



Getting  
**healthy** before  
pregnancy

I want to *read* this my self

*I want to listen in English*

I want to *listen* in East side Kriol

# What is preconception health?

“Preconception health” is getting healthy before you get pregnant or start a family. It is important for men and women. You need a healthy body, to make a healthy baby.

Your health now affects:

- Your chances of getting pregnant
- The health of you and your unborn baby
- Your future children's health

An illustration of a pregnant woman with long, dark, curly hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and grey pants. She is sitting on the ground, reading an open book. In her right hand, she holds a red apple with a green leaf. The background is a warm, orange and yellow gradient, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

Your health  
matters  
now!



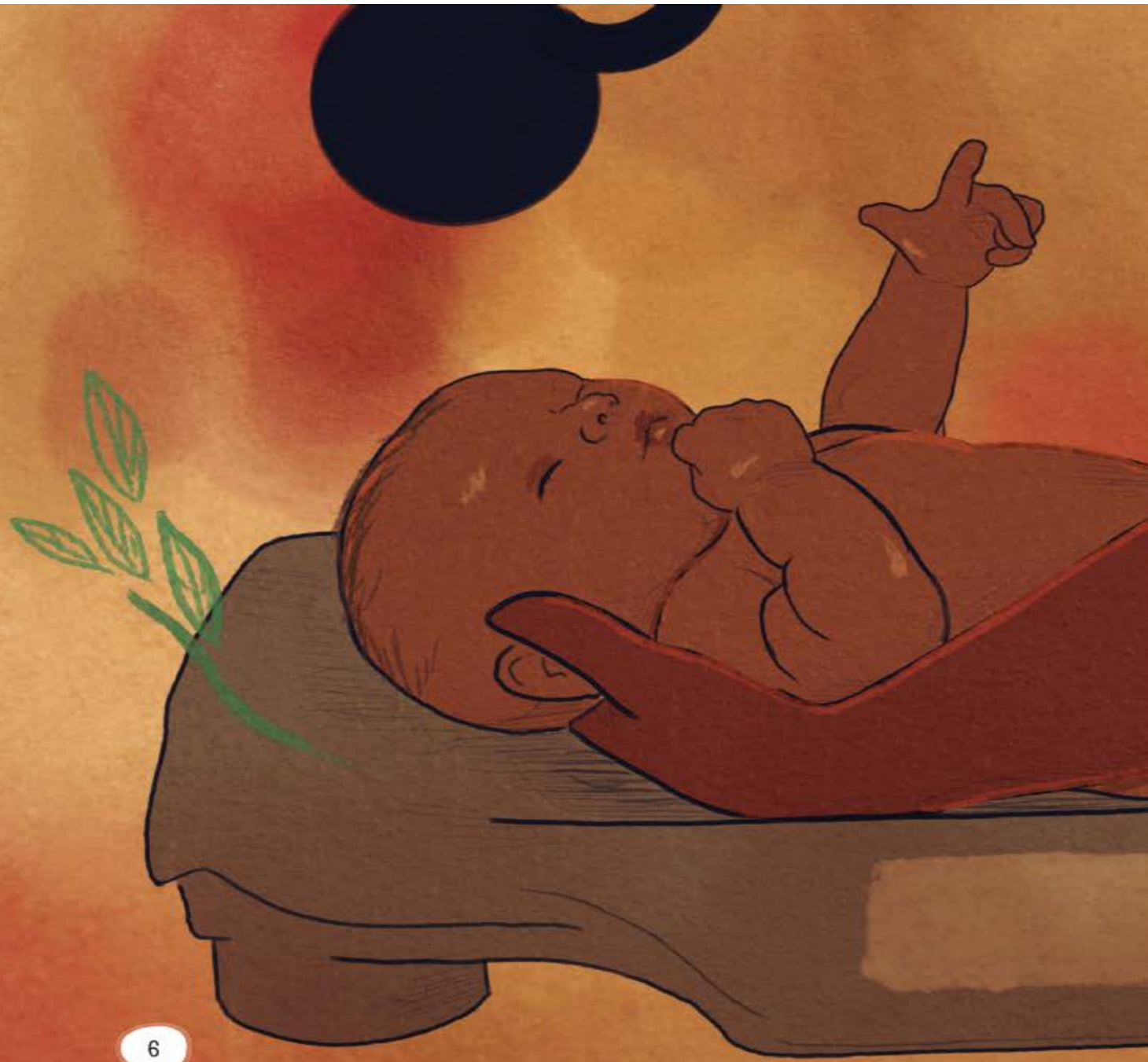
# What impacts your preconception health?

- Food
- Lifestyle
- Environment
- Chronic conditions

Why is food important before  
and during pregnancy?



- Everything you eat and drink will affect how your Baby grows
- Eating healthy foods will help you feel stronger and will provide energy and nutrients to help your Baby grow and develop
- You need to a healthy weight for Baby to grow well and be a healthy size



# How can I make sure I'm eating healthy?

- Eat healthy foods and snacks throughout the day, especially foods high in folate and iron such as dark leafy greens, red meat and fish
- Have fruit and vegetables everyday
- Eat more bush foods
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid alcohol
- Less soft-drink, juice and sport drinks
- Avoid salty, fatty, sugary snacks such as crisps, cakes and lollies





An illustration on a textured, light brown background. A dark brown hand is shown holding a long, thin, orange-brown cinnamon stick. The hand is positioned in the center-left, with the thumb and index finger gripping the stick. To the left of the hand, there are two large, dark brown, circular shapes connected by a wavy black line, resembling a stylized figure or a decorative element. Several green leaves are scattered around the scene, some near the top and some near the bottom. The overall style is simple and illustrative.

How can being an unhealthy weight affect my pregnancy?

- Being overweight or underweight can change hormone levels, affects the quality of eggs and sperm, and can reduce your chance of getting pregnant.
- Gaining too much weight when you are pregnant can cause problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, birth complications and increases your risk of having a large baby – which can be harmful to both mum and Baby.
- If you are overweight during pregnancy, your Baby is more likely to have diabetes, obesity and heart disease during childhood and even adulthood.
- If you do not gain enough weight during pregnancy, your Baby may not grow well and have birth complications.

What lifestyle behaviours are important for a healthy pregnancy?



Certain lifestyle behaviours are important for a healthier pregnancy. These include:

- Be more active
- Less alcohol
- Quitting smoking
- Stopping recreational drug use
- Getting tested for sex infections (STI's)

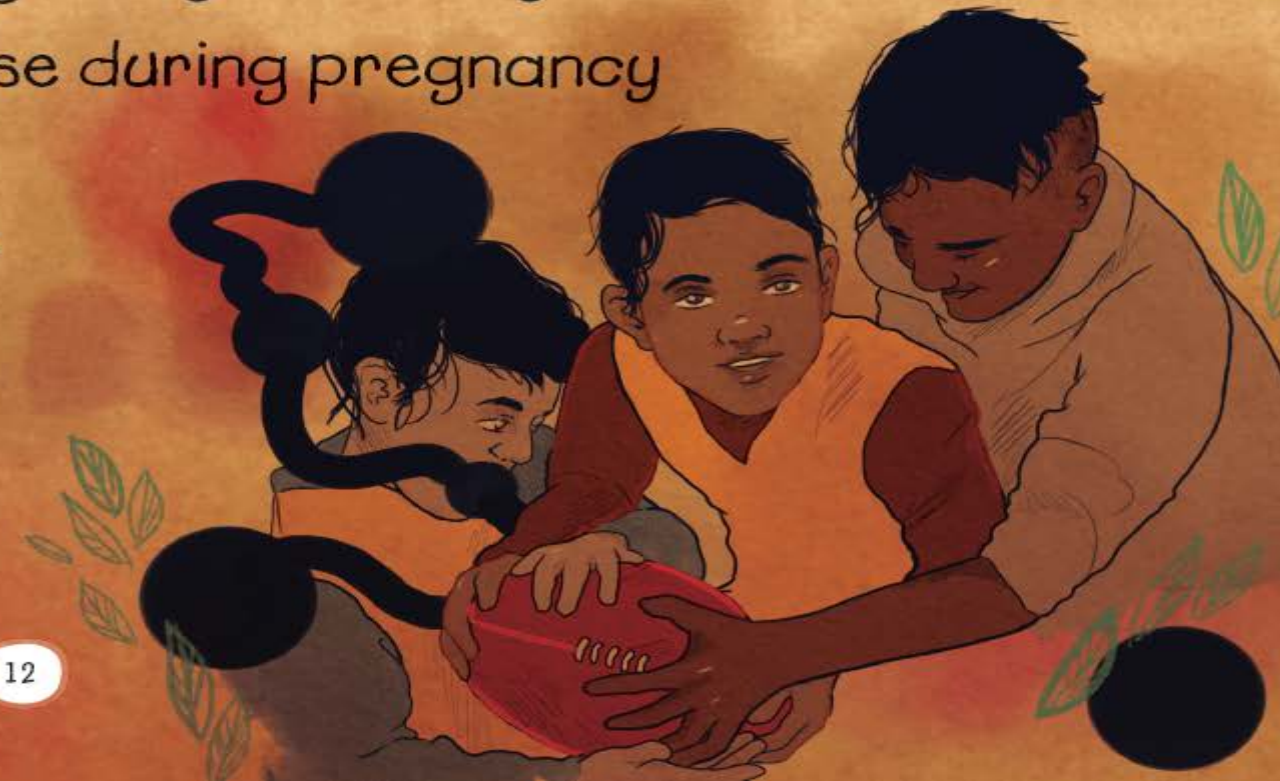
Lifestyle behaviours affect everyone's ability to get pregnant and the health of the pregnancy.

# Why being active is important before and during pregnancy?

Regular exercise helps you to maintain a healthy weight. A healthy weight can help you get pregnant and improve your chances of a healthy pregnancy and baby.

Some of the benefits of exercise during pregnancy include:

- Makes your bones stronger
- Increases your energy
- Helps you sleep better
- Decrease worry & stress



# Alcohol before and during pregnancy

- Drinking alcohol can reduce both men's and women's chances of getting pregnant
- Heavy drinking increases the time it takes to get pregnant and reduces the chances of a having a healthy baby
- No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy
- When you are pregnant, alcohol goes directly into your baby's bloodstream and can cause fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). FASD can hurt your baby's growth and your baby may have physical, behavioural and learning problems that can last for the rest of his or her life.

No amount  
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# How smoking affects your pregnancy





- There is no safe limit for smoking, the only way to protect yourself and your unborn baby from harm is to quit.
- Cigarettes are full of chemicals that are harmful to your body
- If you smoke while you are pregnant, you and your baby are at risk of a wide range of serious health problems. Your baby could be born too early, have a birth defect, have weak lungs, or sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- The more cigarettes you smoke during your pregnancy, the greater risk.
- Stopping smoking completely as early as possible during pregnancy is best for your health and the health of your baby.

Giving up smoking can be hard,  
so ask your friends and family  
to help, talk to your doctor or  
Aboriginal Health Worker  
or contact the Quitline on  
13 78 48 for help and advice.



# Recreational drug use and pregnancy



# Recreational drug use and pregnancy

- Most drugs will travel directly into your baby's blood stream.
- Recreational drugs should not be used during pregnancy because many can harm your baby, and may cause miscarriage.
- If you are recreationally using drugs, and you find out you are pregnant there are things you can do to improve your chances of a healthy pregnancy.
- It may be dangerous for your baby if you suddenly stop taking certain drugs. It is important not to stop taking drugs without help from a doctor.
- Talk to your doctor or Aboriginal Health Worker about the drugs you are taking, even if you are not sure what they are.



# How can sex infections affect my pregnancy



- Sex infections (STI's) can affect your chances of getting pregnant.
- Some STI's can pass from mother to Baby during pregnancy
- Having an STI during pregnancy may make your unborn baby very sick, cause your baby to be born too early, or cause you to get an infection in the womb after birth.
- Effects of an STI on your baby include infections, blindness, deafness, liver problems, brain damage and chronic liver disease.

If you're sexually active, you need to get an STI test at least once every 12 months. If you think have an STI, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor or Aboriginal Health Worker about having a check-up, even if you do not have any signs or symptoms of an STI.

# Chronic disease and pregnancy



- Chronic diseases are long lasting conditions, that can usually be controlled but not cured.
- Factors such as smoking, heavy drinking, poor nutrition and not being active increase your risk of chronic disease.
- Big problem chronic diseases are heart diseases, liver diseases, lower respiratory (lung) diseases, kidney diseases, cancer and diabetes.
- Women with chronic diseases can have a healthy baby but there are extra risks during pregnancy for your health and your baby.
- If you have a chronic disease and think you might be pregnant, see your doctor or Aboriginal Health Worker about getting it under control.



“Strong healthy families  
make Strong healthy Bubs”



# Acknowledgments:



The authors would like to acknowledge that most of the written content in this flip chart draws on the ideas and experiences of the youth working group.

The authors would also like to acknowledge the time commitment and generosity of the Menzies School of Health Research DIABETES across the LIFECOURSE Northern Australia Partnership Indigenous Reference Group, with a special thank you to members Sian Graham, Sumaria Corpus, Kathy Coultard, EYvette Hawthorn, Adelinesje Goodrem and Denella Hampton for sharing their knowledge and ideas in refining the written content.

Finally, thank you to the Menzies HealthLAB Program project who shared existing health messages from on-going health programs and provided continuing advice on effective health education and youth engagement, and the HealthLAB team for their hard work, commitment, and invaluable contributions to this project.

Illustrations created throughout by digital artist Charlotte Allingham, a young Wiradjuri woman living in inner Naarm (Melbourne). Graphic Design by Campaign Edge Sprout.

This resource was made possible through funds provided by the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority, *Your Fertility* program. VARTA is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Health in delivering the *Your Fertility* program.