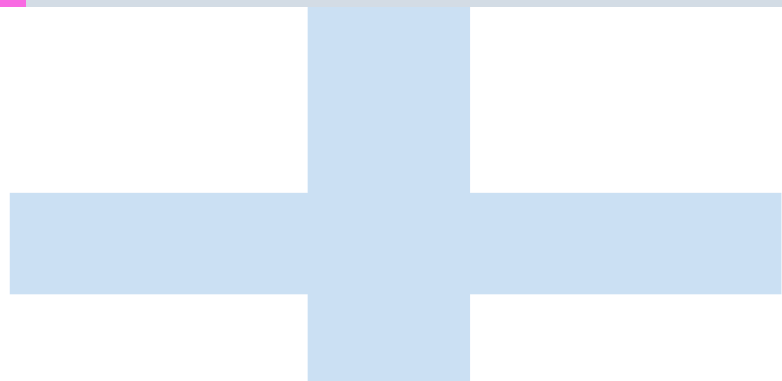


THE
WELL
WOMAN
CENTRE

Prepregnancy



PRE-PREGNANCY ADVICE

Rubella

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PRE-PREGNANCY ADVICE

Rubella

Rubella or German Measles, as it is more commonly known, causes a mild viral illness in most people, but for pregnant women who are not immune to rubella, it may have devastating consequences for the pregnancy. If you got your rubella vaccine in school, you are probably immune, but a small number of people don't develop any immunity. This can be checked with a simple blood test. If you are not immune, then you can get a booster vaccination. It is important not to get pregnant for three months after the booster.

Smears

All women aged 25 and older should have a smear test. A national cervical screening programme has been in operation since autumn 2008. Most GP practices, women's health clinics and family planning centres participate in the screening programme. If you are 25 or more and have not yet received a letter from the programme you can contact the service on www.cervicalcheck.ie or telephone freephone 1800 454555.

Folic acid

This vitamin is particularly needed for the development of the baby's spinal cord and brain. There is folic acid in a lot of food but, when pregnant, you need more. It is recommended that most women who are planning a pregnancy should start to take folic acid three months before they actively try to conceive.

Why is this so important? -The baby's spinal cord is formed 28 days into the pregnancy.

This is the time when most women are just realising that they are pregnant.

Folic acid helps to prevent Spina bifida (a problem with the development of the spinal chord) and Anencephaly (i.e. babies born with little or no brain tissue).

Folic acid should be continued for up to 3 months into the pregnancy.

Diet

When trying to get pregnant many women are concerned about what they should and shouldn't eat.

- ❖ All soft cheeses should be avoided (esp. Brie, Camembert, etc.) and any unpasteurised cheese.
- ❖ All liver and liver products should also be avoided, as they contain large amounts of Vitamin A which can be dangerous for the baby (cod liver oil tablets, pates etc.).
- ❖ Raw meats - Ensure all your meat is well cooked, esp. chicken.
- ❖ Eggs - Do not eat raw eggs. Be careful when eating out as some dishes may contain raw eggs. Always ask. Take extra care when purchasing prepared convenience food and remember to check the sell by date.
- ❖ Peanuts/nuts - Some evidence now links exposure to nuts during pregnancy to an increase in the number of children developing nut allergies. It is recommended that you reduce your consumption of nuts during pregnancy (i.e. Peanuts, cashew nuts, sesame seeds etc.).

Remember, there is no need to eat for two. Just eat a healthy, wholesome, sensible diet. You can expect to gain around 28lbs by the end of your pregnancy.

Alcohol

There is no known safe limit for the amount of alcohol that can be taken while pregnant. It is recommended that women reduce their consumption of alcohol during the entire pregnancy. It is important especially during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, when all of the organs are being formed.

Medicine

During pregnancy it is advisable not to take medication. However, while you are trying to conceive, you may have cause to take some antibiotics or painkillers. There are a number of both which are safe to take during and while planning a pregnancy, and your G.P. or pharmacist will be able to tell you what prescriptions are safe.

Painkillers - Paracetamol is safe to take, but only at the recommended dose.

Do not take Aspirin / Brufen / Nurofen at any stage during pregnancy.

Exercise

Leading up to and during pregnancy, it is very important that you get sufficient exercise, but at the same time, the wrong type can do more harm than good. If you attend a gym, then you should talk to the instructors there as to what you can and can't do. Walking, swimming and cycling are all good exercises, and there are a number of books available in most good bookstores on exercise during pregnancy.

Pets

If you have any pets, you should ensure that all their vaccinations are up to date. When handling cat litter, you should wear gloves or preferably get someone else to do it. You should also wear gloves

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