Reproductive Life Planning (RLP) is the first step in planning your future, and helps you:

- **DECIDE** if you want to have children, when that will happen and how many children you want to have.
- **PLAN** a healthy pregnancy for a healthy baby.
- **DECIDE** the best way for you to avoid pregnancy, if that is your goal.
- **FOCUS** on your health.
- **PLAN** for the cost of a family, education, and your career.
- **TALK** about your decisions with your partner.
- **TALK** to your health care provider about:
  - Spacing pregnancies at least 18 months apart.
  - Using an effective method of birth control if you are having sex and not ready or do not want to have a baby.
  - Stopping your birth control.
  - Medications you take, even over-the-counter medicines.
  - How smoking, drinking alcohol, or using other drugs will affect your pregnancy.
  - Seeking care for emotional health such as depression or anxiety.
  - Seeking treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI’s).
**Good health HABITS**

**HEALTHY EATING:**
- Add a fruit or vegetable to each meal.
- Eat a variety of foods.
- Avoid eating raw meats.
- Drink more water and milk, less caffeine and juice or sugary drinks (like soda).
- Take 400 mcg. of the folic acid vitamin each day.
- Eat regular meals, including two servings of protein (meat, fish, soy, cheese, eggs, and beans) daily.
- Eat more meals at home or try to make better choices when you eat out.

**ACTIVITY:**
- Regular activity will help you feel better before, during and after a pregnancy.
- Walking is an excellent and free way to get active.
- Find something that you like to do so you are more likely to continue doing it.

**AVOID DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:**
- Try to limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- If you are trying to get pregnant, avoid all alcohol since alcohol use in pregnancy can lead to birth defects, brain damage and even death for your baby.

**AVOID SMOKING:**
- Smoking can lead to a variety of health issues, whether you are pregnant or not.
- Smoking marijuana in pregnancy has also been shown to cause problems.

**OTHER HEALTH HABITS:**
- Limit exposure and use the right protective gear around certain metals and chemicals such as lead, paint, bug killers, gasoline and car exhaust.

**Taking care of your HEALTH**

- Get a pregnancy test if you think you might be pregnant or miss your period.
- It is important to get care as early as possible if you are pregnant, and to go to your prenatal visits as scheduled.
- Women under 18 and over 34 years old, women with health disorders like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety or other medical problems, and women who have a history of preterm birth may be at higher risk for future pregnancy problems.
- You can lower the risk of problems that last a lifetime for yourself and your baby by making good health choices before, during and after any pregnancy.

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**IMMUNIZATIONS:**
Make sure your immunizations are up to date. Ask about measles, rubella, mumps, chicken pox, flu vaccines, Tdap, hepatitis and HPV. Make sure your partner and your family is also up to date on immunizations.

**SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STD):**
All STIs, such as herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and HIV/AIDS can cause serious problems for men, women, pregnant women and newborns. If you have any questions get tested at your provider’s office. HIV screening, even if you think you are low risk, is a good idea.

**FAMILY HEALTH:**
Find out about your family history, and your partner’s family history. Does anyone have an inherited disease, birth defect or other health challenges? If you are planning to have children someday, you may benefit from genetic counseling before you get pregnant.

**EMOTIONAL HEALTH:**
Take the time to focus on your own mental health. Some families struggle with anger or physical and emotional abuse and violence. An unplanned pregnancy can increase stress, money problems and interfere with school, work and family life.