Editor note

## Note On Perinatal Car

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## **NOTE**

Women who suspect they may be pregnant should schedule a visit to their health care provider to begin prenatal care. Prenatal visits to a health care provider usually include a physical exam, weight checks, and providing a urine sample. Depending on the stage of the pregnancy, health care providers may also do blood tests and imaging tests, such as ultrasound exams. These visits also include discussions about the mother's health, the foetus's health, and any questions about the pregnancy.

Reduce the risk of pregnancy complications. Following a healthy, safe diet; getting regular exercise as advised by a health care provider; and avoiding exposure to potentially harmful substances such as lead and radiation can help reduce the risk for problems during pregnancy and promote fetal health and development.4 Controlling existing conditions, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, is important to prevent serious complications and their effects.

Reduce the foetus's and infant's risk for complications. Tobacco smoke and alcohol use during pregnancy have been shown to increase the risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Alcohol use also increases the risk for fatal alcohol spectrum disorders, which can cause a variety of problems such as abnormal facial features, having a small head, poor coordination, poor memory, intellectual disability, and problems with the heart, kidneys, or bones.7 According to one recent study supported by the NIH, these

and other long-term problems can occur even with low levels of prenatal alcohol exposure.

## Childbirth Classes

Providers of perinatal care should be aware of the benefits of prepared childbirth and their own ability to enhance this training or to render the teachings ineffective by not supporting them during the intrapartum and postpartum periods. For suggestions of to create consistency within the community of childbirth education, hospital practices, and patient care

A variety of certifications are available for childbirth educators. Lamaze International has evolved from being a method of giving birth to being a philosophy that birth is normal, natural, and healthy. Therefore, today's Lamaze methods affirm the normalcy of birth, acknowledge women's inherent ability to birth their babies, and explore all the ways that women find strength and comfort during labour and birth. Other types of certifications include International Childbirth Education Association, Birthing from Within, Bradley, a variety of preparations using hypnosis as a basis, and multiple eclectic institution-specific versions of classes. In the survey "Listening to Mothers," 88% of women attended classes in hospitals or physicians' offices. The strength of each class depends on the strength and philosophy of the instructor and the restrictions put on the instructor.

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