

Your Health Before, During and After Pregnancy

Now is the perfect time to make small changes that can help keep you healthy and happy before, during and after pregnancy.

Pregnancy complications can happen to anyone. In New York City (NYC), people of color and those with an underlying health condition, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, are more likely to experience serious pregnancy complications. Together, you and your health care provider can create a plan to protect your health now and in the future.

1. Discuss your pregnancy options with your provider.

- Discuss your overall health if you are thinking about becoming pregnant. Your provider can help you be as healthy as possible.
- Learn about birth control if you are not planning on becoming pregnant now. Talk to your provider about an option that is right for you.
- Ask about options if you are pregnant and do not want to be or are not sure. Options include abortion, adoption, and services to support pregnant people and parents who need help.

2. Follow your provider's instructions for any medications you take.

- Tell your provider about any over-the-counter medicines, including vitamins and herbal supplements.
- Discuss which medicines are safe if you plan to become pregnant.
- If you cannot afford your medicines or are having trouble taking them, talk to your provider. They want to know and can help.

3. Protect your sexual health.

- Ask your provider when to start getting screened for human papillomavirus (HPV), which can lead to cancers of the head, neck, throat or cervix. The best way to prevent HPV is with a vaccine.
- Get screened for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. Talk to your provider about your risk and when to get tested.

4. Check to see if you have received all necessary vaccinations, especially for influenza (flu), pertussis (whooping cough), varicella (chickenpox), rubella, measles, HPV and hepatitis B.

5. Get screened for high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes.



6. Cut out alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other drugs while pregnant.

Know the risks of consuming drugs while pregnant, and be aware there is no safe amount of alcohol while pregnant.

- For help, speak with your provider or call **311**.
- For help quitting tobacco or vaping, visit **nyc.gov/nycquits** or call 866-NY-QUITS (866-697-8487).
- For help quitting alcohol or drugs, contact NYC Well, a free 24/7 mental health help line with support in over 200 languages. Call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text “WELL” to 65173 or visit **nyc.gov/nycwell**.

7. Get enough exercise.

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as a brisk walk) each week. For example, you can do 30 minutes per day at least five days per week. For support, visit **nyc.gov/health** and search for **Guide to Healthy Eating and Active Living in NYC**.

8. Eat healthy and balanced meals.

- Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, a quarter with a lean protein, such as chicken, fish, beans or eggs, and a quarter with grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal or brown rice. For information on healthy eating, visit **nyc.gov/health** and search for **eating well**.
- If you need help buying food, visit **access.nyc.gov** to learn about programs for New Yorkers with lower incomes.

9. Take care of your mental and emotional health.

For support, speak with your provider, call **311** or contact NYC Well: Call 888-692-9355, text “WELL” to 65173 or visit **nyc.gov/nycwell**.

10. Ask for help if you feel unsafe at home.

You are not alone — there are many resources available if you are in an abusive, unhealthy or dangerous situation. If you are in immediate danger, call **911**. If you are not in immediate danger:

- Call Safe Horizon at 800-621-HOPE (800-621-4673) or call **311** and ask for the Safe Horizon hotline. Assistance is available 24/7 in multiple languages, to help with temporary housing, safety planning, counseling and other social services, and a court order of protection. To chat online (English only), Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., visit **safehorizon.org/safechat**.
- Visit NYC Hope at **nyc.gov/nychope** for helpful resources, including a list of **NYC Family Justice Centers** — there is a center in every borough.