

Pregnancy after age 35
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In today's world, women have the resources and medical care available to help plan the timing of pregnancy. This may include waiting until later in life, when you are more financially stable, or you are in a better career position to focus on a new family. Advances in medicine have improved pregnancy outcomes for a woman over age 35 however, as you plan your pregnancy, there is still important information to know and understand.

While important for all women, it is imperative that women over age 35 seek care before pregnancy and follow their recommended prenatal care routine. Be sure to disclose any medical conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, or long-term medications, to your prenatal care physician. Becoming pregnant after the age of 35 can mean an increase in risk factors associated with poor birth outcomes such as miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. Your physician can work with you to improve your chances of not only becoming pregnant, but having a healthy pregnancy and baby. This includes identifying improvements you can make in your nutrition and exercise habits, and, if you smoke, assisting with a quit program.

If you are on medication, either prescribed or over-the-counter, your physician will work with you to find the safest regimen during your pregnancy. And, this includes herbal and vitamin supplements. Make sure you discuss use of these items with your prenatal care provider.

Alcohol or substance abuse can dramatically impact your pregnancy. No amount of alcohol or illegal substance is safe for you or your baby during pregnancy. If you are unable to stop use of alcohol or drugs, seek assistance before becoming pregnant.

The Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition can assist with your questions related to a healthy pregnancy at any age, and provide you with additional resources and referrals. For more information on prenatal care and pregnancy, as well as breastfeeding, childbirth and parenting classes, you can call a Healthy Start Care Coordinator at 941-255-8872. You may be eligible for prenatal care and pregnancy support services, so be sure to ask your prenatal care provider to complete a Healthy Start screening form. Healthy Start prenatal care services are supported through a grant by United Way of Charlotte County.

Additional Information

The American Pregnancy Association (www.americanpregnancy.org) shares this information on increasing your chance of conceiving after 35.

- **Schedule a pre-conception appointment.** You and your health care provider can review your medical history, current medications and overall lifestyle. This gives you the opportunity to address any concerns about trying to conceive after 35.
- **Women over 35 take longer to conceive.** The average time it takes a couple over 35 to conceive is 1-2 years, so try to remain positive if you do not become pregnant immediately.
- **A woman who is physically, mentally and emotionally healthy is more likely to conceive.** Alcohol, smoking and caffeine can negatively affect fertility. Being overweight or underweight can also affect fertility by interfering with hormone function.
- **Observing your fertility signs can tell you a lot about your body.** Recording your basal body temperature and cervical fluid can help you pinpoint the best time to have intercourse while trying to conceive. These fertility signs can also reveal if you are ovulating regularly. Becoming familiar with your fertility will also help you discern between pending [signs and symptoms of pregnancy](#).

- **Consider taking an at home fertility screening test..** There are over-the-counter tests that help screen for key elements either male or female fertility. There are testing kits like [Fertell](#) that provide initial screen for both men and women. This often gives couples a peace of mind as the move through the journey to conceive.
- **Visit your health care provider if you haven't conceived after 6 months of purposeful intercourse.** If you have not conceived after 6 months, contact your health care provider to discuss the possibility of fertility testing. You may decide to consult a fertility specialist at this time.