

Help Prevent Birth Defects Before You Become Pregnant



- 1 See your healthcare professional:** Maintain regularly scheduled visits
- 2 Take 400 mcg of folic acid daily:** vitamins and 100% fortified cereals
- 3 Maintain a healthy weight:**
 - Talk to your healthcare provider
 - Women with a BMI of 30 or higher are at greater risks for complication during pregnancy
 - Obesity also increases the risk of birth defects
- 4 Control Chronic Conditions:**
 - Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Obesity, Epilepsy can increase the risk of complications during pregnancy
- 5 Stop Smoking, Drinking, and Using Marijuana or Illicit Drugs:**
 - Smoking cigarettes or e-cigarettes can cause birth defects, low birth weights and infant death
 - There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy. Drinking during pregnancy can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
 - Use of marijuana or illicit drugs can lead to preterm birth, low birth weight, and birth defects. Women using prescription drugs should speak with their doctor.
- 6 Taking Medications:**
 - Talk to your healthcare provider about medications you are taking including over the counter, dietary, prescription and herbal medicines
- 7 Vaccinations:**
 - Some vaccines help protect against infections that can cause birth defects. Speak with your healthcare provider
- 8 Avoid Toxic Substances:**
 - Avoid fertilizer, bug sprays and cat or rodent feces, as these can hurt the reproductive systems of women



www.health.ri.gov/programs/birthdefects

For more information see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at:
www.cdc.gov/preconception/planning