

Pre-conception Plan

I recommend most of these things for both parents and I recommend they are implemented at least 4 months in advance of conception. Dental work and cleanses should take place far enough in advance of conception that you can detox and have the necessary re-building period be at least 4 months.

Emotional

- Meditate on intentions for becoming a parent.
- Investigate issues with your own childhood and the way you were parented. Are you in danger of repeating unhealthy patterns?
- Clarify desired parenting styles between partners. Are they in alignment? Who is willing to compromise?
- Talk with parents or those who have chosen to not have children about their experiences, expectations, regrets.
- Consider what is healing in your life and what is toxic. What should be cut out as you prepare to raise another being?
- Consider therapy. Any patterns you don't want to pass on to your child? Any relationship kinks that need to be smoothed?

Physical

- Sleep! Don't underestimate it's value. Try to get to sleep before 10pm for the most restful sleep.
- Implement healthy exercise. Yoga, walking, light jogging, dance, hiking, a sport, strength training (no need to use weights, bodyweight alone can strengthen). Find something you enjoy that is sustainable.
- If you are under or over weight you may need to gain or lose a few pounds.
- Reduce stress. Find the sources of stress in your life and consider whether they are necessary. Implement stress reducing techniques into your daily life.
- Examine your exposure to heavy metals and endocrine disrupting chemicals (dental work, plastics, household cleaners, cosmetics, water, etc.)
- Are there any physical issues you have that you would like to remedy before parenting?
- Limit cell phone and computer use.
- Get tested for STDs and other infections.

Nutrition

- Eat organic and naturally raised foods.
- Nourish yourself: eat what you desire and don't restrict yourself. Your body should build nutrient stores and it won't be so hard to eat a good pregnancy diet if you are used to letting yourself eat what you desire. You will also crave less junk if you don't restrict the good stuff (including healthy fats!)
- Eat whole foods, particularly cut out refined sugars and grains.
- Don't eat non-food items like artificial sweeteners, colorings, flavors
- Eat seasonally, locally, and diversely. If you have the means, do your shopping at the farmer's markets instead of the grocery store, many have not only produce but naturally raised meats, eggs, and raw milk. You can also try local harvest. The more you stay out of the grocery store the less you will think of the processed foods (that take up 90% of the stores!) as food.

- Try to get your nutrients from whole foods, herbal infusions, and superfoods. If you feel (or know!) that you need more use a food based multivitamin.
- Prepare things well for maximum nutrition: soak, sprout, or ferment grains (and legumes and nuts! Anything that is a seed has anti-nutrients that need to be neutralized), cook at lower temperatures, etc.

Financial

- Consider costs associated with parenting as well as lost income if one parent will stay home with the baby.
- Where are you willing to cut costs (hand-me-downs, cloth diapers or elimination communication, making necessities instead of buying them)? Where do you see yourself unable to make cuts (You only want to have a midwife and naturopath even though insurance doesn't cover them)?

This is a simple guide to help you think about what your wants and needs are before conception. Keep everything in perspective and if something isn't realistic for you, don't stress! Just enjoy yourself.