

## Heart Health During the Preconception Period

### FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART MONTH!

# 44%

of women in the United States are living with a heart condition

Pregnancy places significant demands on the heart and blood vessels as blood volume increases by up to 50%. Starting pregnancy with a healthy heart helps the body adapt more safely and lowers the risk of complications like high blood pressure, preeclampsia, and heart strain. Protecting your heart health now can prepare you for a healthy future!

**Risk factors** are things that can **increase** the chance of a **heart-related problems** before or during pregnancy. Risk factors include:

- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes or Prediabetes
- High Cholesterol
- Unhealthy Weight
- Smoking or Vaping
- Chronic Stress
- Poor Sleep

### Action Steps for Improving Heart Health Prior to Pregnancy

Limit alcohol consumption.

Drink 8-10 cups of water daily.

Aim for <2,300 mg of sodium and 25-30g of fiber daily.

Schedule a preconception checkup to discuss your overall heart health!

Aim to receive 7-9 hours of sleep nightly to help regulate stress hormones and blood pressure.

Prioritize heart healthy foods in your diet. Include fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and limit processed snacks.

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity weekly. This can help strengthen the heart and lower blood pressure.

Read nutrition labels when shopping, aiming for foods with lower sodium and added sugars to protect blood vessel health.

