

# Your Health – Now and in the Future

Many women of reproductive age are in good health. But some are at risk for long-term health problems. Did you know that one in four New York City women is obese? And one in ten smokes? Some younger women already have chronic health conditions, like asthma, diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure.

Women in this age group are also deciding whether to have children. Your health **before** and **during** pregnancy is very important – and can affect your long-term health and your baby’s health. For example, women who are obese or have chronic conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure are more likely to have complications during pregnancy, such as:

- **preeclampsia** (high blood pressure during pregnancy, sometimes causing seizures)
- **gestational diabetes** (diabetes during pregnancy)
- **preterm birth** (before 37 weeks)
- **an unplanned cesarean delivery** (C-section)
- **a low birthweight baby** (less than 5.5 pounds)

Some complications during pregnancy can increase your chances of developing a long-term health condition. In fact, one out of two women who has gestational diabetes will develop diabetes later in life. Women with high blood pressure during pregnancy have twice the risk of heart disease in the future.



# What Can I Do to Be Healthy?

- Talk to your health care provider about:
  - Managing ongoing health problems
  - Whether you need to be tested for high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, HIV and cervical cancer (Pap test)
  - Birth control options if you want to prevent pregnancy. Choose a method that's best for you – so that you become pregnant when you want to be pregnant. Visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search birth control.
  - Getting a preconception health check-up before you become pregnant. Visit [womenshealth.gov](http://womenshealth.gov) and search preconception health.
  - Updating your immunizations – especially varicella, rubella, measles and hepatitis B
  - Any medications, herbal remedies and other over-the-counter products you may be taking, especially if you are planning a pregnancy soon
- Stop smoking. For help quitting, visit [nyc.gov/nycquits](http://nyc.gov/nycquits).
- Get moving. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as a brisk walk) at least five days a week. Visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search physical activity.
- Eat well and maintain a healthy weight. If you recently delivered a baby, try to get back to your pre-pregnancy weight within that first year. Visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search eating well.
- Break any dependence on alcohol and drugs. For help, speak with your health care provider or call **311**.
- Take care of your mental and emotional health so that you can thrive. For help, speak with your health care provider or call **311**.
- Get help if you're at risk of domestic violence. Call **311** or **800-621-HOPE**. If you're in immediate danger, call **911**.

