



Preparing for Pregnancy

A Preconception Workbook

Hello Beautiful Momma!

Welcome to your preconception journey. I believe you came across this workbook for a reason. You may have just been looking for some information about choosing a prenatal vitamin or tracking your cycles, but you have found so much more. This workbook contains my BODY, MIND, HEART approach for preparing to conceive. I believe pregnancy isn't just about growing a baby. Pregnancy is a journey of nourishing souls, both our own and our child's. We do so not just with our bodies, but with our heart and mind as well.

In my BODY, MIND, HEART approach for preparing to conceive, I walk you through the transformation of the whole self. There is a greater, more fulfilled you on the horizon, and that transformation starts now.

xoxo,

Dr Sterling

The Educate, Evaluate, Evolve Framework

EDUCATE

First, I provide the exact knowledge you need to understand the hows, whys and whats of preparing to conceive.

EVALUATE

Next, I guide you through a self-evaluation. Once we know where you are, we can get you where you want to be.

EVOLVE

Finally, we combine what we've learned in the EDUCATE and EVALUATE modules, and use it to EVOLVE.

There is incredible momentum for change as we prepare to conceive. We are going to take that momentum and transform. Our bodies become a nourishing environment, our mind a tranquil home, and our relationships a robust and strong foundation for a growing child and mother.

Preparing for Pregnancy

B O D Y

How To Track Your Cycles

Step One: Record the first day of your period. This is Day 1 of your cycle. Note: This should be the first day of true menstrual flow. Some women have light spotting the day before their period begins, but this does not count.

Step Two: The following month you will again record the first day of your period.

Step Three: If you count backwards by 14 days from Day 1 you will arrive at the day you ovulated. While cycles vary in length (normal range 21-35 days*) the interval between ovulation and your next period is relatively stable. The variation in cycle lengths is mostly in the time between Day 1 of your cycle and the day you ovulate.

Not all women have a predictable cycle length- some months it's 28 days, others it's 32. This is not considered abnormal. It does, however, mean you will have to be more generous with your fertile window. This is explained on the next page.

*If you have periods more frequently than every 21 days or further apart than every 35 days, this should be addressed with your ObGyn

The Fertile Window

This is the time in your cycle in which conception is possible. It is defined as the 5 days leading up to and the day of ovulation (5 days before you ovulate and the day you ovulate.) If your cycle varies in length, you will have to assume a longer fertile window. For example, if your cycle is every 28-32 days, your ovulation occurs around Day 14-18 of your cycle. In order to capture your ovulation, you will need to assume an 8 day fertile window (Day 10-Day 18).

Timed Intercourse

There are several ways to time intercourse for conception. The most intensive (or pleasurable, depending on how you look at it ;) is to have intercourse everyday of your fertile window. The middle road is to have sex every other day. There is some information out there that every other day is preferable due to sperm counts being lower when you have sex daily- ignore this, it is not supported by the data. If you want to have the most efficient timing, perhaps you are short on time or it's painful (talk to your ObGyn about this!), intercourse the day before ovulation and the day of ovulation are most important. The fertile window is 5 days because sperm can live in the female reproductive tract for that long waiting for an egg. However, the ideal scenario is that the sperm arrive at the same time or slightly before the egg. Your egg has a much shorter life of just 24 hours.

Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thr	Fri	Sat

Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thr	Fri	Sat

Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thr	Fri	Sat

Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thr	Fri	Sat

Visting your ObGyn

Prior to pregnancy, a preconception visit with your ObGyn is recommended. At this visit your doctor will review your medical history and evaluate your overall health. You should know the answers to the following questions before your appointment:

1. Do you have any current or past medical problems such as asthma, diabetes, or depression?

2. Have you had any surgeries in the past such as a cesarean or breast augmentation?

3. Any history of oral surgeries or other procedures? Have you had issues with excessive bleeding from procedures in the past?

4. First day of your last menstrual period? _____

How frequently do you have periods? _____

How long do your periods last? _____

5. When was your last pap smear and what was the result?

6. Any history of sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia?

7. Any family history (for you or partner) of genetic disorders, birth defects, mental disorders, breast, colon, uterine or ovarian cancer?

8. Any other medical problems that run in your family or in your partner's family?

Pregnancy History

It is important for your doctor to know how many weeks you were when you delivered, had a miscarriage or pregnancy termination. Your Ob will also want to know of pregnancy and delivery complications such as gestational diabetes or a postpartum hemorrhage.

Date	Weeks	Type of delivery	Complications/Outcome

Medication and Supplement List

Name of medication	Dose	Reason for taking

Questions for your ObGyn

Bring this questionnaire to your appointment so that you, or better yet your partner or a friend, can take down notes about what your doctor wants you to do. No more leaving the doctor's office totally confused about your next steps!

1. Do I need any further testing to ensure my health is optimized for pregnancy?

2. Are the medications I am currently taking safe in pregnancy?

3. Would you recommend I either gain or lose weight before attempting pregnancy ? How much?

4. Would I benefit from a referral to a specialist prior to trying to conceive?

5. Do I need to see a Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist for a preconception consultation?

6. What genetic carrier testing is available to me? Would you recommend I see a genetic counselor before getting pregnant?

7. What dose of folic acid should I be taking?

The Perfect Prenatal Vitamin

Below is a table with the recommended daily intake of nutrients for pregnancy. These daily allowances can be met through a combination of diet and supplementation with a prenatal vitamin. The most important component of the prenatal vitamin is the folic acid (folate). The dose listed below is for AVERAGE risk women and your ObGyn may recommend you take more (4,000 mcg compared to 400-600 mcg) if you are in a higher risk category.

Nutrients	Recommended Daily Allowance
Vitamin A	770 mcg
Vitamin D	600 IU
Vitamin E	15 mg
Vitamin K	90 mcg
Vitamin C	85 mg
Thiamin	1.4 mg
Riboflavin	1.4 mg
Niacin	18 mg
Vitamin B6	1.9 mg
Folate	600 mcg
Vitamin B12	2.6 mcg
Calcium	1000 mg
Phosphorus	700 mg
Iron	27 mg
Zinc	11 mg
Iodine	220 mcg
Selenium	60 mcg

Evaluating Nutrition

Beyond your prenatal vitamin, there are ways to optimize your diet for pregnancy. Answer the questions below to identify areas for improvement. For more information click on the apple above!

1. Are there any processed foods (soda, fast-food, pre-made meals) you can eliminate from your diet?

2. Are there places you can switch out animal-based fats for plant-based? (olive oil for butter is a great example)

3. Where can you add more vegetables, fruits and fermented foods to your diet?

Evaluating Body Image

Scientific research is catching up with what many doctors and healers have long known- positive thoughts about our body help us heal and lead to better health.

1. Do you have negative thoughts about your body?

2. How often are you experiencing these thoughts?

3. Are there any recurring negative thoughts? What are they?

4. Do you want to work on your body image? -----

Body Love Ritual

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Starting at your head, go through all your parts: eyes, ears, nose, hands, legs, etc. As you go part by part, do the following:

1. Express your gratitude for what that body part does for you. For your eyes, you may say, “Thank you, eyes, for allowing me to see my beautiful son.”
2. Tell that part of your body that you love it. “I love you eyes.”

When you get through all your body parts, you will see that if you can love all the parts of your body, then you can love your whole self and your whole body.

Evaluating Exercise

Weekly exercise goal= 5 times a week for 30 minutes at time or 150 min of exercise per week. For more information about exercising in pregnancy, click on the dumbbell above.

1. How many minutes per week do you exercise?

2. Do you do both cardio and strength training?

3. Do you stretch?

4. What exercise activities do you enjoy?

5. If you aren't meeting your exercise goals, is there an activity you enjoy that you can do at least once a week to move you closer to the goal?

Evaluating Sleep

Sleep is incredibly important for our physical and emotional health. The goal is 7-8 hrs of sleep at night. For healthy sleeping tips, click the moon above.

1. How many hours of sleep do you usually get?

2. How long does it take you to fall asleep? (Ideal is 15-20 min)

3. Do you disconnect from devices and screens for 1 hr prior to bed?

4. Do you have a bedtime routine? What is it?

5. Do you ever have trouble falling or staying asleep?

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M I N D

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Evaluating Thoughts

Our thoughts are an important component of our mental health and wellbeing. Use the following questions to get insight into your inner world.

1. Do you have negative thoughts about yourself or your life?

2. How often are you having these thoughts? (Throughout the day, once a day, a few times a week?)

3. Do you have any recurring negative thoughts? What are they?

4. Do you believe these thoughts?

Evaluating Emotions

Our emotions are an important component of our mental health and wellbeing. Use the following questions to get insight into your inner world.

1. Are there times that you feel overwhelmed by emotion?

2. How often are you feeling overwhelmed by unpleasant emotions?

3. Do you do or say things you later regret in response to your emotions? In what situations does this happen?

4. Do you wish you had greater ability to control or process your emotions?

Evolving Emotions: The 3Cs of Cultivating Calm

In the face of overwhelming emotions

CALM Body: cleansing breath, release tension

CENTER Mind: Bring yourself into the present, statements of fact (I am safe, I am in my home), ground yourself in gratitude

CONNECT Heart: Reach out to a loved one and tell them how you are feeling or thank them for being in your life

The PHQ-9 Depression Screening Tool

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?
(use "✓" to indicate your answer)

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite — being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself	0	1	2	3

add columns + +

(Healthcare professional: For interpretation of TOTAL, please refer to accompanying scoring card). TOTAL:

10. If you checked off <i>any problems</i> , how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?	Not difficult at all	<input type="text"/>
	Somewhat difficult	<input type="text"/>
	Very difficult	<input type="text"/>
	Extremely difficult	<input type="text"/>

The GAD-7 Anxiety Screening Tool

GAD-7

Over the <u>last 2 weeks</u> , how often have you been bothered by the following problems?	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Worrying too much about different things	0	1	2	3
4. Trouble relaxing	0	1	2	3
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still	0	1	2	3
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	0	1	2	3
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	0	1	2	3

Total Score _____ = Add Columns _____ + _____ + _____

If you checked off any problems, how difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not difficult
at all

Somewhat
difficult

Very
difficult

Extremely
difficult

Scoring the PHQ-9

Scoring: add up all checked boxes on PHQ-9

For every ✓ Not at all = 0; Several days = 1;
More than half the days = 2; Nearly every day = 3

Interpretation of Total Score

Total Score	Depression Severity
1-4	Minimal depression
5-9	Mild depression
10-14	Moderate depression
15-19	Moderately severe depression
20-27	Severe depression

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A2662B 10-04-2005

Scoring the GAD-

7

Total Score	Interpretation
≥10	Probable diagnosis of GAD; confirm by further evaluation
5	Mild anxiety
10	Moderate anxiety
15	Severe anxiety

Spitzer RL, Kroenke K, Williams JB, Lowe B. A brief measure for assessing generalized anxiety disorder: the GAD-7. Arch Intern Med. 2006; 166:1092-1097.

If you score above 5 on the PHQ-9 or GAD-7 this needs to be addressed with your primary care doctor or a mental health professional

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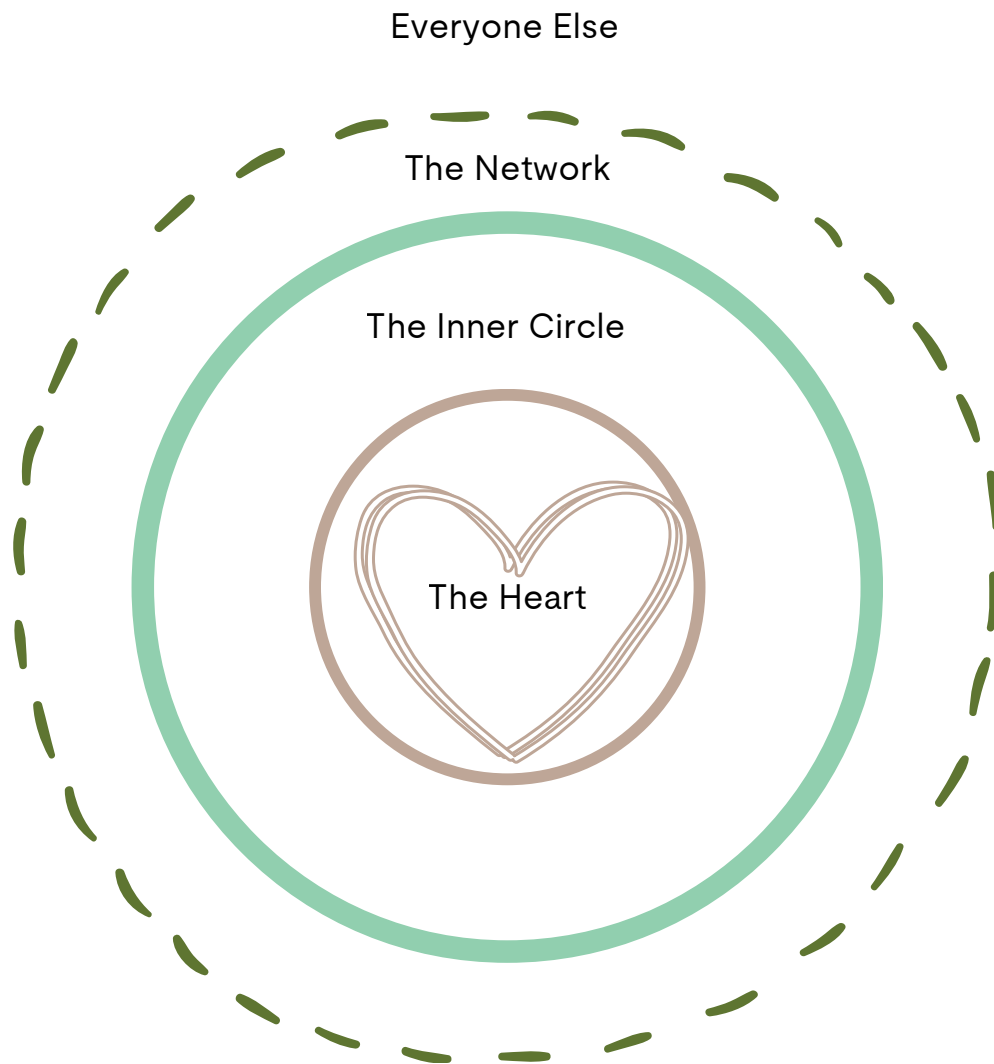
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H E A R T

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Social Circles Exercise

We are social creatures. We cannot talk about our well-being without acknowledging the importance of our relationships with others. As we prepare for the drastic life change that pregnancy brings, we must evaluate the health of our social circles.



Social Circles Exercise

THE HEART: The people with whom you can be most vulnerable without fear of judgement

Who is in THE HEART?

THE INNER CIRCLE: Your closest friends and family who bring positivity into your life

Who is in THE INNER CIRCLE?

THE NETWORK: Friends, family and colleagues who you enjoy and bring positivity into your life

Who is in THE NETWORK?

Evaluating Your Primary Relationship

As we prepare to become parents with our partner, it is important to evaluate the health of our relationship. Pregnancy and having a child can be stressful for our relationships. Use the following questions to get insight into your primary relationship.

1. How is your relationship?

2. How could it be better?

3. What could you do to be an exceptional partner?

4. Is there anything you need from your relationship that you aren't getting?

5. Have you ever considered couples therapy?

Even couples in healthy and happy relationships can benefit from couples therapy, especially before starting the journey to become parents or adding more children to their family. If you would like help finding a qualified therapist click the family icon below.



Best Wishes

for a healthy and happy
pregnancy

Love,

Dr. Sterling