

Your Early Pregnancy Checklist

You're expecting, and from the moment you found out, your life has been forever changed in the most amazing way. So even though you're not showing and it's a little too early for childbirth classes, you still have so much to think about and consider. After all, there's a little person taking shape inside you – and it's one of the most incredible things you will ever experience. So be sure to use this checklist to help you know what's important for you and your baby at the beginning of your pregnancy.

Your health

- Avoid alcohol, drugs and cigarettes
- Consult with your doctor before taking any medication
- Get plenty of sleep – and try to nap when you're tired
- Exercise moderately, but avoid starting a new exercise regimen
- Be careful not to become overheated for prolonged periods of exercise
- Many women experience nausea in their first trimester – try eating dry crackers or smaller meals throughout the day

Your nutrition

- Boost your energy with high-protein and healthy carbohydrate foods like brown rice, hard cheeses or multi-grain breads. You can find more information from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating at www.hc-sc.gc.ca.
- Eat foods naturally high in folic acid like oranges, melons and dark-green, leafy vegetables
- Drink lots of fluids – especially water (8-10 glasses a day if you can)
- Eat plenty of iron-rich foods like whole grains, beans, raisins and nuts
- If you love coffee – try to cut back, or try decaffeinated coffee or tea. Visit Health Canada's website to find out which teas are recommended and how much caffeine is okay
- This is no time to diet. Eat well and make healthy choices.

Your healthcare

- Schedule your first prenatal visit with your doctor as soon as you think you're pregnant
- Plan to visit your doctor every four weeks throughout your pregnancy, increasing visits as your pregnancy progresses
- Inform your doctor if your immunizations are not up to date
- If your family has a history of genetic disorders – talk to your doctor about prenatal testing
- Choose a place to give birth (hospital? home? birth centre?)
- Choose a healthcare professional (GP, Ob-Gyn, midwife, doula, or combination)
- Consider taking a prenatal vitamin supplement every day

Your lifestyle

- It's never too early to start budgeting for your new life with baby (e.g. what is the cost associated with storing your baby's cord blood?)
- Consider starting a pregnancy diary or a photo diary of your changing body
- Avoid perms, colour, highlights or hair treatments that use heavy chemicals – especially during your first trimester when the fetus's organs are developing and most susceptible to damage from toxins, drugs and infections
- Visit a bookstore, friend's house or a library and buy or borrow a few pregnancy books (baby learning is always fun)