

# BECOMING PREGNANT

Becoming pregnant entails a significant life change for a couple. It is a major milestone that brings excitement, anticipation, and joy, but can also bring some challenges and adjustments.

Pregnancy can bring about physical and emotional changes for the mother and her partner. They may need to adjust their lifestyle and routines to prepare for the arrival of the new family member.

Therefore, before embarking into pregnancy it would be imperative that certain lifestyle factors are taken into consideration. It is crucial to understand that if the couple are in good health it increases the likelihood of getting pregnant and reduces any possible risks later on.



## BEFORE YOU GET PREGNANT

1. Avoid smoking and alcohol consumption as this is known to greatly impact fertility and the baby. Smoking has been shown to increase the risk of premature birth, low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), while alcohol consumption can lead to foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) causing physical, cognitive, and behavioural problems in the child.
2. Staying active, cutting down any extra weight and having a well-balanced diet is the key to improve fertility. A healthy diet will improve the sperm quality of men while improving the baby's development and their health in the future.

3. It is very important that any pre-existing medical conditions are treated, and caution is taken when taking any medications. Therefore, it would be beneficial, if you or your partner suffer from any conditions or take any medications you consult a doctor before pregnancy.
4. Multiple studies have also highlighted the importance of folic acid supplementation before and during pregnancy, as this helps the body to make new cells and helps to protect the baby from any neural tube defects e.g spina bifida. Folic acid should be commenced two-three months before conception and the recommended dose is 400mg daily.
5. Ensure that you have your vaccination records in check, especially the Rubella vaccine and perform any necessary screening tests e.g smear test.

