Nine wonderful months!
A guide to your pregnancy
Congratulations
on your pregnancy!

Pregnancy is such an exciting time - but it's only natural that mixed in with all the excitement, there will be a little bit of apprehension and more than a few questions. What's going to happen to your body next? Exactly how big is this tiny baby in your tummy? What foods should you be avoiding? When does the blooming part of pregnancy come along?

As you go through the next 9 months, the SMA Careline* can provide you with information about pregnancy and baby care. The specially-trained advisors are all mums, so not only do they know the facts about pregnancy and becoming a parent, they know the realities too! If you have any questions about your pregnancy, call the SMA Careline on 0845 776 2900 (UK), 1800 931 832 (ROI) or visit www.smanutrition.co.uk or www.smanutrition.ie

To help mums-to-be even more, SMA Nutrition* have developed this booklet all about pregnancy - so wonderful months! - packed full of everything you need to know about having a baby, from preconception care to deciding what to pack in your labour bag.

Happy reading!

Katie Allsopp

*Throughout this booklet, we often mention 'healthcare professionals' - this covers the main healthcare professionals you may interact with, such as GPs, midwives, health visitors, public health nurses, dietitians, and paediatricians.

In this booklet, the term 'boy' is used to refer to both male and female babies.
First things first

A little bit of preparation goes a long way, especially when it comes to having a baby.

If you’ve decided the time is right to have your first baby or to increase the size of your family with a new addition, now comes the good part: ‘Trying for a baby’...

Stop using contraception at least 3 months before trying to conceive and try to have at least one normal period.

- If either of you smoke, stop (If you need help, contact your GP or the NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline: 0800 169 9 169. In the Republic of Ireland call the National Smokers’ Quitline on 1850 201 203)
- You are advised to avoid drinking alcohol and not get drunk during pregnancy or if you are trying to get pregnant. For more information see “All change!” section, page 13
- If you take any kind of regular medication, have a chat with your GP before you become pregnant
- Make love as often as possible - and remember that you’re most fertile in the middle of your menstrual cycle
- Ensure you have a healthy diet and exercise regularly
- Avoid too much vitamin A (e.g. liver products)
- Avoid eating shark, swordfish and marlin and limit your intake of tuna to no more than 2 steaks or 4 medium cans a week
- Avoid peanuts if there is a history of allergies in your family or your partner’s family
- Keep sugary and fatty foods to a minimum
Baby food

To help ensure your body is ready for pregnancy, make any changes to your diet before you become pregnant.

- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet, with foods from each of the 5 food groups every day (fruit and vegetables, fats, carbohydrates, dairy products and protein).
- Try to have 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day (fresh, frozen, dried, in juice form or tinned).
- Dairy foods such as milk, cheese (see 'Foods to avoid' section on page 10) and yoghurt are important as they are high in calcium.
- Give your folic acid intake a natural boost by eating dark, leafy green vegetables, granary bread and brown rice.
- Make sure there’s enough iron in your diet by having red meat, pulses and dark green vegetables.
- Try to eat at least 2 portions of fish, including oily fish, a week (but keep oily fish to a maximum of 2 portions a week).
- Have starchy foods such as bread, potatoes, pasta or rice with every meal.

“Should I take supplements or special vitamins?”

The most important supplement you can take is folic acid, which reduces your baby’s risk of spinal problems, such as spina bifida. The UK Department of Health and The Food Standards Agency of Ireland recommend that all women who are trying to get pregnant should take a 400 microgram tablet of folic acid every day and continue taking this for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Supplements containing vitamin A should be avoided, including fish liver oils. Your healthcare professional will be able to advise you on any other supplements or vitamins you should be taking.
"We’ve been trying for 6 months now. How much longer will I have to wait before I become pregnant?"

Some women are pregnant after only a month of trying, while others try for months and months before becoming pregnant. However, most couples manage to conceive within a year or so. If you’re not pregnant after 12 months, you and your partner should both make an appointment to see your GP.

General hygiene

• Wash your hands before and after handling any food.
• Thoroughly wash all fruit and vegetables, including ready-prepared salads, before eating. Peel and top carrots before eating them.
• Cook raw meat and poultry thoroughly and make sure that ready-to-eat poultry and cooked chilled meals are reheated thoroughly and are piping hot before they are eaten.
• Always wash your hands after handling raw meat or poultry, and make sure that raw foods are stored separately from ready-to-eat foods.
• Wear gloves when gardening or handling soil and then clean your hands thoroughly - to reduce the risk of contracting toxoplasmosis.

NB. Cats are linked to toxoplasmosis, a disease that can harm developing babies, so avoid emptying cat litter trays or, if no one else can do it, make sure you wear disposable gloves.

Money matters

Having a baby can be an expensive business. If possible, start saving a little money every week for baby and nursery equipment.

This is also a good time to have a chat with your partner about what you’d both like to happen after your baby is born. How long will you be on maternity leave? Will you return to working full-time at the end of your maternity leave? Can you afford to change to part-time working? Is flexible working an option? How much responsibility will your partner have for childcare? If you are going back to work, who will look after your baby - and how much will this cost? A useful website is The Department for Work and Pensions: www.dwp.gov.uk (UK) or www.citizensinformation.ie (ROI).

For information or advice about preparing for a baby, contact the SMA Caroline on 0845 778 2900 (UK), 1800 931 832 (ROI) or visit www.smanutrition.co.uk or www.smanutrition.ie
The first trimester - weeks 1-11

Early signs of pregnancy

• Missed period
• Sore, tender or tingling breasts
• Increased vaginal discharge
• Mood changes
• Frequent visits to the loo
• Tiredness
• Period-like pains in your tummy
• Morning sickness.

These are all possible pregnancy symptoms but the only way you can tell if you're definitely pregnant is to carry out a pregnancy test. Home pregnancy kits are usually accurate or you could have a pregnancy test at your local pharmacy or your GP's surgery.

Your baby 6-8 weeks

By week 6, your baby is about 8 mm from head to toe and his heart is beating. His bones, fingers, toes, ankles and wrists are beginning to develop and he also has eyelids, although they won't open for many weeks yet.

Positively perfect!

Your suspicions have been confirmed - you're pregnant. Well done!
"I'm pregnant - what do I do now?"

Make an appointment to see your GP. Your GP will have a chat with you about your pregnancy and will arrange a 'booking appointment' for you, which usually takes place with a midwife when you are between 8 - 12 weeks pregnant.

Make a date!

Discover your baby’s approximate due date with this handy chart...

To calculate your baby's estimated date of delivery (EDD), pick out the first day of your last period from the pink box. The date that appears directly below this date (in blue text) is your baby's EDD.

This is only an approximate guide. Your baby could arrive 2 weeks before or 2 weeks after this date - only 5% of babies arrive on the day they're supposed to arrive!

### Baby’s estimated date of delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>01.02.03</td>
<td>04.05</td>
<td>06.07</td>
<td>08.09</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>12.13</td>
<td>14.15</td>
<td>16.17</td>
<td>18.19</td>
<td>20.21</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>24.25</td>
<td>26.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>01.02</td>
<td>03.04</td>
<td>05.06</td>
<td>07.08</td>
<td>09.10</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>17.18</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December
"Becoming pregnant was a complete surprise, so I wasn't able to take folic acid. Is eight weeks too late to start?"

No. The UK Department of Health and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) recommend taking folic acid before pregnancy, and for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, so take a 400 µg of folic acid supplement every day.

Medical matters

Always speak to your GP, pharmacist or other healthcare professional before taking any medication during pregnancy. Many of the minor discomforts of pregnancy can be treated without taking medication - your healthcare professional will be able to advise you.

If you take drugs for a medical condition, such as epilepsy or diabetes, continue with your treatment but discuss your medication and your pregnancy with your GP as soon as possible.

You should also contact your healthcare professional if you take, or are considering taking any vitamin supplements (other than folic acid). Some vitamins, for example vitamin A, can be harmful to an unborn baby - avoid multivitamin supplements as they often contain high levels of vitamin A. Other supplements containing vitamin A or fish liver oils should also be avoided.