



# PRE- CONCEPTION HEALTH

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## CHECKLIST BEFORE BECOMING PREGNANT

It's important to be in a healthy mental and  
physical state before become pregnant. The  
Center for Disease Control suggests that all

women do the following every year,  
especially women trying to become  
pregnant:

- ◇ Eat healthy foods (see the “Healthy Diet” page)
- ◇ Stay active (Try to get 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week)



- ◇ Take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid daily, which will help prevent birth defects. You can either eat foods with added nutrients or take a supplement daily, which can be found at Walmart or Sisseton's local convenience store. IHS also provides prenatal vitamins and folic acid, so check with your OB/GYN at your prenatal visits.
- ◇ Maintain a healthy body mass index of about 18.5-24.9, you can calculate your BMI online using your height and weight at [this](#) website. Being either underweight or overweight can make you less likely to become pregnant and can also make your pregnancy riskier.
- ◇ Protect against sexually transmitted

infections (STIs). Practice safe sex and try to get tested regularly. If you think you have been exposed to an STI, see your OB/GYN. If you find out that you have an STI, take medicine for the full time as directed.

*Taking the time to get yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally healthy before becoming pregnant will best prepare you for taking care of yourself and your baby.*

- ◇ Avoid harmful chemicals, metals, and toxic substances around the home and workplace.

- ◇ Make sure your vaccinations are up to date.
- ◇ If you're in a situation of partner violence, talk to a doctor or counselor about ways to manage the situation. IHS has a Department of Behavioral Health with trained counselors you can talk to.
- ◇ Find healthy ways to manage your mental health and stress. Make an appointment with the IHS Department of Psychology.
- ◇ If you smoke or use substances, this is the best time to work on quitting. You can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for more help.

- ◇ Avoid street drugs and other people's prescription medications.
- ◇ Avoid and/or limit how often you drink alcohol.
- ◇ Make sure you know if you have any health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, or obesity.
- ◇ Learn about your family's health, and ask a doctor about any risks or diseases that you may be worried about passing onto your baby.
- ◇ Get regular check-ups with your doctor. The OB/GYN at the IHS facility is Dr. Peterson, and the nurse practitioner is J. Bassett. All of your pre-natal check-ups at the IHS facility are free of charge to you.

You can, however, choose to seek prenatal care at another healthcare facility if you have private insurance.

- ◇ Once you become pregnant, keep in mind where you want to deliver your child. Since the IHS doesn't offer delivery services, you should apply for Medicaid before delivery or use private insurance to cover the cost of this service. Most SWO women deliver at Coteau Hospital, and you can call 605-698-7681 to schedule an appointment here.