

# SUPPORTING PARTNER HEALTH IN THE PRECONCEPTION PERIOD

## WHY DOES SUPPORTING PARTNER HEALTH MATTER?

Preconception health is important for everyone involved in planning a pregnancy. Research and healthcare is often focused on the health of the person who will carry the pregnancy, but the health and well being of a supporting partner can also influence conception, pregnancy, and birth outcomes.

A partner's physical health, nutrition, mental health, and substance use can impact pregnancy support and the well-being of a family unit. Current research suggests that paternal health prior to pregnancy influences infant health outcomes, specifically in regards to substance use and nutrition (Moss & Harris, 2016).

### A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

In this newsletter, the term "supporting partner" refers to any partner involved in family planning and preconception care. While some preconception health resources focus specifically on men's health, **partner health is not limited to any gender.**

People of all genders can benefit from addressing their emotional, physical, and mental health before pregnancy and can play an important role in supporting healthy pregnancy outcomes and family well-being.

## HOW CAN SUPPORTING PARTNERS FOCUS ON THEIR HEALTH BEFORE PREGNANCY?

### 1. Schedule a Routine Health Checkup

Regular healthcare visits can help identify and manage health conditions before pregnancy. Conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and mental health concerns can affect overall health and family planning goals.

### 2. Prioritize Mental Health

Managing stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns can strengthen relationships and improve readiness for parenthood. Seeking support when needed is an important part of preconception health.



### 3. Focus on Healthy Eating

A balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats supports overall health, energy levels, and reproductive health.

### 4. Stay Physically Active

Regular physical activity supports heart health, stress reduction, sleep quality, and overall well-being. Consider activities built into daily life like walking or chores.

### 5. Avoid Tobacco, Vaping, and Substance Use

Tobacco, nicotine products, excessive alcohol use, and other substances can negatively affect health and fertility. Reducing or eliminating substance use before pregnancy can benefit the entire family.

### 6. Get Enough Sleep

Quality sleep supports physical and mental health, hormone regulation, and overall wellness. Most adults should aim for 7–9 hours of sleep each night.

### 7. Reduce Exposure to Harmful Chemicals

When possible, limit exposure to environmental and workplace hazards such as pesticides, tobacco smoke, and certain industrial chemicals that may affect reproductive health. Consider creating tobacco free spaces in the home and in the car.

### 8. Prepare for Pregnancy Together

Open conversations about health goals, finances, parenting expectations, and support systems can help partners feel more prepared for pregnancy and parenthood. Utilizing reproductive life planning worksheets can help facilitate these conversations.



## JUNE GRANT HIGHLIGHT

This month marked the start of The Ready for Life 2026-2027 grant year!



Pictured right: Grant staff traveled to Stoneville, NC to attend a Community Baby Shower in partnership with Carolina Complete Health.

**Are you looking to make positive change in your community?  
Are you interested in maternal and reproductive health?**

The Ready for Life **Community Health Champions program** is starting recruitment of preconception health champions for a Fall 2026 cohort. This program is open to individuals in North Carolina Perinatal Care Regions 2, 5, & 6.

**For more information, visit [www.ncpreconceptionhealth.org](http://www.ncpreconceptionhealth.org) or email [ssandhir@marchofdimes.org](mailto:ssandhir@marchofdimes.org).**