



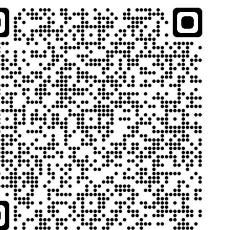
## Creating healthier dads and babies.



This pamphlet provides a brief overview of a healthy start for a man and his future baby.

Talk to your health care provider or contact your local county health department at:  
[Oklahoma.gov/health/  
countymap](http://Oklahoma.gov/health/countymap)

For more information, visit: [iio.health.ok.gov](http://iio.health.ok.gov)



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**Preparing For A Lifetime**  
**It's Everyone's Responsibility**



You plan for school, work, holidays, and even your retirement.

### What about your baby?

We used to think that all a man needed to do to prepare for a baby was save some money and set up the crib, but many things contribute to producing a healthy baby.

Men are not silent partners in the making of a baby. The health of the man plays an important role in his ability to create a baby and to have healthy children.

When conception does not occur as planned, the cause is sometimes due to the man, sometimes due to the woman or a combination of both.

### A Man's Health Before Pregnancy Can Affect the Baby

**What's up doc?** A family history of certain health conditions, some medicines and diseases take on new meaning when baby planning. High blood pressure, arthritis, depression, cancer, mumps, diabetes, Hepatitis B, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV can affect your chances for making a pregnancy happen or having a healthy baby.

**Healthy sperm...** Sperm is continuously produced. It takes about three months for sperm to fully develop and its quality may be affected by many factors during that time: heat, chemicals, recreational and prescription drugs, infections, etc. For example, cocaine may increase the number of abnormal sperm. Sperm quality also decreases gradually as men age.

**It's too darn hot...** some men who work in extremely hot environments such as foundries or bakeries or use hot tubs and saunas for relaxation have experienced a low sperm count.

**Booze news...** Alcohol can damage the quality of sperm. Research says heavy alcohol use may affect sperm formation and function, or may cause impotence.



**Sperm that really smoke...** what good are a lot of sperm if only a few work well? Sperm quality can be affected by smoking. Research also shows a slight increase in certain types of cancer in children of smoking fathers. Smoking can make it harder for a man to get an erection. The sperm also can not swim as fast to reach the egg to create a pregnancy. Smokers' sperm has a harder time getting into the woman's egg to create a pregnancy.

**The right stuff...** you are what you eat. If your body is poorly fed and nourished, so are your sperm and sex drive.

**Working grind...** sperm can be affected by toxins or poisons in your environment. You might face these on the job or at home and not realize it. Your work clothes may also bring home contaminants to your pregnant partner.

**Supporting each other...** Having a baby does not make a bad relationship better; it only adds to the stress. Having a child results in a lifelong connection to your partner.



## Is there a baby in your future? Plan for it. Here is what you can do:

- Find out about your family health history.
- Book a physical examination – check up with your health care provider.
- Make sure your immunizations are up-to-date.
- It is safer to stop drinking alcohol and smoking before planning a pregnancy.
- Prescription, over-the-counter, and recreational drugs can affect the quality and quantity of sperm.
- A healthy diet builds healthy sperm.
- Become aware of possible environmental risks at your job and in your home.
- Work with your co-workers and employer to promote a healthy workplace that supports the needs of future and existing fathers.
- Talk with your partner about your readiness to become parents.
- Educate yourself about healthy pregnancies, benefits of breastfeeding, and keeping your baby safe.

