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AN MOM'S GUIDE TO

# Early Pregnancy

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# Welcome to your simple, effective guide to early pregnancy.

If you've recently learned you're expecting a little one, congratulations! While this is undoubtedly an exciting time, it's completely natural to feel overwhelmed and anxious, too.

At Binto, we also believe in taking things one step at a time. We consulted our in-house medical experts (and some real pregnant women and mothers!) to narrow down the most important next steps. In the following guide, you'll find our top three tips for preparing your body, home, and family for the very early stages of pregnancy. Don't worry, mama, we've got you covered!

XX,  
Team Binto

# Preparing Your Body

## 1. TAKE A PRENATAL VITAMIN

Taking a daily prenatal is one of the most crucial things you can start doing right away after becoming pregnant – and it's as simple as finding the right prenatal for you and your growing baby.

Did you know a baby's brain and spinal cord start developing inside the womb during the first month of pregnancy? Folate, an ingredient in prenatal vitamins, is necessary for preventing infant brain and spinal cord abnormalities, like spina bifida. Therefore, consuming enough folate early in pregnancy – even though your baby might be the size of a grain of rice – is still critical.

When pregnant, you need enough nutrients for two. This is why most prenatal vitamins have larger doses of folic acid, iron, and vitamin D than multivitamins. Iron helps carry oxygen to the baby, while vitamin D works to help the fetus grow strong bones and teeth. While eating a nutritious diet is the best way to get vitamins and minerals, a prenatal acts as a form of insurance.

## THE BENEFIT OF BINTO

Our prenats are formulated everything you need, including folate, choline, DHA, iron, vitamin D3, vitamin B, and vitamin K. On top of this, our prenatal vitamin is gluten-free, vegetarian, and contains zero preservatives.

## 2. START RESEARCHING CARE PROVIDERS

Getting prenatal care from a medical professional or practice is a vital component of a healthy, safe pregnancy. During each prenatal appointment, your provider will check in on the health of both you and your baby through heart rate and blood pressure monitoring, ultrasounds, urine samples, and more. Insurance and location can be contributing factors to consider when choosing a provider. But, it's most important that you feel safe and respected.

If you have local friends, family, neighbors or coworkers who are pregnant or have given birth, here are some questions you can ask them about their provider and birth location:

- What is the name of your doctor or midwife?
- Are you delivering at home, at a birth center, or in a hospital?
- What did you like or dislike about your care team and location?

Based on what you learn, make a list of practitioners or locations to call for initial consultations.

**BINTO MOM TIP:** "I didn't feel comfortable asking for recommendations on Facebook since I hadn't told many people I was pregnant, so I sent a text to a few of my closest girlfriends who had given birth before. This immediately gave me some names and hospitals to research online - it just got the ball rolling." –TAMYRA

### 3. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DIET

When you're pregnant, the nutrients you consume get passed to your infant through the placenta – this is one of the ways you nourish them and support their growth.

Even if you're only a few weeks pregnant, your baby is growing: its mouth, eyes, spinal cord, jaw, throat, and heart (yes, its tiny little heart!) are developing at this time.

Pregnancy comes with dietary restrictions. Here are some of the big ones to remember:

- **Alcohol and smoking** could negatively influence your baby's development and cause birth defects
- **Caffeine** has been shown to possibly be related to miscarriages. Because of this, doctors recommend limiting caffeine intake to less than 200mg per day, though the safest thing to do is refrain from consuming caffeine
- **Fish with higher levels of mercury** (shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish) is advised due to mercury's linkage to infant brain damage
- **Foods that may be contaminated** or contain illness-causing bacteria should be avoided. This includes raw meat and deli meat, smoked seafood, raw shellfish (like oysters, clams, and mussels), and unwashed vegetables. You should also avoid raw eggs – so ask before eating homemade caesar dressing, mayonnaise, and custards.

# Preparing Your Home

## 1. TAKE CARE OF ANY MAINTENANCE

Putting off buying a new washer and dryer for months? Need that loose window screen replaced? Now is the time to do it. When you're further along in your pregnancy, your to-do list will be filled to the brim with baby-related tasks, like signing up for a breastfeeding class and decorating the nursery.

When you're adjusting to life with a newborn, the last thing you're going to want to deal with is a malfunctioning appliance, replacing a hard-to-reach lightbulb, or coordinating an ideal time for a handyman to stop by the house. Plus, instead of being annoyed with or distracted by a disorganized attic or basement, you'll be able to completely focus on your child.

Set aside an hour this week to tackle or create a plan for those to-do list items. If you want, go ahead and block off this time on your calendar.

**BINTO MOM TIP:** "As soon as I found out I was pregnant, I knew it was time to do some of those non-urgent but important tasks, like deep cleaning the carpet and getting our homeowners insurance renewed." –JAMIE

## 2. CONSIDER YOUR SPACE

While many parents choose to have their newborn sleep in their bedroom during the first few months, it's not a bad idea to start visualizing a dedicated room for the baby. Would certain rooms in your home make an ideal nursery, perhaps a guest bedroom, sunroom, game room, or office? Is there a room that's quieter and further away from street noise? What rooms are closest to your bedroom - perhaps not up or down a flight of stairs - so you can easily move back and forth between them?

Now, we're not advising that you go and redesign the layout of your home. Again, it's about taking things one step at a time - even if that first step is just thinking about your space. Perhaps you'll realize that you need to switch a few rooms around or sell some furniture.

It's less overwhelming to start these processes now than when you're eight months pregnant or have a newborn at home. When you have a moment, perhaps before falling asleep, exercising, or waiting in traffic, here are some questions to think about:

- Where are a few places in your home for a nursery?
- What are the pros and cons of each?
- Where would the current items in those spaces go in order to make room for nursery items?

## 2. EXPERIMENT WITH GREEN CLEANING

A 2013 study published in the International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health found that women who worked as janitors or cleaners, were, on average, more likely to have children with birth defects. What's the possible common factor? Toxins and chemicals. While it's impossible to completely avoid coming into contact with toxins, you can still reduce exposure.

First, don't freak out. There's no need to overhaul your entire cabinet of cleaning supplies. Keep things easy and attainable. Next time you run out of product, replace it with a clean or natural alternative. We often turn to the Environmental Working Group (EWG) online database where you can look up cleaning products and learn their health rating.

Keep an eye out for certain culprits; many oven cleaning products include glycol ethers, which have been linked to miscarriage and birth defects. Glycol ethers are normally listed as "2-butoxyethanol (EGBE)" or "methoxydiglycol (DEGME)" on the ingredients list.

Phthalates are another type of chemical commonly used in many fragranced products like laundry detergents and air fresheners. Some studies show exposure to phthalates during pregnancy could lead to abnormal genital and behavioral development in children, an increased risk of allergic disease, and increased airway inflammation.

**WORK WITH WHAT YOU HAVE:** Want to stick to your staple Pine Sol and Febreze? No judgement! Just open a window or turn on the oven vent. Cleaning in well-ventilated spaces will help "air out" your space and prevent you from inhaling potentially dangerous chemicals.



# Preparing Your Loved Ones

## 1. THINK ABOUT HOW TO INVOLVE SIBLINGS

If you already have a child, put some extra care and thought into involving them in your pregnancy. Whether it's getting their input on baby names or letting them tag along to a prenatal appointment, these small gestures will help them feel enthusiastic about becoming a big brother or sister and like they're a valued part of the family.

We also recommend planning some solo time with each of your kids during your pregnancy, even if it's just a trip to the ice cream store or some extra cuddles before bed. It's natural for young children to feel a little nervous or jealous of their sibling in the womb. Giving them some extra love and attention sends the message that they'll always have your heart.

**MAKE A PLAN:** Early in your pregnancy is a great time to get organized. Talk with your partner or take some time on your own to brainstorm three ways you can get your other child or children involved in your pregnancy and make them feel special. Put down some potential dates on your calendar so you don't forget once you get busier with Operation: Baby.

## 2. BE UPFRONT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

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**BINTO MOM TIP:** "When I was feeling pressure or judged during pregnancy, I just politely said, 'Thanks for sharing your opinion. Your support and care mean so much to me, but I'm going to decide what is right for me and my baby. As soon as I need it, I will absolutely ask you for advice.' It was always well-received - I think because it was a good balance of grateful and firm." –SHELZA

### 3. JUST BE A PARTNER, NOT A PARENT

Pregnancy is a time to celebrate new beginnings, but it's also a time to commemorate the ending of an era - perhaps your time as a family of two, three, or four is coming to a close. Similar to making time for the kids, don't forget about your partner. With all the sudden focus on your belly and a new baby, it's easy to forget about intimacy (the very energy that perhaps resulted in the pregnancy!) and your original role as their partner. As clinical sexologist Dr. Kelly Johnson recently told us, "Good parents are bonded parents."

The next time you see your partner, give them a hug, look them in the eye, and ask them about their day. Really listen to their answer and follow up with a few open-ended questions. Stay focused on your partner the entire time, without checking your phone or engaging in another activity. Scheduling a date night, giving each other a massage, having sex, or having a conversation in the car are ways to facilitate this type of connection too.



# The best care for you and your baby.

By keeping these tips in mind, you're on your way to preparing your body, mind, and family for the earliest stages of pregnancy. Sure, we could write a novel about green cleaning products, circumcision, and everything in between – but sometimes it's best to start with just a few basics!

Staying calm and focused will ensure you're physically and emotionally prepared to withstand and enjoy the journey ahead. From products to information, BINTO is right here with you on this pregnancy journey, every step of the way.

**SOURCES:** This e-book was written by English Taylor. A women's health freelance writer and editor, English went to the University of Virginia undergrad and Northwestern for graduate school. She currently lives in the Bay Area but hails from Nashville.