

Do you want a healthy baby?



Department of Health

About three months before you try to fall pregnant

- Stop taking the Pill – use another method of contraception.
- Make sure that you have had all the necessary vaccinations – particularly against rubella (German measles).
- Start with a balanced intake of multi-vitamins, which should contain 0.4mg folic acid.
- When you consult your clinic or doctor, mention that you are planning a pregnancy, particularly if you are on medication for a chronic disease, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy or heart disease.
- Seek genetic counselling if:
 - you are in your late thirties;
 - you have had two or more miscarriages;
 - you have given birth to a child with a congenital or hereditary disorder;
 - there is any history of a hereditary/genetic disease in your or your husband's family – irrespective of how long ago;
 - you and your husband are related.



When you are trying to fall pregnant

Since the confirmation of pregnancy is usually obtained only after you are already two or more weeks pregnant, you ought to **avoid** the following risk factors now:

- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Unprescribed medicines (inform your sister or doctor that you wish to fall pregnant)
- Contact with anyone suffering from an infectious disease, especially rubella
- Abdominal X-rays
- Regular contact with anaesthetic gases
- Excessive heat, e.g. saunas and very hot baths
- Uninspected, undercooked meat
- Cat litter



When you are pregnant

- Visit your antenatal clinic or doctor regularly.
- If there is any person with a birth defect, or mental, vision or hearing impairment in your or your husband's family, ask your clinic sister or doctor to refer you to your nearest genetic counselling clinic.
- Get sufficient rest and light exercise.
- Follow a balanced, vitamin-rich diet.
- Obtain information on breastfeeding.
- Contact your clinic or doctor immediately if you experience bleeding from the vagina, severe, persistent nausea, vomiting or headaches, swelling of the feet or legs, excessive or sudden weight gain, abdominal pains, a marked decrease in urine or a sudden, strong flow of water from the vagina.
- Ask your clinic sister or doctor to inform you about
 - screening tests on pregnant women and
 - a sonar examination to detect certain abnormalities in the unborn baby.



After the birth of your baby

- Visit your clinic or doctor about six weeks after the birth of the baby for a thorough post-natal examination.
- Take your baby to the baby clinic regularly for a general examination and the necessary vaccinations.
- Consult your family-planning clinic or doctor with regard to an appropriate contraceptive.
- Ask your clinic sister or doctor about laboratory screening tests that can be done on your new-born baby.
- If you experience any problems with breastfeeding, contact your clinic sister or doctor, or either of the following –

La Leche-League SA
P.O. Box 10153
ASTON MANOR 1630
Tel. (012) 809-0385 (Pretoria)

Breastfeeding Association of SA
P.O. Box 4055
BELLVILLE 7535
Tel. (021) 686-8363

For more information on genetic counselling, contact:

Subdirector: Human Genetics and
Director: Nutrition
Department of Health
Private Bag X828
Pretoria 0001
Tel. (012) 312-0000