

Preconception Foundations

The First 90 Days

Sandra Golaszewski, DNP, APRN, CNM

The 90 days before pregnancy is the highest-leverage window in reproductive medicine. Egg quality is built in roughly 90 days. Sperm quality is built in roughly 75 days. The nutritional, hormonal, and metabolic foundation that will carry a pregnancy is set in this window, not after the positive test. This guide covers the foundations that matter most.

Nutritional foundations

- **Whole food, low processed eating.** Build meals around real food. Limit processed foods, refined sugar, and industrial seed oils.
- **Protein at each meal.** Aim for 30 to 40 grams of protein per meal. Animal protein, fish, eggs, and legumes.
- **Two whole eggs daily.** Choline is the most underconsumed fertility nutrient. Two whole eggs daily is the non-negotiable baseline.
- **Liver or desiccated liver capsules.** Liver is the original prenatal vitamin. If liver as food is not appealing, desiccated liver capsules are an acceptable second option.
- **Full-fat dairy if tolerated.** Cheese, yogurt, butter, and whole milk provide fat-soluble vitamins and saturated fat that supports hormone production.
- **Cold-water fatty fish.** Salmon, sardines, and mackerel for omega-3 fatty acids two to three times per week.
- **Daily leafy greens.** Spinach, kale, and other leafy greens for natural folate. The folate that is built into food is more bioavailable than synthetic folic acid.

Supplements that matter

- **High-quality prenatal vitamin with folic acid or methylfolate.** Folic acid has the strongest evidence base for preventing neural tube defects and is the form recommended by ACOG and USPSTF. Methylfolate is the active form your body uses directly and may suit some individuals. Either form is appropriate when paired with a complete prenatal.
- **Vitamin D, 2,000 IU daily.** Maintenance dose for most people. Higher repletion doses require lab confirmation first.
- **CoQ10 for egg quality.** Particularly relevant over age 35. Ubiquinol form is typically better absorbed.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids.** If you are not eating fatty fish two to three times per week, supplement.

Supplements are case-specific. The right plan should be built with a clinician who knows your case.

Note on folate: *Folic acid has the strongest randomized trial evidence for neural tube defect prevention and is the form recommended by ACOG and USPSTF. Methylfolate has emerging evidence and may be preferred in specific cases. The choice should be made with a clinician who knows your case.*

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for clinical evaluation.

Sandra Golaszewski, DNP, APRN, CNM | AVENORA Health | avenorahealth.com | info@avenorahealth.com

Cycle and ovulation awareness

- **Track your cycle for at least 2 to 3 cycles before trying.** Knowing your pattern is the foundation for everything that follows.
- **Confirm ovulation.** Use basal body temperature tracking, ovulation predictor kits, or cervical mucus observation. Confirmed ovulation is not the same as assumed ovulation.
- **Note your luteal phase length.** The luteal phase (from ovulation to the next period) should be at least 10 days. A short luteal phase is a workup point, not a small detail.

Lifestyle foundations

- **Sleep, 7 to 9 hours per night.** Consistent timing matters more than perfection.
- **Daily stress management practice.** Walking, meditation, journaling, or any practice you will actually do.
- **Movement, ideally including strength training.** Two or three strength sessions per week plus daily walking is a strong baseline.
- **Reduce alcohol exposure.** Alcohol affects both partners. Reduce or eliminate during the preconception window.
- **Eliminate tobacco and nicotine.** Including vaping. These affect egg quality, sperm quality, and pregnancy outcomes.
- **Review medications with a clinician.** Some medications need to be adjusted before pregnancy. Do not stop anything without a conversation.

Partner basics

- **Sperm quality is built over approximately 75 days.** The 75 days before conception is a window where lifestyle changes can meaningfully improve sperm parameters.
- **Encourage similar nutritional foundations.** The same whole-food approach that supports egg quality supports sperm quality.
- **Sperm quality is affected by heat, alcohol, tobacco, and certain medications.** Saunas, hot tubs, laptop use on the lap, and tight clothing are all relevant exposures.
- **Semen analysis is reasonable early in the process.** Not after a year of trying. Knowing the baseline is responsible, not pessimistic.

When to seek more help

- Trying for 6 months at age 35 or older, or 12 months under age 35.
- Cycles that are irregular or absent.
- A history of pregnancy loss.
- Known medical conditions that affect fertility (thyroid, PMOS, endometriosis, diabetes, autoimmune).
- Concerns about partner fertility.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for clinical evaluation.

Sandra Golaszewski, DNP, APRN, CNM | AVENORA Health | avenorahealth.com | info@avenorahealth.com