



You're a Busy Woman

Work

Relationships

Dreams

Health

School

You have a lot of important things going on in your life right now and a lot to plan for your future.

Maybe you want to be a mom someday....Or maybe you don't.... Or maybe you're already a mom— either way, it is important for you to make a Reproductive Life Plan.

What is a Reproductive Life Plan?

Why is it Important for You?

How to Create Your Reproductive Life Plan

What is a Reproductive Life Plan and why is it important for you?

A Reproductive Life Plan is a set of goals that you make about having or not having children (even if being a mom is years away for you). It includes how many children you want to have, and when you want to have them. It also helps you plan the spacing of your pregnancies, or prevent getting pregnant when you are not ready. Part of your Reproductive Life Plan includes goals to improve your personal health.



Most women end up having at least one baby sometime in their life, even if they don't plan on it. Once you become sexually active, you may get pregnant even if you are using birth control. One of the best things you can do to have a healthy baby is to make sure you lead a healthy life long before you get pregnant. If you wait, it could be too late to protect your baby from the effects of unhealthy habits.

If you choose to have children you should discuss your Reproductive Life Plan with your partner, and decide together how you both want to plan your family. Your Reproductive Life Plan is not set in stone and can change, but the important thing is to start thinking about it now.

**Here is a guide for you to make your Reproductive Life Plan
Read and answer the following questions**

Do you want to be a mom someday? __YES __NO __DON'T KNOW

If you answered YES:

How old do you want to be when you have your first or next baby? _____

How many kids do you want to have? _____

How far apart do you want your kids to be? _____

What is your plan to prevent pregnancies that you are not ready for?

What will you do if you end up getting pregnant when you are not ready?

If you answered NO or DON'T KNOW:

What is your plan to prevent yourself from ever getting pregnant?

What will you do if you end up getting pregnant anyway?

For more questions go to http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/173_14001.asp



Here are some other things to consider in your Reproductive Life Plan

Personal Habits



These behaviors could harm you and your future babies and it is best to avoid them. Check any of the behaviors that apply to you:

- Smoking
- Drinking or binge drinking (drinking 5 or more drinks with alcohol in one sitting)
- Using illegal drugs (marijuana, cocaine, meth, heroin etc.)
- Unhealthy dieting or overeating

For more info: www.slcosubstanceabuse.org

SL County Health Dept 468-2009 for evaluation and referral

Outside of Salt Lake County call 1-866-633-4673 or go to: www.hsdsa.utah.gov

Below are healthy habits to maintain no matter what your future plans are. Check any of the behaviors that apply to you or your partner:

- Eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Exercising regularly
- Taking a multivitamin that contains folic acid everyday
- Getting regular checkups with your doctor and dentist
- Getting enough sleep
- Using condoms to protect yourself from infection when you are sexually active
- Managing stress

For more info: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi
www.mypyramid.gov/global_nav/sitehelp.html
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/index.htm>



Health Problems

Your health will affect the health of your future babies; make sure your health problems are under control before you ever get pregnant. Do you have any of the following? Check any that apply to you:

- Diabetes
- Problems with your thyroid
- Too skinny or too heavy
- Asthma
- Mental health concerns, including depression
- Heart defect
- Blood clotting problems
- Seizures
- Medication for acne
- Exposure to chemicals
- Exposure to cat litter
- Any infections: Which one(s)? _____
- Any diseases: Which one(s)? _____
- Other _____



Note: Once you become sexually active you may want to be tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS. Some STDs can cause serious pregnancy problems.

For more info: www.4woman.gov

Your Reproductive Cycle

Ask your health care provider questions about how to have a healthy pregnancy even if you don't plan on becoming pregnant in the near future. When you are ready to have a baby, visit your provider at least 3 months before you want to get pregnant. This gives your provider a chance to make sure you are in good health before pregnancy. For the best chance for a healthy pregnancy and baby, it is recommended to wait 24 months between the birth of your last child and conception of the next.

Do you want to be pregnant now? **YES** **No**

If you answered "NO", you may want to use some type of birth control. For information on different types of birth control, go to: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/utah>

Information on low cost family planning clinics in Utah can be found at:

<http://www.health.utah.gov/rhp/familyplanning/familyplan.htm>



Do you know when in your menstrual cycle you are most likely to get pregnant?

YES **NO**

If you answered "NO", go to www.health.utah.gov/rhp and click on "Public Info". Under "Preconception/Women's Health" take the "Menstrual Cycle Knowledge Quiz".

Whether you plan to get pregnant or not, track your periods using a calendar. When you see your provider, you will probably be asked: What was the first day of your last period; was it normal for you; how long do your periods last; and do you have pain or other problems with your periods?

For more info: www.4woman.gov

Vaccines/Immunizations

Vaccines (or immunizations) help protect you from certain diseases and illnesses such as the ones mentioned below. Staying current on **your** immunizations will also help protect your baby from diseases after birth. Infants should begin their series of immunizations by two months of age and complete them by two years of age. The important thing is to make sure that your vaccines are up to date **before** you get pregnant. Some vaccines must **not** be given during pregnancy. Check with your doctor six months prior to pregnancy to find out which vaccines or boosters you may need.



Are your vaccines up to date?

Have you been vaccinated for the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tetanus (Td) | <input type="checkbox"/> Varicella (Chicken Pox) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pertussis (Tdap) | <input type="checkbox"/> Measles, Mumps, Rubella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis A | <input type="checkbox"/> Influenza (Flu) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis B | <input type="checkbox"/> HPV vaccine |

Even if you are not planning a pregnancy, as an adult you need to receive a booster dose of tetanus every ten years and yearly flu vaccine.

For more info call toll-free: 1-800-275-0659 or www.immunize-utah.org

Medications

Some medications are not safe to take during pregnancy. Always make sure your doctor knows the prescriptions or over-the-counter medications that you are taking.

What medications are you taking?

Prescriptions:

Over-the-counter drugs, supplements, or herbs:



Family Health History

Health problems can sometimes run in families. Some of the health problems mentioned below have to do with pregnancy and others have to do with general health.

Have you or anyone in your family had any of the following:

- A baby born too early (premature baby)
- A baby who weighed less than 5 ½ pounds (low birthweight baby)
- Preeclampsia/eclampsia (toxemia, high blood pressure, seizures, PIH)
- Diabetes that started during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
- Problems getting pregnant
- Two or more miscarriages
- Stillborn baby (a baby born dead)
- A baby born with birth defects. If so, what kind of defects? _____
- Depression
- Asthma
- Obesity
- Heart disease
- Heart defect
- Stroke
- Other _____



Talk with your doctor about any health problems your family members have had. Ask how you can lower your chances of having the same problems happen to you.

Your partner's health habits and family history will also affect your health and that of your child. Get as much information on this as possible.

For more info: www.modimes.org

Utah Birth Defect Network 866-818-7096 toll free or www.health.utah.gov/birthdefect

Personal Safety

Some women are abused by people who are close to them. Abuse is NEVER okay and creates an unsafe place to live. Your safety is important for your own health and any children you may have in the future. Are any of the things below happening to you?

- Is there anyone in your life who physically hurts you (for example, pushes, hits, slaps, kicks, strangles, etc)?
- Is there anyone in your life who says mean or hurtful things to you a lot?
- Is there anyone in your life who forces you to take part in any sexual activities (including touch) that make you feel uncomfortable?
- Is there anyone in your life who tries to control you or your activities?

If you answered YES to any of these questions there is help available. Please call Utah Domestic Violence Info Line.

1-800-897-LINK (5465)



Personal Development

It takes a lot of work, commitment and energy to be a mom. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you plan for your future. Think about how being a mom will affect your other goals.

Future Goals:

Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years? The next 10 years?
(Married? Single? In school? Working? Living in a home or apartment? etc...)

How much education do you want to complete? (Do you want to go to college or technical school? Where? When?)

Do you plan on having a career? (What kind of work do you want to do? Where do you want to work?)

Do you plan to be a stay-at-home mom? (How will you prepare for that?)



Emotional Health



Being able to handle stressful situations can affect your health as well as the health and safety of your future kids. Ask yourself these questions to learn more about your own emotional health.

When you feel sad do you usually bounce back quickly or do you stay sad for a long time (2 weeks or more)?

How often do you find yourself feeling overly nervous, anxious, or worried? What sort of things make you feel that way?

What do you do when you are in a stressful situation or if you feel overwhelmed?

Do you get angry easily? What types of things make you angry?

When you get angry what do you do to calm yourself down?

How do you generally treat people who are close to you?

What do you do if someone says or does something that you don't like?

Are there any areas of your emotional health that you want to improve in preparation for having kids someday? If there is anything, write your goals here:

NOTE: It is always helpful to let your doctor know how you are doing and feeling. Don't be embarrassed to talk to him or her about any problems you may be having with your emotional health.

For more info and resources: www.utah.networkofcare.org

Financial Security

Life can be very expensive and having a baby will make it even *more* expensive. It is a good idea to make a financial plan for basic needs in life whether you plan to have kids when you're older or not. Here are some things to think about in preparing for your future.

- A place to live
- Money to pay for groceries for your family
- A way to get around (car, bus, etc)
- Health, dental, and auto insurance
- Baby supplies (diapers, furniture, clothes)
- Child care for when you go out



**Future mom or not—
A Reproductive Life Plan gives you
more control in planning your future.**



This message brought to you by:

Planned Parenthood Association of Utah
University Health Care
Utah Chapter of March of Dimes
Utah Department of Health

References:

Recommendations to Improve Preconceptional Health and Health Care- United States. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. April 21, 2006/ Vol.55/No. RR-6 Preconception Health and Care, 2006. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention