



PRESS RELEASE

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Holy Redeemer obstetrician offers tips to help prepare for pregnancy

(MEADOWBROOK, PA) – For women thinking about having a baby, experts say that they should be in the best possible physical condition to be a mom. But that isn't the case for many moms-to-be; and as a result, there are a number of babies being born prematurely or with birth defects.

Dr. Stuart Dershaw, chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center, advises women to address any health concerns before having a baby.

“Careful planning and monitoring of chronic health conditions will help ensure a healthy pregnancy,” says Dr. Dershaw. “Scheduling a pre-pregnancy checkup with your doctor is a crucial step in making your pregnancy safe. The purpose of the checkup is to discuss your health and the possible risks you face when you are trying to conceive.”

The following recommendations during the pre-pregnancy checkup are not only for first-time moms, but also for women who have been pregnant before.

- Discuss family history and personal health. Conditions such as asthma, high blood pressure, diabetes or a thyroid disorder could affect a pregnancy. Also talk about current medications; this includes some treatments for acne and epilepsy.
- Review weight, including a discussion on dietary recommendations and restrictions. Women who are obese have a higher risk for preterm delivery, gestational diabetes and cesarean sections.
- Discuss vaccination status and follow through with any necessary updates.
- Talk about behaviors (including partners) that may affect the chances of becoming pregnant. This includes smoking or drinking alcohol. For moms-to-be, excessive exercising could affect fertility.

Dr. Dershaw also recommends that women preparing for pregnancy take a supplement to ensure that they are getting 400 micrograms of folic acid each day. This nutrient has been proven to reduce the risk for birth defects. It's also advisable to see a dentist, as oral

health is connected to overall health. Dental checkups can help reduce the risk for premature delivery and low-birth weight babies.

Delivering about 3,000 babies each year, the Maternity Center at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center helps moms prepare for a healthy pregnancy and guides them through labor and delivery. We offer a highly trained, experienced staff of maternity specialists including board-certified obstetricians, anesthesiologists, maternal-fetal medicine specialists, pediatricians, neonatologists and maternal/newborn nurses. If needed, Holy Redeemer provides on-site perinatology, antenatal testing and neonatal intensive care units. And moms can sign up for an array of classes on pregnancy, childbirth preparation and infant care, as well as consult with a lactation specialist for assistance with breastfeeding. For more information or to make an appointment with a Holy Redeemer obstetrician, call 1-800-818-4747 or visit www.yourebeautifulbaby.com.

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