

## *What do I need to do?*

If you want to have a baby soon, go to your doctor or clinic now for a checkup. Tell them that you are thinking about getting pregnant. Tell them about any problems that you know of. They will ask you some questions about what you eat, your habits and your health. Ask them what you need to do to give your baby the best possible chance to be born healthy.

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### *Remember:*

It's up to you to plan ahead for a healthy baby BEFORE you get pregnant.

- Go for a checkup before you get pregnant.
  - Find out if there are any problems that might keep you from having a healthy baby.
  - Get answers to any questions you have.
  - Decide the best time for you to get pregnant. Use a birth control method that you like until you are ready.
  - Make good health choices before you get pregnant.
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If you need more information,  
call Healthy Beginnings:

# **1-800-654-1385**

*The call is free.*

# *Plan Ahead For A Healthy Baby!*



*What a woman does  
before she gets pregnant  
can make a difference  
to her baby when it is born.*



*Planning ahead can help you  
have a healthy baby.*



## *Why do I need to plan ahead before I get pregnant?*

- To decide when is the best time for you to have a baby.
- To be sure you do not have any medical problems or diseases which could hurt you or your baby.
- To give you time to eat better, stop smoking or drinking or make other changes to help you and your unborn baby.
- To find out if there are any lead or chemicals where you work or live that might cause you to lose your baby or that could hurt your baby.



All of your baby's important organs form in the first weeks that you are pregnant. Birth defects and other problems can happen to your baby even before you miss a period!

You increase your chances of having a healthy baby by being in good health BEFORE you get pregnant.

## *What things can make a difference to my baby?*

No one knows for sure all of the things that can affect your unborn baby. Some of the things we do know about that make a difference to your baby are:



- Your diet (Do you eat in a healthy way everyday?)
- Your weight (Do you weigh too much or too little?)
- If you take any medicines
- Your family history (If there have been problems like sickle cell disease, mental retardation or birth defects in your family before)

- Your own health (Do you have any illnesses such as sugar diabetes, PKU, asthma or breathing problems, heart disease, high blood pressure or seizures?)
- If you smoke cigarettes
- If you drink beer, wine or liquor
- If you work with lead or chemicals at home or work
- Your age (Are you under 18 or over 34?)
- If you use street drugs of any kind