

# Explore PartnerPepTalks

Slow down and decide where you want to take action.

## Start With Yourself

What does your reproductive life plan look like now? Has it changed over time? From puberty onward, everyone deserves age-appropriate conversations that reflect their identity, values, and choices. Whether you're planning to conceive, still undecided, or navigating a fertility journey, your internal pep talk sets the tone for all the rest.

☐ I need support here    ☐ I feel confident with this

## Talk With Your Partner

Whether your relationship is casual or committed, it's empowering and necessary to be clear on your shared intentions. Talk before the moment. Make a plan for how you'll approach pregnancy, or prevent it altogether. Revisit the conversation regularly, especially if you're open to the idea of having unprotected sex. And don't forget to schedule check-ups for at least 3 to 6 months in advance!

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## Professionals to Check-in With

### Your Health Providers

No clinician covers all of preconception health, and not every healthcare provider will be comfortable bringing up preconception planning strategies. You may need to bring it up during a check-up. Evidence-based PartnerPepTalk resources aim to make everyone more capable and at ease with these conversations. Allow more time than you think you'll need for referrals and follow-up, because current insurance reimbursement structures may be limiting.

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### Mental Health Professionals

Mental wellness supports generational resilience. That goes for both future moms and future dads. Trauma-informed, preconception mental health care is part of the full picture.

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### Infectious Disease &/or Sexual Health Nurse or Doctor

Be open to updating vaccinations (see Preconception Medical Checklists) as well as testing and treatment for common sexually transmitted infections (STI). Most people don't realize that even if an oral or genital infection has no symptoms, it can affect fertility, future pregnancy safety, and more. It's critical to complete treatment as instructed and prevent reinfection by having both partners equally responsible for follow-up.

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### Pharmacist

Instead of saying "no" to the "Consultation with a Pharmacist," say "yes" the next time you pick up your prescription medication for yourself or your intimate partner. Teamwork is really important when it comes to medication management and family planning. Abrupt changes without medical supervision can do way more harm than good.

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### Dentist / Hygienist

Oral health can affect pregnancy outcomes. Silent infections like gingivitis are transferable, and preconception check-ups for both partners are key. The dental office is an ideal setting to get blood pressure measured, too. Bring this up at your next visit.

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## Additional Topics of Importance

### Food, Activity & Sleep

A rich variety of wholesome foods can help protect the body's own protective barriers—like the gastrointestinal tract—while supporting overall vitality. Pair this with regular physical activity and restorative sleep to fuel health and the quality of sperm and seminal fluid, eggs, and uterine lining. Resist the temptation to overdo one "healthy" lifestyle habit at the expense of the others. If you struggle finding a balance, turn to professionals such as Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs), sleep apnea specialists, and credentialed exercise specialists. These may prove invaluable, even more so when you live with medically complex conditions.

☐ I may seek support here    ☐ I already feel on track

### Nicotine, Alcohol, Cannabis & Other Drugs

A strong legacy of resiliency begins with both partners practicing healthier habits before family building. Acknowledge that social circles and partners have tremendous influence on each other. Binge or chronic substance use? Trouble cutting back or quitting? Recognize situations that are working in your best interest and those that aren't. Professional guidance may offer added security, ensuring you don't have to carry burdens alone.

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### Pain Management:

Legal opioid prescribing to reproductive-age women remains common (~15–20% in recent national estimates) and is of particular concern before trying to conceive. Work closely with your prescribing physician to review whether continued use is necessary, and explore safer options. Physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and complementary care specialists are more sources of support.

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**TIP** Share your goals with your healthcare provider at every life stage, no matter your sexual or gender identity. Preconception health and a supportive environment benefit everyone, not just the person who may become pregnant.