

Preconception Clinical Care for Women Nutrition



All women of reproductive age are candidates for preconception care; however, preconception care must be tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Given that preconception care ideally should occur throughout the reproductive years, some recommendations will be more relevant to women at specific stages in their lives and with varying levels of risk.

Calcium

Women of reproductive age should be counseled about the importance of achieving the recommended calcium intake level. Calcium supplements can be considered if dietary sources are inadequate.

Dietary Supplements

All women of reproductive age should be asked about their use of dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, traditional or home remedies, herbal products, weight loss products, etc.) as part of preconception care and should be advised about what is or is not known about their safety, effects, and efficacy.

Essential Fatty Acids

Women should be encouraged to eat a diet rich in essential fatty acids, including omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. To achieve this, women should be advised to consume at 8 to 12 ounces (oz) of a variety of seafood and no more than 6 oz of canned albacore tuna weekly.

Folic Acid

All women of reproductive age should be advised to ingest 0.4 mg (400 micrograms [μg]) of synthetic folic acid daily that is obtained from fortified foods or supplements, or both. In addition, all women should be advised to consume a balanced, healthy diet that includes folate-rich foods.



Iodine

Women of reproductive age with iodine deficiency should be counseled about the risks of this condition to pregnancy outcomes and about the importance of maintaining an adequate daily dietary iodine intake of 150 µg during preconception, 220 µg when pregnant, and 290 µg during lactation.

Iron

At a preconception visit, screening should be conducted for women with risk factors for iron deficiency for the purposes of identifying and treating anemia. There is evidence to recommend that all women be screened at a preconception visit for iron deficiency anemia for the purpose of improving the perinatal outcome.

More Information

This fact sheet is part of a series on the clinical content of preconception care for women. Other fact sheets in the series include:

- Health Promotion
- Personal History
- Immunizations
- Infectious Diseases
- Medical Conditions
- Exposures
- Psychosocial Risks
- Special Populations

To see the complete list of the preconception clinical content and description of how the content was selected and rated, please visit: www.cdc.gov/preconception/careforwomen