**Northgate Practice Information Leaflet:**

**Preconception Care & Support**

**What is preconception care?**

Preconception care is an opportunity for you and your partner to improve your chances of getting pregnant before you start trying for a baby. A healthcare professional can help you to assess your health; fitness and lifestyle, to identify areas that you may want to improve. There are also simple steps you can take towards improving the health of your child, even before you try to conceive.

Preconception care may be particularly useful if:

* you're having trouble getting pregnant
* you want to find out how a condition such as [diabetes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/diabetes-pregnant/) or [epilepsy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/epilepsy-pregnant/) can affect pregnancy
* there is a risk that you could pass on a genetic condition, such as [sickle cell disease or thalassaemia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/screening-sickle-cell-thalassaemia-pregnant/), to your baby
* you have had problems during a previous pregnancy

**What should you expect to cover during your Preconception check-up?**

*Lifestyle*

A bad diet, being overweight or obese, smoking, drinking and unhealthy working conditions can affect the quality of sperm and stop you getting pregnant. You should both try to make your lifestyle as healthy as possible.

*Medical history*

This is the time to discuss any long-term health conditions you may have, for example, asthma, epilepsy, or diabetes. It is very important that any pre-existing condition is managed well and any symptoms that you have are well controlled before you try to become pregnant.

*Medications*

**You should also discuss any [long-term medication](https://www.emmasdiary.co.uk/getting-pregnant/how-to-get-pregnant/drugs-in-pregnancy) that you are taking as some should be continued during pregnancy while others need to be changed or stopped. You should never stop long-term medication without consulting your doctor.

*Supplements*

You will be advised to commence a folic acid supplement which should be started before you get pregnant and continued for the first [12 weeks of pregnancy](https://www.emmasdiary.co.uk/pregnancy-and-birth/pregnancy-week-by-week/12-weeks-pregnant).

**Next Steps**

Six months ahead of conception is not too soon to start thinking about your health, but certainly try to consider your pre-conceptual care at least three months before you hope to get pregnant.

If you wish to speak to a GP or Nurse for further pre-conception support please submit an eConsult (via the practice website [www.northgatepractice.co.uk](http://www.northgatepractice.co.uk)).