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The Ancient Greeks and Romans knew that alcohol taken before and around the time of conception was damaging to the later development of the baby. Many traditional societies fed special diets to their young women and men of childbearing age. Veterinarians, stockbreeders and farmers all practice preconception health care.

At present, one couple in six is infertile, one woman in five will suffer a miscarriage, one baby in ten is born prematurely, and one in thirty is born with a congenital defect. At least one child in every ten suffers from a learning or behaviour problem, one child in five suffers from asthma, and yet the combined evidence of many eminent researchers shows that conditions such as infertility, miscarriage, low birth weight, premature birth, malformation, breastfeeding difficulties, learning problems, allergies and many more are often preventable with preconception health care.

### **Preconception health care can help to:**

- Improve fertility and resolve infertility in both men & women
- Ensure a normal, healthy full-term pregnancy (prevent miscarriage, premature birth and stillbirth)
- Ensure a natural unmedicated birth
- Avoid postnatal depression
- Ensure successful breastfeeding
- Ensure a very happy, healthy baby
- Avoid birth defects

Probably the most important aspect is that it involves both partners equally. Another very fundamental aspect of preconception health care is improving nutrition. Every aspect of reproductive health, from formation of sperm and maturation of ova, right through to the production of good quality breast milk, is dependent on an adequate supply of vitamins, trace minerals and essential amino and fatty acids. However, refined modern diets, common lifestyle factors and environmental pollution can seriously compromise an individual's nutritional status.

Since sperm formation can take up to 116 days, and since ova are susceptible to damage for about 100 days before ovulation, preconception health care for both partners needs to be in place for a minimum period of three to four months immediately preceding any attempt to conceive.

Our practitioners are highly experienced at supporting couples through the preconception time.