pregnant, but you really are. What's happening is that your body isn't producing enough hCG yet to be detected by the test. Waiting and testing again a few days after your missed period is likely to turn up the plus sign you're looking for.

9. If the Test is Negative

Didn't get pregnant this month? Don't get upset. Most couples don't succeed the first time out of the gate (more than half get pregnant by 6 months, about 85% by one year). Most likely, you miscalculated your ovulation cycle, so your partner's sperm never had the chance to fertilize your egg. Consider switching to a daily OPK if you haven't already tried it, and get psyched to try again next month. If it takes you about 6 months to a year without any success, consider consulting a fertility specialist to help improve your chances. You can do this!

