



# What to Expect Before You're Expecting: The Complete Guide to Getting Pregnant

*Heidi Murkoff, Sharon Mazel (Contributor)*

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**What to Expect Before You're Expecting: The Complete Guide to Getting Pregnant** Heidi Murkoff , Sharon Mazel (Contributor)

It's a cover-to-cover revision of America's bestselling guide to getting pregnant, with updated information about genetic screening, ovulation tracking, fertility treatments, and risks like Zika.

*What to Expect Before You're Expecting*, with over 250,000 copies in print, has everything that eager-to-be moms and dads need to know about getting pregnant, from getting their bodies ready to make a healthy baby to getting that healthy baby on board faster. You'll find baby-friendly foods to order up (say yes to yams); fertility-busters to avoid (see you later, saturated fat); how to pinpoint ovulation, time baby-making sex, keep on-demand sex sexy, and separate conception fact—it takes the average couple up to 12 months to make a baby—from myth—position matters.

With the latest on health insurance coverage, preconception travel and the Zika virus, sex selection techniques, antidepressants, and information on family-building options for single women and same-sex couples. Plus, for the 1 in 8 couples who experience infertility, the latest on both low-tech and cutting-edge fertility treatments, from medications to IVF and surrogacy. It's everything you need to know for that baby-making adventure.

## What to Expect Before You're Expecting: The Complete Guide to Getting Pregnant Details

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## From Reader Review What to Expect Before You're Expecting: The Complete Guide to Getting Pregnant for online ebook

### Modern Girl says

I guess...maybe this book wasn't meant for me? I do plan to have a family in the next 3 years. My doctor did put me on prenatal pills to boost my calcium & folic acid while I'm still under 30. I've been working today a more active and healthy lifestyle for the past 14 months in the aim to "get fit for pregnancy down the road."

So, I thought this book would be useful.

There was a useful chapter. That's right, one chapter. The stuff about caffeine, and weight, and PCOS (which they make it sound like EVERYONE has). The stuff about guys and hottubs, cell phones, laptops and bicycles was interesting too.

But it was mainly stuff I don't need to think about yet - like artificial reproductive technology.

And it was missing all the stuff I really want to know, the stuff I'm currently trying to do, like condition my body and get my metabolism and eating behaviors where they should be. It didn't really talk about fibre, sugar, deli meats, processed cheese, soy, or anything of the things I'd heard about being issues but wanted confirmed.

As a developmental doctoral student, there was a lot of stuff that they generalized about that I know it wrong. I know the people who wrote this are well educated. But they skewed facts a few times, particularly early on. And that just made them lose any credibility in my books.

I \*was\* excited to read this line of books and to finally be approaching the stage in my life where it made sense to read them. Now, I'm not sure if I want to shell out the money for the rest of the set. I'm hoping the book about actual pregnancy will be better.

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### Sadie says

Some women get pregnant easily and without trying while others must endure tests and fertility help or are unable to conceive at all. All women are different and all face the steps towards parenthood differently. The book *What to Expect Before You're Expecting* by Heidi Murkoff and Sharon Mazel is the "complete guide to getting pregnant." As I'm thinking of taking those tentative steps into motherhood, I decided to give the 2nd edition of this book a read through and review.

I can often tell a lot about an informative book by its table of contents. This book was neatly laid out with 4 parts:

Getting Ready to Get Pregnant (prepping, weight, and eating well).

Getting Pregnant (biology, cycles, fertility, getting down to business, and how to tell if you are pregnant).

Bumps on the Road to Baby (challenges, treatments, and dealing with loss).

Keeping Track (planners and charts).

As you can see, it certainly covers the basics of what you need to know. Delivered in an informative, 2 column layout, with boxes for additional information and separate for Dads-to-Be, it looks much like a

textbook or informative style book complete with terms to know and bullet points.

As far as readability, however, I didn't find it dragging on like a textbook would. Riddled with humorous language that balances on being funny yet clear to the point (and never too crass) the book was an easy read that I feel a woman of any education level could easily understand. However, I didn't read it cover to cover. Should you? Definitely not. This book has information on women with eating disorders, anxiety, over or underweight issues, or have been affected by the Zika virus. Its packed with good information for any individual person's needs, which was refreshing to me. I felt the authors did not shy away from potentially uncomfortable topics in favor of catering to the "norm" but rather provided a comprehensive book that caters to all individuals.

Well, almost all individuals. The author does have information on lesbian couples, and for any woman getting pregnant, this book is invaluable. However, expecting fathers in a gay relationship would find little in this book to be of real use (not to say it doesn't have some good information). The book touches on surrogate mothers, embryo donation, adoption, and sperm donors. The book certainly understands the changes in the modern family but knows that its core audience involves women looking to get pregnant with a male partner.

The book had sections for Dads-to-Be making it easy for them to find relevant information and be involved. I would have liked to see more information for "partners" rather than just fathers. I understand that much of the information was for sperm health and the like so while I feel those sections should remain, a separate section for more general partners would be refreshing to see. I would have also liked to see more information on the legality of non-traditional families. What struggles might gay parents-to-be find? While this is often changing, it might be good to at least provide resources to help others find that information.

Additionally, I would have liked to see a small section on the struggle transgender individuals might face. For example, trans men can still get pregnant but after stopping hormones, and with certain risks. Trans women often stop producing sperm and would also need to pause hormones. Additionally, if they have received gender reassignments surgery, obviously children are no longer allowed to be conceived naturally unless pre-planning was done. A small section of information on transgender issues would have made me feel as though this book was truly complete.

However, I am aware that this book is directed towards the general populous and for that group, it works very well as a readable, informative, and helpful guide. Those individuals in special circumstances often take the step to research their own situation or look to their own books. Perhaps the changes I suggested will be made in later editions as non-traditional families rise in popularity.

What to Expect Before You're Expecting also does a great job of addressing science and speculation. It lets you know which is which, and what can be classified as "wives tales" without cutting them completely, allowing individuals of different beliefs or couples willing to try anything for fun their own options. Additionally, the authors never made me feel guilty as a reader. They proposed what is scientifically healthiest for diet, weight, and lifestyle choices and encourage you to be your healthiest self without guiltning anyone who can't be perfect. It encourages even small changes to a healthy lifestyle and recommends setting realistic goals rather than scaring anyone into the extreme. It has options for vegetarians and vegans and suggestions for great nutrition levels. I found it to be inclusive in that sense providing all possible information while also letting the reader know when to take some information with "a grain of salt."

Finally, this book provides resources to talk to other women who are trying to conceive, helpful preparation checklists, and fertility charts. I checked my book out at the library and therefore had to copy them with a scanner, but I still found them nice to have as well as the different resources provided.

Overall, I was glad I picked this book up but I could see situations where others might pass on it. For most, I would recommend checking it out at your local library or purchasing it on discount at a thrift store (I found

tons of copies there). Not because the book isn't worth the money, but because not everyone needs all the information provided. I haven't tried to conceive just yet, so I didn't read the chapters on infertility or dealing with loss. Should that information become relevant, I will pick this book up again. It's great for "most" situations but not all. Additionally, it supplies a lot of great information but isn't necessary for the creation of a baby (obviously). Many do just fine without it. I like to research and be informed so for the individual like me in a mostly traditional situation, it was a supplement to help me get mentally and physically ready for when we decide to take that next step.

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## Ashley says

A few things I learned from this book:

1. You should totally quit smoking before trying to get pregnant
2. That drinking habit you have should probably go, too.
3. And that other little ah, habit you have? Ix-nay on the rugs-dray.

Ugh - the beginning of this was SO bad. It got a little better as it went on, but still nothing earth-shattering. And the author has an awful habit of putting at least one thing (sometimes two, sometimes three - I guess she likes to mix it up) per sentence in parentheses (I actually had a mental game to going to see how many sentences were parentheses free - I never got above 2 or 3). It was endlessly distracting and made it feel like more of a ym (remember that magazine?!) or Seventeen article with all the little asides to make it more relatable (or whatever).

Needless to say, I can't recomend this one.

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## Victoria says

2.5 stars. I read this book because my husband and I are thinking of trying to conceive in the near future. I had very mixed feelings about it.

Because it was the first book I read, and because I do not have many close female friends who are mothers nor any siblings, even some of the basic information about what you should and should not do when trying to conceive was useful. (This includes such obvious advice as getting your weight under control, taking your vitamins, and a reminder about some things you might not be able to eat when pregnant.) I have read other reviews that have said an hour of Google research might provide the same information as this book, and perhaps that is true. Still, I find books to be comforting and realistically, part of reading this book was to deal with some of my own anxieties (precisely because I'm a "planner" and having children is nothing if not an exercise in the unexpected).

Because that was part of why I wished to read this book, however, it made large swathes of it really superfluous and perhaps they could have been even more anxiety-inducing had I not skipped them. A great portion of the book is about problems with fertility, which is of course something we have not yet been established to have. Additionally, the book is solely focused on the body, but does not discuss anything regarding mentally preparing for a baby, which I hoped it might have. Finally, the language used is eye-rolling at best; the author revels in bad puns and cutesy metaphors that are distracting.

Ultimately, if one truly needs a baseline primer on the bodily aspects of conception, the first few chapters of this are useful. If one wants some questions to help one mentally prepare, however, this book offers none of

that. Overall, though, this book is perhaps more useful for those who have been trying for a while but have not yet conceived.

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### Shannon says

Completely useless. Most of the info contained within can be easily gleaned from the internet with a few cursory searches. **If you don't know it's good for you to eat healthy food, be at a healthy weight and not smoke when you're trying to conceive you shouldn't be contributing to the human race anyway.** She also assumes that every woman out there wants to make babies as fast as they can, but what about the people who have misgivings? No advice for them?

**The author is not a doctor and she doesn't cite any sources for the "research" she's done.** She also uses ridiculous acronyms like TTC (trying to conceive,) BD (baby dance aka sex,) and O (for ovulation.) This is dumb. I don't care if people use these on message boards like she claims they do, but if you type BD instead of sex I'm going to kick you in the face.

Also, a lot of her recommendations are to talk to your doctor. What prescriptions are ok? Talk to your doctor. How can I lose weight if I'm 30lbs overweight? Talk to your doctor. Obviously I wouldn't trust a book for some of these things, but really, is that the best she's got? **She wrote a book about pre-conception and her best advice is to seek someone else's?**

Thankfully, I checked this book out from the library. Feel free to give it a glance if you're curious, but don't waste money on something you can easily get for free, or from your doctor.

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### Lightreads says

I didn't totally hate this, even with all the mealy-mouthed cutesy bullshit (I say this solemnly and with purpose: if any of you ever catch me unironically using the phrase "baby dancing" instead of just saying sex, do us all a favor and insert bullet into brain post haste, please and thank you). I didn't even hate her complete aversion to showing her work and, you know, citing like a fucking professional. I didn't even hate the entire 50 words she devoted to noticing that, ohmygosh, there are people planning to get pregnant who aren't heterosexual, monogamous, and married! Or even how thirty of those fifty words were misleading as to law and facts. (They didn't even get in the same *zip code* as my circumstances, let alone the same ballpark, but go figure.)

Really though. If you're writing a book to educate people about pre-conception health, and I come stumbling along, fresh and blinking and largely uneducated from a life of avowed childfreedom with all my childfree friends, and your book on pre-conception health only manages to teach me four things I didn't already know? *You're doing it wrong.*

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## **Shannon (Mrsreadsbooks) says**

This is a good basic guide for women who are getting ready to start TTC. The book is broken down into just a few chapters including Getting Ready to Make a Baby, Making a Baby and Bumps in the Road, along with a long section for tracking your cycle and other TTC options in the last chapter called Fertility Tracker. I personally didn't learn too much information that I wasn't already aware of, but I have been reading a lot about TTC and pregnancy. Overall I think it's a good basic guide for what to do before you are TTC and habits to change as well as information about when you are TTC, as well as general information about what to do if problems arise along the way.

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## **Kim says**

I didn't hate the book, and some of the GoodReads reviews of the book are a bit harsh.

Sure, there's information here that's easily found on the internet, but that could be said of most topics under the sun. The book acts as a nice stepping off point for the clueless (me!) and at least it's a consolidated sampling of the information I didn't know that I needed to know. Now I can take what I read and actually do more in depth research. Going blindly into the wilderness of internet information can be a daunting endeavor to just think about.

I could've done without the silly euphemisms. I mean, really, can we just say "sex" instead of "baby dance". Also, all those acronyms might be the norm on message boards and in mommy blogs, but us never-been-pregnant-before ladies might prefer to use real words.

I appreciated the authors friendly tone throughout but did find it rather distracting. I think grown women can accept straight forward information without the author trying to sound buddy-buddy with the reader.

There were several sections of the book that seemed repetitive. The author didn't seem to have a clear and concise outline and the editor didn't seem to think it necessary to point that out. Also, the little blurbs/boxes weren't necessary, especially the sections for fathers-to-be. Maybe they could've just put all of that information in its own chapter.

Despite the weaknesses I've pointed out, I found the book a decent read. Like I mentioned before, I find the value in this book in that it is a consolidated text of things I need to educate myself on. I won't knock off any other points simply because of the author's chosen tone and need for acronyms. I wasn't necessary the target audience, but riding the periphery helped me keep from hating the book.

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## **Jaime says**

We've been trying to have a baby for a couple of years now, and I thought it was time that I made sure that I was as educated as I thought I was about conception. I definitely learned a few things from this book. This is a book you can skip around in easily, because not all of the topics are going to apply to everyone. It's informational without being dry and boring. There is also information here for the man you are trying to conceive with. I especially appreciated that the book acknowledged that not everyone can get pregnant at the drop of a hat, and addressed different options that are available. I'll definitely be holding on to this to refer to from time to time.

## **Kelli says**

Wow. No. If you want a book that will scare you into not eating anything besides vegetables, and doing nothing but exercising and taking prenatal vitamins, then by all means, read this! If you want to keep yourself healthy by still keeping some sanity before you get pregnant and ultimately lose your sanity -- then stay away! I didn't find much to help me along in the journey of trying to get pregnant, unfortunately.

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## **Ensley says**

Basic but helpful information.

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## **Carissa says**

The first twenty or so pages has a great wealth of information. The chapters after that kind of go over the same stuff in detail and weren't terribly interesting. There are helpful pages in the very back that you can copy and fill out.

Notes:

Get a full checkup-- weight check, thorough physical, medication overview, blood test (hemoglobin or hematocrit, RH factor, rubella titer, varicella titer, urine screen for diseases, TB, HepB, CMV, toxoplasmosis titer, thyroid, STD), PCOS, uterine fibroids cysts or tumors, endometriosis, PID, irregular periods, recurrent UTI, ask when to start trying after stopping BC pills, update on tet-dip shots, check MMR immunity, screen for Tay-Sachs disease.

Ask mother and mother-in-law if they had preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, postpartum or general depression, how long it took to get pregnant, morning sickness, how long in labor

Start three months before trying to get pregnant with working on tapering the meds  
SSRIs like Prozac may carry a small risk for developing withdrawal symptoms in the baby after delivery

Alternatives to medication are light therapy, psychotherapy, meditation, biofeedback, eating foods high in omega-3, DHA supplement, pregnancy-safe exercise (such as yoga)

Good exercise is 10 minutes of aerobic, 10 minutes of strength training, 10 minutes of stretching

Take prenatal vitamins before trying to conceive

No green tea or any tea with red raspberry leaf, southernwood, worm wood, mug wort, barberry, tansy, mandrake root, juniper, pennyroyal, nutmeg, arbor vitae, senna

Eat lots of calcium (such as 3 calcium chews/day), good protein (quinoa is excellent as well as veggie

burger, black bean enchilada, beans, lentils, split peas or chick peas, edamame, tofu, walnuts, pecans, almonds, sunflower and pumpkin seeds), iron [leafy greens (collard, kale, spinach), lean beef, dried beans, peas, dried apricots, oatmeal] and add vitamin c rich food to increase iron absorption such as oj and tomatoes

Extra foods to eat that are old wives tales but can't hurt to try-- yams, nuts & seeds, oysters, berries such as blackberries and raspberries

Also-- avocados and DHA rich eggs

Go organic to avoid pesticides and other gross stuff-- apples, cherries, grapes, peaches, nectarines, pears, raspberries, strawberries, bell peppers, celery, potatoes, spinach

Limit eating salmon, trout, shrimp, pollock, catfish, canned tuna, sugar snacks, white bread, white rice, white pasta, white pancakes, soy supplements (soy in general)

Avoid eating hydrogenated oils and fish such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish and fresh tuna

Stop taking your BC pills a few months before trying (such as three) and make a note of the first day of each period. Count back 12-16 days to get your ovulation day--keep a chart to determine future dates

You can check your cervical mucus (CM)  
after period--dry  
then sticky for a day or two  
then creamy next several days  
then slippery/stretchy, clear, consistency of egg white is your fertile time

Do not use lubricants or saliva. Try in the morning (if convenient). Think happy baby thoughts!

Three months before you should be exercising 30 minutes per day, healthy eating, taking prenatal vitamin, weaning off prescriptions, ditching BC pills

Two months before you should be continuing to exercise, eat healthy and taking vitamins, be off meds, and also have a full checkup and begin charting periods, basal body temp and CM

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## **Suzanne Ledford says**

First off, let me say I'm far from even expecting to expect. That said, I still love this book. For any woman who wants to get pregnant, thinks she might want to get pregnant or is just interested in learning all there is to know about pregnancy, then this is the book for you. WtEBYE covers everything from what vitamins to take and foods to eat to what possible problems you might face and what options there are if you have trouble conceiving. It has an in-depth fertility journal in the back so you can plan the perfect time to get pregnant. (Romantic, I know...but still helpful!) I would definitely recommend this book and am glad to have it on my shelf!

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## **gina says**

This book offers only a small section to preconception planning (first 70 pages) and the following 200 are

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about fertility issues. It would be better named "What to Expect When You Have Fertility Problems, With a Side Note on Preconception Planning." ::sigh::

There is a lot of valuable fertility information in here and I really feel that this was the motivating factor in writing this book. There are several, better books on preconception than this, but this is not a bad place to start. A springboard in your preparation and soul searching before having children. I believe if every woman spent more time preparing her body, mind, spirit, for having a child that this world would be a much better place. I mean, heck, uncountable clergy require premarital counseling, but no one requires pre-pregnancy counseling. If more people undertook their decision to have a baby with more soul searching, perhaps things would be better. So if you need a place to start, this isn't a bad one. Just please, please don't stop here. Keep reading and searching.

Now onto my complaints.

1. The book is solely a market for its own franchise and will NOT recommend other authors, books, sources to you. It will ONLY refer you back to its own website, and other books. This is a shame to put your own Profit or Ego above women's health. There are numerous sources they could have listed as places to go to learn further information. Other preconception books I have read were JamPacked full of websites, phone numbers, addresses, authors, you name it to get the pre-mother out there and educating herself on a wide range of topics. Don't ever trust a book that refuses to give kudos to others writing in the same field. Run Away! That means their motivation is not you. If it was they'd bend over backwards to tell you were to go to get more info. They would not pretend to be a one stop shop for information.

2. If you enjoy really bad word play, puns, alliterations, all in the name of trying to sound super clever and cute then this is the book for you. It feels almost like two different people are writing this. One is trying way to hard by constantly writing the bad "trying to be clever and cute" word play stuff and "funny" writing. (not funny) The other person is writing the medical information and falls into a decent informative to the point writing style that lays off the down your throat cuteness most of the time. The two styles are obvious to anyone who's had any experience writing. The Two styles will jump off the page at you. I'm sure Heidi has a team of experienced information gatherers..and there is probably only so much one can do to make what they wrote, seem like you wrote it. ::sigh:: I'm sure some woman out there loves the short clipped phrases and sentences that try So Hard at being clever. Count me out though.

Helpful tip: Stick to reading just the outtakes in the boxes, and highlighted materials. Its all you need anyway.

3. Its advice is one step too short on most accounts. Perhaps this is because they don't want to ever refer anyone to an outside source beyond the What to Expect Kingdom. For instance in their brilliant advice to count calories yourself when trying to lose weight they say just that- that you'll need to count the calories yourself. Are you kidding me?? Has anyone on their staff ever tried to do that in todays day and age? Half of the items you eat (fresh w/ no packaging, or from a restaurant) does not give you the calories. But if you go to a website online (Free ones! Tons of them!) you can plug in everything you ate and it adds it up for you. Would it have killed them to suggest a few to their readers. Because I'm sure if you're finding counting calories as an important \*new\* step in the right weight direction, then you need tools to get you there. But What to Expect can't even provide this small step towards information. It just felt a few explanations shy of a being helpful in a places.

All of this is why I say, "Start here, maybe. Don't stop reading. Ask for more." I don't know if I will buy this book. Though the numerous forms in the back look useful- I might see if theres someone better I can give my money to when it comes time to buy.

## Jessica says

Informative book. This book got a lot of unfair reviews. If you are in the medical field, you'll probably hate this book. It is goofy, light hearted, and very informative. It is written with a forward by a doctor who agrees with the information that Heidi Murkoff shares with her reader, so, quite frankly, I didn't need an endnote reference for every fact that was shared with the reader. It helped me make a few lifestyle/vitamin alterations to boost my odds at conceiving. I enjoyed the silly phrases that so many seemed to hate. Yes, I thought "baby dance" was funny...

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