



Pointers For Parents-To-Be

A Healthy Baby Begins With Healthy Habits

(NAPSA)—Having a healthy baby begins with healthy habits—habits that should start well in advance of getting pregnant. And although planning for a pregnancy is not always an option, it is ideal since your baby will benefit from the steps you take NOW to improve your diet, lifestyle, and health.

“The time leading up to pregnancy, as well as the initial weeks of pregnancy, are very important to a developing baby,” said Jay Cohen, MD, F.A.C.O.G., of West Broward OB/GYN Associates in Florida. “This is a time when many women do not even know they are pregnant, and unhealthy habits may be harmful to a developing baby.”

To help ensure a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby, Dr. Cohen offers the following suggestions that couples should consider BEFORE conception:

- **Increase folic acid intake**—Research has shown that taking at least 400 mg a day of folic acid in early pregnancy reduces the incidence of neural-tube birth defects by up to 73 percent. Since many women do not know that they are pregnant during this critical time in fetal development, this may be the best reason to start taking a multivitamin with folic acid now, *before you conceive*.

- **Take a multivitamin specially formulated for pre-conception**—A prescription pre-conception/prenatal multivitamin/mineral, PreCare® Conceive™, has been specifically formulated to help ensure that you are getting the vitamins and minerals your body needs to get ready for pregnancy. PreCare® Conceive™ is the first prescription vitamin/mineral supplement that is designed to provide essential nutrients to both women and men who are planning to conceive.

- **Eat balanced meals**—Eating nutritionally leading up to and during your pregnancy is one of the most important things you can do for your baby. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables, nuts, legumes, and whole grain breads and cereals.

Also, be sure to increase your calcium intake with plenty of low-fat milk and dairy products.

- **Avoid alcohol**—Drinking alcoholic beverages during pregnancy has been linked to several serious health problems, including low birth weight, miscarriage, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

- **Visit the doctor and dentist now for a checkup**—Take



Healthy babies start before conception. Couples planning a family should talk to each other and their doctor about good eating and exercise habits, including the benefits of a multivitamin specially formulated for pre-conception.

care of any medical or dental conditions such as immunizations or cavities. Special precautions must be taken when dental work is done during pregnancy in order to ensure that the baby is not harmed. Check with your doctor and dentist for their recommendations. They may prefer that you delay dental work until later in the pregnancy or after delivery.

- **If you smoke or take drugs, get the help you need to quit**—When you are pregnant, everything that goes into your body impacts your growing baby. As a result, when you smoke or use drugs, you pass along health risks such as premature labor, breathing problems, fatal illness among infants, growth retardation, and substance withdrawal.

- **Start an exercise routine**—Pregnancy is neither a time to diet, nor to be underweight. In conjunction with your new healthy eating plan, design an exercise program that meets your needs and follow it daily. Being in shape before pregnancy can mean an easier delivery and a faster recovery. Before beginning any new exercise program, consult your doctor.

- **Check the medications you are taking**—Talk with your doctor to make sure that current medications (both prescription and over-the-counter) won't interfere with your pregnancy.

- **If you have a family history of problem pregnancies or birth defects, talk to your doctor.**

For more information about PreCare® Conceive™, ask your doctor or pharmacist, or visit www.Ther-Rx.com.