



PRE-PREGNANCY CHECKLIST FOR WOMEN WITH EXISTING CARDIOVASCULAR-RELATED CONDITIONS

If you are thinking of becoming pregnant and have an existing cardiovascular -related condition or history of heart-related events, you should have a conversation with your health care professional before getting pregnant to help keep you and your baby healthy during pregnancy.

Here are some conversation starters to take with you to your next appointment with your health care professional.

IF YOU HAVE:

A general preexisting cardiovascular-related condition

- What are my risk factors that I need to be aware of before becoming pregnant?
- Am I healthy enough to become pregnant?
- How will my care or delivery differ based on my condition?
- Will I need to see any specialists? If so, how will you and the specialists coordinate my care?
- Will I be able to carry my baby for the duration of the pregnancy. Is there a chance I may have to deliver early?
- Will my medications need to change if I become pregnant, or even before pregnancy?
- What else should I know before I become pregnant?

A congenital heart defect

- How does my CHD impact my ability to get pregnant and/or carry a pregnancy to term?
- How does my CHD impact my health or risk during pregnancy? How does it impact my baby's health?
- Is it safe for me to get pregnant with my CHD?
- How will my care be coordinated with my cardiologist?
- Will my medications need to change if I become pregnant, or even before pregnancy? What medications are safe to take if I become pregnant?
- Is my baby at a higher risk of developing a CHD?

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High blood pressure

- How does high blood pressure impact my health? How could it impact my baby's health?
- Is it safe for me to get pregnant with my current blood pressure?
- What additional risks or complications could my high blood pressure cause?
- What should my numbers be before I get pregnant? What do you recommend I do to help manage my blood pressure?
- What blood pressure medications are safe to take if I become pregnant?
- What if I have cravings for salty foods?

Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes

- How does diabetes impact my health? How could it impact my baby's health?
- Is it safe for me to get pregnant with my diabetes?
- What additional risks or complications could my diabetes cause?
- What should my A1C reading be before I get pregnant? How can I best reach that?
- Are my medications safe to take if I become pregnant?
- How will my insulin needs change during pregnancy?
- What are some things I can do to control my diabetes prior to getting pregnant?
- What if I have cravings for sweets?

IF YOU HAVE HAD:

A heart attack or cardiac arrest

- Could pregnancy lead to another heart attack or cardiac arrest?
- Is it safe for me to get pregnant?
- What additional risks or complications could my history of (heart attack/cardiac arrest) cause?
- What can I do to prevent another (heart attack/cardiac arrest)?
- If I get pregnant, how will I be monitored?
- How will my care be coordinated with my cardiologist?
- What medications are safe to take if I become pregnant?
- Will my medications need to change if I become pregnant, or even before pregnancy?
- How can I tell what symptoms are normal in pregnancy and which could be a heart problem?

A stroke

- Could pregnancy lead to another stroke?
- Is it safe for me to get pregnant?
- What additional risks or complications could my history of stroke cause?
- What can I do to prevent another stroke?
- If I get pregnant, how will I be monitored?
- How will my care be coordinated with my neurologist and/or cardiologist?
- What medications are safe to take if I become pregnant?

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Heart failure (cardiomyopathy, peripartum cardiomyopathy)

- Could pregnancy make my condition worse or lead to other complications?
- Is it safe for me to get pregnant?
- What additional risks or complications could my history of heart failure cause?
- If I get pregnant, how will I be monitored?
- What medications are safe to take if I become pregnant?
- How can I tell what symptoms are normal in pregnancy and which could be a heart problem?

Depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions

- How does (depression/anxiety/stress) impact my health? How could it impact my baby's health?
- If I get pregnant, how will I be monitored?
- What medications are safe to take if I become pregnant?

If you have any other conditions or general concerns, talk to your health care professional. They can help guide you on how to manage your condition before and during pregnancy as well as assess any risks or complications that pregnancy could cause.

DURING A PREVIOUS PREGNANCY, IF YOU HAD:

Any complications with previous pregnancies (ex: low birth weight, preterm delivery, etc.) please be sure to share those with your doctor.

General cardiovascular-related complications

- Have my risk factors changed since my last pregnancy?
- Am I healthy enough to become pregnant again?
- How will my care or delivery differ from how it was during my other pregnancy?
- Have treatments for my condition changed?
- Will I need to see any specialists? If so, how will you and the specialists coordinate my care?
- Will the tests I need be the same as they were previously?
- Will I be able to carry my baby for the duration of the pregnancy. Is there a chance I'll have to deliver early?
- What else should I know before becoming pregnant?

Gestational diabetes

- How does gestational diabetes impact my health? How could it impact my baby's health?
- What are the chances I'll have gestational diabetes again?
- What can I do to lower my risk before and during pregnancy?
- If I get pregnant, when will I be tested to see if I have gestational diabetes?
- If I get pregnant, what signs should I look for that might indicate gestational diabetes?
- What if I have cravings for sweets?
- Do I need special care after delivery?

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Hypertensive disorder (gestational hypertension, preeclampsia, eclampsia)

- How does my gestational (hypertension/preeclampsia/eclampsia) impact my health? How could it impact my baby's health?
- What are the chances I'll have (gestational hypertension/preeclampsia/eclampsia) again?
- What can I do to lower my risk before and during pregnancy?
- If I don't have high blood pressure now, does that reduce my chances of having any of these conditions again?
- If I get pregnant, what tests or monitoring can I expect to watch for these conditions?
- If I get pregnant, what signs should I look for that might indicate these conditions?
- Do I need special care after delivery?

For more support or to connect with other moms and caregivers who have experienced pregnancy-related cardiovascular conditions, check out the American Heart Association's **Support Network Maternal Health Forum (supportnetwork.heart.org)**.

To learn more, visit **goredforwomen.org/pregnancy**
and have a conversation with your health care professional.