

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



High-Risk Pregnancy

Your pregnancy may be high-risk if you have²:

- Heart Disease
- High Blood Pressure
- Kidney Problems
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Asthma
- Problems with weight
- Over 35-years-old
- Problems with smoking, drinking and drugs

What causes a high-risk pregnancy?¹

A high-risk pregnancy means that the mother and child may end up with health problems. Health problems in women before they get pregnant can lead to a high-risk pregnancy. Some problems may occur in women even if they were healthy before getting pregnant.

Some of the factors leading to a high-risk pregnancy are:

- A woman's age: Over 35-years-old or under the age of 20²
- Have health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, blood disorders or HIV¹
- Problems in pregnancies before¹
- Being above or below your normal weight¹
- Smoking, drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs¹

Pregnancy complications that happen AFTER you get pregnant¹:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes that starts when pregnant (called gestational diabetes)
- Placenta problems (bleeding)

In some cases, high-risk pregnancies can lead to bed rest.

Be sure to work with your doctor to lower your risk; working with your doctor before you get pregnant is best.



High-Risk Pregnancy

Women with diabetes should have their blood sugar in good control for 3 to 6 months before trying to get pregnant.³

A woman whose blood sugar is not under control, has a higher chance of having a baby with birth defects.⁴ Poor control of blood sugar can also cause health problems in the mother such as high blood pressure, nerve damage, and heart disease.⁴

What can you do to try to have a healthy pregnancy?¹

- Start prenatal care appointments as soon as possible¹
- Get pre-existing conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure and get it under control¹
- Talk to your doctor about taking prenatal vitamins and folic acid¹
- Take any vaccines that your doctor recommends¹
- Ask questions about anything you don't understand³
- If the doctor puts you on bed rest understand what you can and can't do
- Try to keep a healthy weight and diet. Do not smoke, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs¹

For a healthy pregnancy focus on a healthy lifestyle. Eat healthy foods. Take prenatal vitamins, including folic acid. Exercise regularly. Avoid stress. Avoid smoking, alcohol, and illegal drugs.

If you have a chronic disease your doctor may change your care while you are pregnant. Any medicine you take during pregnancy may affect your baby. Be sure to follow your doctor's orders.⁵

References

1. National Institute of Health: National Institute of Child Health & Human Development. http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/high_risk_pregnancy.cfm
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5. Mayo Clinic. Pregnancy: When You Have a Chronic Health Condition. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/highriskpregnancy.html>

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