



## A healthy mom has the best chance of a healthy pregnancy

A roadmap through your life stages for a heart healthy pregnancy & beyond

### What Can YOU Do?

- Utilize ABC's guide to a healthy lifestyle with "7 Steps to a Healthy Heart"\*
- Know your personal and family history along with risks
- Discuss your heart, brain and maternal health risk with your clinician
- Consider monitoring blood pressure at home - with clinician guidance
- Seek out and Speak up—to a clinician who listens AND who has a history of collaborative care
- Establish care early and seek regular evaluation

### 1 Prior to Pregnancy

- ♥ Establishing care with a primary care clinician to review your risk factors and optimize your health is key.
- ♥ Early access to prenatal care is critical.
- ♥ Learn your family's heart and pregnancy history.
- ♥ Women born with a heart defect (i.e. congenital heart disease) or who develop a heart condition during their life time MUST speak with a cardiologist before pregnancy.

#### FYI

Your **family's history** is just as important as knowing your own and can impact your health during pregnancy as well as long-term heart health.

#### FYI

Did you know: **40% of women do not make it to their postpartum visit**, with the lowest rates in the most disenfranchised. That's concerning because **53% of maternal death occurs 7-365 days after delivery.**

### 3 Postpartum

- ♥ The first year after delivery is an important time to re-establish your health and continue to identify your risk factors.
- ♥ Seeing your clinician within 3 weeks of delivery is SO important.
- ♥ Women with preeclampsia, high blood pressure or heart disease during pregnancy must schedule their appointments sooner - on average that happens within a week.
- ♥ Determine with your clinician when you should see your primary care clinician and/or if you should see a cardiologist.
- ♥ Ask your clinician if you would benefit from monitoring your blood pressure at home.

#### FYI

The time between pregnancies is a critical period to make sure you are in good health before becoming pregnant again. Work with your care team to **return to your pre-baby weight, monitor your risk factors** and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

#### FYI

A **pregnancy heart team** led by clinicians from cardiology, maternal-fetal medicine, obstetrics, obstetric anesthesia, pharmacy, and nursing support a holistic approach to patient care.\*



#### FYI

Preeclampsia can occur up to **6 weeks postpartum**; Postpartum preeclampsia occurs **most commonly within the first 7 days** after delivery.

#### FYI

You don't have to wait until you decide to get pregnant. After all, **nearly 1/2 of all pregnancies are unplanned** (CDC). Therefore, optimizing your health prior to pregnancy should begin early - even before adulthood.

### 2 Pregnancy

- ♥ Pregnancy is nature's stress test on the heart.
- ♥ It can expose undiagnosed and unknown heart issues.
- ♥ It may also lead to major health risks for individuals during pregnancy and throughout their lifespan. These include: high blood pressure during pregnancy, preeclampsia, elevated blood sugar during pregnancy, preterm labor and a child smaller than expected.
- ♥ Preeclampsia affects **1 in 25 pregnancies** in the US. Know the symptoms and discuss ways to reduce your risk, if relevant, with your clinician. These may include:
  - Low-dose aspirin anytime from 12 to 28 weeks gestation (preferably before 16 weeks gestation).
  - 140 minutes per week of moderate cardio including briskly walking and eating a heart healthy diet.
  - Utilize a blood pressure machine at home.
  - Request a referral to a cardiologist, if needed or look for centers or practices that offer a pregnancy heart team.

#### FYI

Research has shown that the **Mediterranean Diet** decreased the risk of preeclampsia in Black women.<sup>1</sup>

#### FYI

Certain women are more likely to have these **major health risks**. This includes: a first-time mom; previous experience with high blood pressure during pregnancy; women whose sisters and mothers had preeclampsia; women carrying multiple babies; women younger than 20 years and older than age 40; women who have obesity; Black women as the result of **the stress from lived experiences**.

### 4 Post Childbearing and Beyond

- ♥ Post childbearing is an important time when your family is complete. Your body has undergone many changes during one or more pregnancies and births and this is an important time to continue to work with a clinician to optimize your health.
- ♥ Make physical, mental and stress management an important priority.
- ♥ Set reminders to schedule yearly well-woman visits, continue to track your numbers and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- ♥ Tell your clinician if you had a history of any major health risks during pregnancy since this may put you at long-term risk of heart and brain disorders.



\* For more info and access to the resources referenced in this guide, please scan the QR Code or visit the website.