

# *My Reproductive Life Plan*

This reproductive life plan is for adults. It will help you to understand how to protect your ability to have children, think about when to have children and how to have the healthiest baby possible when you're ready.



## Is Having Children One of Your Life Goals?

The future that you imagine and the goals that you set for yourself may or may not include having children. Check the sentence below that best describes you *right now*. (Your goals and your life can always change.)

- ☐ **I'm not planning to have children.**  
Visit [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca/NotReady](https://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca/NotReady) for information about birth control, health and well being.
- ☐ **I'm ready to have children now.**  
For information about preconception health, visit [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca/Ready](https://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca/Ready)
- ☐ **I may want to have children or another child someday, but not right now.**  
Visit [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca](https://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca) for information about preconception health.



# My Reproductive Life Plan

You can decide **if** and **when** to have children. Check the sentence below that best describes your goals *right now* or write your own sentence. Then write the steps you will take to meet this goal. This is your **reproductive life plan**.

**Example 1:** I am not sure if I want to have children, so I will continue to practice safer sex and learn about long-term birth control options.

**Example 2:** I want to have children someday but not now, so I will talk to my health care provider about having children in the future.

**Example 3:** My partner and I want to have children now. I will talk to my health care provider about the things that can impact my health, my partner's health and having a healthy baby.

**Example 4:** I want to have children some day but not now, so I will talk to my health care provider about how having children might be possible for me as I identify as 2SLGBTQI+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex/Indigiqueer, Other identities).

☐ I am not sure if I want to have children, so I will

---

☐ I want to have a child in the next year, so I will

---

☐ I want to have children someday but not now, so I will

---

☐ I am planning on adopting/fostering children, so I will

---

☐ I am concerned about my fertility (ability to make a baby) and I'm not sure I can have children, so I will

---

☐ (Write your own plan)

---

**Your reproductive life plan may change.** That's okay! You can update your plan at any time. If you want to have a child or another child one day or you want to keep your options open, take steps to improve your health, protect your fertility and improve your chances of having a healthy baby.



### Did you know?

**Almost half (50%) of all pregnancies are unplanned. An unplanned pregnancy is a pregnancy that is unintended and can happen even when birth control is being used. If you plan a pregnancy, you have time to make sure you are healthy and prepared before it happens.**

»» **FACT**

The next five sections will help you think about things that you can do now to:

- Improve your health,
- Protect your fertility, and
- Improve the health of a baby.

## My Physical Health

Taking care of your physical health can improve your overall health, protect your fertility and improve your chances of having a healthy baby.

When did you last visit your health care provider (doctor, nurse)?



### TIP

Ask your health care provider how often you should visit for preventative screening. If you have a health condition like diabetes, high blood pressure, or obesity you may need to visit more often.

Are your vaccines (immunizations) up-to-date? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure.

### TIP

Check with your health care provider to make sure your immunizations are up to date.

If you could become pregnant, do you take a multivitamin with folic acid? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### TIP

Taking a multivitamin with 0.4 mg of folic acid in it every day can help to prevent birth defects. Because so many pregnancies are unplanned, it's best to take it daily for as long as you are able to conceive (get pregnant). Some people need more folic acid. Talk to your health care provider to find out how much folic acid is right for you.

What medications and herbal/natural supplements do you take?

---

### TIP

Medications and herbal remedies can affect your fertility and pregnancy. Share a list of all medications and supplements you take with your health care provider. Include medications that have a doctor's prescription and any medication you buy without a prescription (e.g., medicine for headaches, colds, or stomach upset).

Are you a healthy weight? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure.

### TIP

Regardless of your gender, being at a healthy weight can make it easier to conceive a baby. It can also help you have a healthier pregnancy.

Knowing your Body Mass Index (BMI) will tell you if you are a healthy weight. Find out your BMI at [healthiertogether.ca/living-healthy/maintain-a-healthy-weight](http://healthiertogether.ca/living-healthy/maintain-a-healthy-weight)

How often do you exercise? I exercise for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes most weeks.

### TIP

Moderate to vigorous activity for a minimum of 150 minutes per week not only helps to maintain a healthy weight, it is also recommended for good overall health. Moderate to vigorous activity will make you sweat but you should still be able to talk while you exercise. Learn more at *Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Adults (18-64 years)* at [csepguidelines.ca/guidelines/adults-18-64/](http://csepguidelines.ca/guidelines/adults-18-64/)

Do you eat healthy? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I'm not sure.

### TIP

Eating healthy can help you to maintain a healthy weight, prevent disease and improve health. Visit *Canada's food guide* to learn more about eating healthy foods at [foodguide.canada.ca](http://foodguide.canada.ca). If you can't afford to buy enough food or healthy foods, talk to your health care provider or call Health Link at 811.

## OTHER TIPS FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH:

- If you use tobacco products, try to cut down and/or quit. Try to avoid second-hand smoke. Smoking tobacco and being around second-hand smoke can reduce your fertility and is harmful during pregnancy.
- Follow *Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health* at [ccsa.ca/canadas-guidance-alcohol-and-health](http://ccsa.ca/canadas-guidance-alcohol-and-health). There is no safe amount of alcohol, no safe type of alcohol and no safe time to drink alcohol when intending to get pregnant or during pregnancy. Following the guidance provided can reduce the risk of health problems for everyone.
- Be substance free (including cannabis, other drugs and prescription medications that aren't prescribed for you). There is help available if you are trying to cut down and/or quit. Talk to your health care provider or visit [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca](http://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca)
- Following *Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines* at [canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/resources/lower-risk-cannabis-use-guidelines](http://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/resources/lower-risk-cannabis-use-guidelines) can help reduce risk when using cannabis.

## My Sexual Health

Taking care of your sexual health can improve your overall health, protect your fertility and improve your chances of having a healthy baby.

I plan to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP**

Practice safer sex (using external or internal condoms, dental dams, etc.) to help prevent STIs. You can have a STI without even knowing it.

The date of my last screening for STIs was: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP**

Get tested and treated for STIs, especially when you have a new partner. Ask your new partner(s) if they have been tested. Untreated STIs can cause fertility problems in people of all genders.

***Everyone should have a plan to prevent STIs.***

**Healthy Sperm:** It takes about 3 months for new sperm to fully develop. Drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, taking certain medications, exposure to industrial chemicals, too much heat, too much stress, and being well above a healthy weight can make it difficult to make healthy sperm.



## My Mental Health

Your mental health is part of your overall health. Positive mental health supports your ability to reach your life goals.

People who make me feel good about myself when I'm with them include: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP** Build and keep relationships with positive people who make you feel good about yourself.

Things I like about my relationships include: \_\_\_\_\_

Things I would like to change about my relationships include: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP** If you are in a relationship, ask yourself if it is positive, trusting and respectful. If you don't feel safe or supported in your relationship, it could be abusive. Being hurt physically, sexually or emotionally is dangerous to your health and can be harmful to children.

Things that cause stress in my life include: \_\_\_\_\_

I manage my stress by: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP** Some stress in your life is normal. Use positive ways to manage the stress you do have. Talk to someone you trust if you feel like you have too much stress.

I usually get \_\_\_\_\_ hours of sleep each night.

Things I can do to get a good night's sleep include: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP** Take care of your mental health by being physically active, eating healthy, and getting a good night's sleep (7-9 hours).





# My Family Health History

Knowing your family health history is important to your health. Your family’s health history can impact your fertility and your children’s health. Knowing your family health history can help you take steps to reduce possible risks to your health and future children. If you know your family health history, share it with your health care provider.

My health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Health conditions in my family:

| Health Problem                 | Who    |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Depression after baby was born | Sister |
| Cystic fibrosis                | Cousin |
|                                |        |
|                                |        |
|                                |        |
|                                |        |
|                                |        |
|                                |        |
|                                |        |





## Planning When to Have Children

If you want to have children or another child, you will also want to think about when is the right time. It's also important to know at what age conception (when sperm fertilizes an egg) is easiest and safest.

### When should I start a family?

The ability to make a baby (fertility) gets lower as people get older. As a person ages, their sperm may be less healthy and may not move as well. By their mid-30s, it gets harder and takes longer for people to become pregnant. Having a baby after age 35 can increase the chances of health problems for both the individual and the baby.

»»FACT

### How long does it take to get pregnant?

Most people who are trying to get pregnant by having sex and who do not have fertility problems get pregnant within a year.

»»FACT

### When should I ask for a referral to a fertility specialist?

If you are under 35 and you have not been able to get pregnant after trying for a year, ask your health care provider for a referral to a fertility specialist. If you have a medical condition that could cause fertility problems, talk to your health care provider sooner. If you are 35 years or older and have not been able to get pregnant after 6 months of trying, talk to your health care provider. Fertility treatments can help people to get pregnant, but they are less successful as people get older.

»»FACT

## My Next Steps

There are many things you can do to meet your life and reproductive goals. Start by choosing one or two small goals and use the chart below to help you track your successes. Examples of small goals include:

- Visit [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca](http://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca) to get more information.
- Make an appointment to see my health care provider.
- Check to see if I need to eat more vegetables and fruits each day.
- Fill out sections of this booklet.



| What I will do   | By when            | Help I will need to do this   | Celebrating each step towards success  |
|--|--------------------|---|--|
| Example: I will walk after dinner for 10-15 minutes on Monday and Thursday evenings. | Starting on Monday | I will ask my partner to encourage me and a friend to walk with me. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Called my friend and booked our walk</li> <li>- Walked on Thursday</li> <li>- Walked 6 times this month!</li> </ul> |
|  |                    |   |  |
|  |                    |   |  |
|  |                    |   |  |
|  |                    |   |  |
|  |                    |   |  |
|  |                    |   |  |

Making a reproductive life plan and thinking about your next steps puts you on track to a healthier life!

# Important Contact Information

No cost services

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Emergency Services</b></p> <p>Ambulance, Fire and Police</p> <p><b>911</b></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>  |  | <p><b>Health Link</b></p> <p>Free health advice from a registered nurse</p> <p><b>811</b></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>  |
| <p><b>Addiction Services Helpline</b></p> <p>Help for problems with gambling, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.</p> <p><b>1-866-332-2322</b></p> <p><a href="https://ahs.ca/amh">ahs.ca/amh</a></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>   | <p><b>Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence</b></p> <p>Available to anyone who is looking for support or referrals to specialized sexual assault services.</p> <p><b>1-866-403-8000</b></p> <p><a href="https://aasas.ca">aasas.ca</a></p> <p>Available 9am-9pm daily</p> | <p><b>AlbertaQuits Helpline</b></p> <p>Tobacco cessation counsellors can help you make a plan to quit, manage cravings and stay on track.</p> <p><b>1-866-710-7848</b></p> <p><a href="https://albertaquits.healthiertogether.ca">albertaquits.healthiertogether.ca</a></p> <p>Available 8am-8pm daily</p> |
| <p><b>Family Violence Info Line</b></p> <p>Provides information about family violence programs and services, as well as advice and support.</p> <p><b>310-1818</b></p> <p><a href="https://alberta.ca/family-violence-find-supports">alberta.ca/family-violence-find-supports</a></p> <p>Available 24/7</p> | <p><b>Hope for Wellness Helpline</b></p> <p>Offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada..</p> <p><b>1-855-242-3310</b></p> <p><a href="https://hopeforwellness.ca">hopeforwellness.ca</a></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>                                      | <p><b>Income Support Contact Centre</b></p> <p>Financial help for Albertans who don't have resources to meet their basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter).</p> <p><b>1-866-644-5135</b></p> <p><a href="https://alberta.ca/income-support">alberta.ca/income-support</a></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>    |
| <p><b>Indigenous Support Line</b></p> <p>Helps First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and their families navigate the healthcare system.</p> <p><b>1-844-944-4744</b></p> <p><a href="https://ahs.ca/isl">ahs.ca/isl</a></p> <p>Available M-F Noon-8pm<br/>North, Central and South Zones</p>               | <p><b>Mental Health Helpline</b></p> <p>Offers help for mental health concerns for Albertans.</p> <p><b>1-877-303-2642</b></p> <p><a href="https://ahs.ca/amh">ahs.ca/amh</a></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>  | <p><b>Poison &amp; Drug Information Service</b></p> <p>Confidential advice about poisons and chemicals.</p> <p><b>1-800-332-1414</b></p> <p><a href="https://ahs.ca/padis">ahs.ca/padis</a></p> <p>Available 24/7</p>  |



# Important Websites

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b><a href="https://ahs.ca">ahs.ca</a></b></p> <p><b>Alberta Health Services (AHS)</b></p> <p>Canada's largest integrated health system, responsible for promoting wellness and providing health care across the province.</p>  | <p><b><a href="https://ahs.ca/options">ahs.ca/options</a></b></p> <p><b>Know Your Options</b></p> <p>Get the care you need, when you need it. The best place to start is with Health Link at 811 or your family doctor. There are other options depending on what you need.</p> | <p><b><a href="https://covenanthealth.ca">covenanthealth.ca</a></b></p> <p><b>Covenant Health</b></p> <p>Catholic service provider within Alberta's health care system, with 17 facilities in 12 communities.</p> |
| <p><b><a href="https://myhealth.alberta.ca">myhealth.alberta.ca</a></b></p> <p>Your resource for non-emergency health information and tools.</p>   | <p><b><a href="https://alberta.ca/all-services">alberta.ca/all-services</a></b></p> <p>To find Alberta Government services and information you need.</p>  | <p><b><a href="https://ahs.ca/immunize">ahs.ca/immunize</a></b></p> <p>For information on Alberta's routine immunization schedule and answers to frequently asked questions.</p>                                  |
| <p><b><a href="https://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca">ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca</a></b></p> <p>Planning to become pregnant - or not become pregnant - is a big decision for everyone. Whether you're Ready to have a baby or Not, preconception health promotes the steps that all people can take to be healthy now and in the future.</p>          |   |   |
| <p><b><a href="https://HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca">HealthyParentsHealthyChildren.ca</a></b></p> <p>Find information from Healthy Parents, Healthy Children: Pregnancy &amp; Birth and Healthy Parents, Healthy Children: The Early Years online with many interactive features. Browse on a smart phone, tablet or computer.</p> |   |   |
| <p><b><a href="https://ahs.ca/srh">ahs.ca/srh</a></b></p> <p>Sexual and reproductive health services, information, resources and related websites.</p>   |   |   |
| <p><b><a href="https://ahs.ca/nutrition">ahs.ca/nutrition</a></b></p> <p>Offers tips and information for healthy eating at home, at work, on the go and much more.</p>   |   |   |



[ahs.ca/hcf](http://ahs.ca/hcf)



[www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org)

*Adapted with permission from Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Childhood Development Resource Centre.*

This document has been prepared with funds provided by the Government of Ontario. The information herein reflects the views of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Ontario. The resources and programs cited throughout this document are not necessarily endorsed by the Best Start Resource Centre or the Government of Ontario.