



## **Female Personal Reproductive Health Risk Assessment**

### **Background:**

This is a tool that can be filled out in a waiting room, exam room, or given to a patient before or after an appointment to discuss at a subsequent visit. This tool was first developed for non-clinical settings so it is not limited to clinical visits. Ideally, the patient would fill this out prior to seeing her health care provider so that the provider could go over the “results” of the assessment.

One potential way to introduce the tool to patients might be a brief introductory letter:

*Please take a few minutes to fill out this Personal Reproductive Health Risk Assessment. This tool is intended to help start a conversation between you and your health care provider about your personal health and lifestyle and how they might relate to any future pregnancies. There is no “one size fits all” approach to preparing for pregnancy, every woman’s body and life circumstances are different. This is just one way to begin thinking about where you are right now and what your personal, life and physical/medical goals might be between now and any future pregnancies. Your health care provider will discuss your completed Personal Reproductive Health Risk Assessment with you.*

The tool is not meant to provide specific health recommendations or clinical guidelines. Instead, it’s a way to open a dialogue with a female patient about her current health behaviors and lifestyle choices and how they relate to her future pregnancy plans. It helps women think about all the factors that might impact their own pregnancies and birth outcomes in ways and terms that are familiar to them. For many, it serves as a warning to take the time and effort now and in the coming months and years to better prepare their bodies and life circumstances before pregnancy.

### **Instructions:**

After the patient has filled out the personal risk assessment, add up her score and tell her if she falls into the low, moderate or high risk categories. One way to explain her score is to explain that the tool gives us a snapshot of her health, and if she were to become pregnant today, she would be at either a low, moderate or high risk of having a poor birth outcome. Explain that this is not a diagnostic tool and no one can predict exactly what might happen.

Refer to the: **Explanation of Personal Reproductive Risk Assessment** to discuss the areas where she might be able to make some changes to help her have a lower risk of a poor birth outcome if she were to become pregnant. This is a nice tool to help introduce the idea of completing a written Reproductive Life Plan (RLP). For example, if a patient has a high BMI, one of her goals in her RLP might be to lose a certain amount of weight and maintain it for a certain length of time before becoming pregnant. After reviewing this tool with her, it is easy to then recommend that she take some time to complete a written RLP and revisit at least every six months or more often as her life circumstances change.



## Personal Reproductive Health Risk Assessment for Females

Question	YES	NO
1. Do you go to your health care provider at least once a year for a check up?	Yes= 1	No=0
2. Do you go to your dentist at least every six months to get your teeth cleaned?	Yes= 1	No=0
3. Do you eat fast food at least three times a week?	Yes=0	No=1
4. Do you get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least 5 times a week?	Yes= 1	No=0
5. Have you ever been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection?	Yes=0	No=1
6. Do you know when you intend to become pregnant (someday)?	Yes= 1	No=0
7. Do you take steps to handle your stress in a positive way?	Yes= 1	No=0
8. Do you smoke?	Yes=0	No=1
9. Do you take prescription medications?	Yes= 0	No=1
10. Do you have \$200 or more in credit card debt?	Yes= 0	No=1
11. Do you know your sickle cell status?	Yes= 1	No=0

12. Have you been immunized against human papillomavirus (HPV)?	Yes= 1	No=0
13. Do you or anyone in your immediate family have diabetes or high blood pressure?	Yes=0	No=1
14. Is your weight status overweight, obese, or underweight?	Yes=1	No=0
15. Have you ever been hit by a significant other?	Yes=0	No=1
16. Do you get at least eight hours of sleep most nights?	Yes= 1	No=0
17. Do you take a multivitamin with at least 400 micrograms of folic acid every day?	Yes= 1	No=0
18. Have you ever had a pregnancy scare?	Yes=0	No=1
19. Has anyone in your family had a poor birth outcome (infant death, premature baby, low birth weight baby, birth defect)?	Yes= 0	No=1
20. Do you consider yourself to be in excellent health?	Yes= 1	No=0

**Add up your points and put the resulting number here:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Answer/Scoring Key: Personal Reproductive Health Risk Assessment for Females**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Sheet Assignment</b>
<b>20-15</b>	Low Risk
<b>14-9</b>	Moderate Risk
<b>0-8</b>	High Risk

\*This exercise was designed to help adolescent females assess their personal risk of a poor birth outcome if they were to become pregnant today. It is by no means a medical recommendation. All females should talk with their own health care providers about their personal risk factors that could affect their own health and the health of any current or future pregnancies.



## Explanation of Personal Reproductive Risk Assessment for Females

<p><b>1. Do you go to your health care provider at least once a year for a check up?</b></p> <p>Regular health care is important to your health. Regular care should include a pap smear, breast exam, review of family health history, weight, blood pressure check, diabetes testing and assessment of health habits that may be considered risky.</p>
<p><b>2. Do you go to your dentist at least every six months to get your teeth cleaned?</b></p> <p>Gum disease and other types of infections of the mouth affect can affect your overall health. It increases a woman's risk of heart disease, and can cause a pregnant woman to go into labor early.</p>
<p><b>3. Do you eat fast food at least three times a week?</b></p> <p>Fast Food is loaded with saturated fat and is low in essential vitamins and minerals. Eating fast food on a regular basis can increase your risk of obesity as well as poor nutrition.</p>
<p><b>4. Do you get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least 5 times a week?</b></p> <p>Physical activity helps a woman to look and feel her best. Regular exercise and eating a healthy diet may help to prevent some illnesses, and decreases your risk for colds and other infections.</p>
<p><b>5. Have you ever been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection?</b></p> <p>Unprotected sex can put you at risk for infections of the reproductive organs. This can lead to internal scarring, and infertility later in life. In addition, some STIs cannot be cured and stay with you for life. Many STIs can affect the health of baby if not treated properly. Early prenatal care is a must.</p>
<p><b>6. Do you know when you intend to become pregnant (someday)?</b></p> <p>Putting down on paper your plan for when and if you want to have children decreases your chance of experiencing an unintended pregnancy. Infants conceived without planning are at a higher risk for poor health, and life long health complications.</p>
<p><b>7. Do you take steps to handle your stress in a positive way?</b></p> <p>Stress can increase a woman's risk for illness and infection. Ongoing stress can put you at risk for chronic diseases like high blood pressure. A woman who has high stress and gets pregnant is more likely to have a baby born too early and too small to survive.</p>

**8. Do you smoke?**

Smoking increased your risk of developing health problems. Women who smoke at a young age are more likely to develop serious lung disease in the future. A woman who drinks or smokes when pregnant has a much higher risk of delivering an infant who dies before its first birthday.

**9. Do you take prescription medications?**

Some prescription medications can harm a fetus and could lead to birth defects. Always ask your health care provider about the risks of taking a medication if you were to become pregnant. Also, some antibiotics can decrease the effectiveness of some forms of birth control, for example, birth control pills.

**10. Do you have \$200 or more in credit card debt?**

Young women who go into debt have a hard time getting out of debt. A poor credit score can affect your ability to buy a car, house or get financial aid in the future. Being financially healthy is a major protective factor for health. Financial insecurity is closely linked to chronic diseases.

**11. Do you know your sickle cell status?**

Sickle cell anemia and trait is one of the most common inherited conditions that African-Americans have. Both trait and disease can have health implications. Know what is in your genes, and how it can be passed on if you get pregnant.

**12. Have you been immunized against human papillomavirus (HPV)?**

HPV is a major cause of cervical cancer. Protecting yourself with this new vaccine decreases your risk of this serious health issue. HPV is the most common STI among all women.

**13. Do you or anyone in your immediate family have diabetes or high blood pressure?**

If you have a close relative with diabetes or high blood pressure you are at an increased risk to develop these health problems, both of which can cause severe debilitating conditions several decades after the initial diagnosis is made. Both of these diseases can cause serious complications when pregnant if they are not well controlled

**14. Is your weight status unhealthy?**

Being underweight or overweight can cause health problems. Underweight women are more likely to have weaker bones, and being overweight can increase your risk for diabetes and heart disease and poor birth outcomes.

**15. Have you ever been hit by a significant other?**

Domestic violence is a major danger to health. 1 out of every 4 women will experience an abusive relationship. Some will not survive it. If you are in need of help, you can call a domestic violence hot line. The risk of domestic violence goes up for women when they are pregnant. Abuse can happen in teen relationships, seek help immediately.

**16. Do you get at least eight hours of sleep most nights?**

It is essential for the body to have the opportunity to rest in order to rebuild, and rejuvenate. When you do not give your body this opportunity you increase your risk for illnesses and health consequences

**17. Do you take a multivitamin with at least 400 micrograms of folic acid every day?**

Some studies show that folic acid might decrease the risk of developing breast, cervical and colon cancer, helps prevent heart disease, and can help prevent neural tube birth defects if taken before becoming pregnant and through the first several weeks of early pregnancy. Get in the habit—start now and take them for life.

**18. Have you ever had a pregnancy scare?**

Infants born as a result of an unintended pregnancy are more likely to be born less healthy, increasing their risk for life long complications.

**19. Has anyone in your family had a poor birth outcome (infant death, premature baby, low birth weight, birth defect)?**

A family history of a poor birth outcome may put you at higher risk for one as well, though not necessarily. Talk to your health care provider well before planning to become pregnant to come up with a plan for optimal health for both you and your future baby.

**20. Do you consider yourself to be in excellent health?**

One's perception of health is very telling. If you do not think you are in excellent or good health, then there are probably health habits you have which you already know are bad for you. Once identified they can be eliminated.

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## Adolescent Reproductive Life Plan

### My Life, My Plan

These are the years when you should be having fun and preparing for your future. Now is a good time to start to think about what you want out of life and set goals. Do you have dreams of a career, college, travel, and relationships?

As you make your plans, it's a good idea to think through the "ifs" and "whens" of how becoming a parent fits in to what you want. Making a plan and putting it on paper has been shown to help achieve life goals.

### If and When

Do you want to become a parent someday? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Not sure, maybe

If yes or maybe... What life goals do you want in place first? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Decide what you want out of life:

- \_\_\_\_ HS diploma for sure
- \_\_\_\_ College diploma
- \_\_\_\_ A great job
- \_\_\_\_ A cross country trip
- \_\_\_\_ A committed relationship, maybe even married
- \_\_\_\_ A well-established career
- \_\_\_\_ Money saved in the bank
- \_\_\_\_ Own my own home and car
- \_\_\_\_ What else? \_\_\_\_\_

Pretend you are an artist. Draw a timeline for the next 20 years and show how old you will be for each of these life experiences. Be creative; add in what you want out of life.



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Now answer these questions and add them to your timeline:

- How old do you want to be when you have your first baby?
- How many children do you think you might like to have?
- How old do you want to be when you have your subsequent babies?

*There are steps you can take to be in the best health. Consider all of the following:*

### **Develop Healthy Relationships**

Surround yourself with family and friends that support you and help you be your best self. Don't let anyone pressure you to do anything you are not ready for like sex. Stay away from alcohol, smoking and illegal drugs.

### **Take Care of Yourself**

Eating well, regular exercise and taking a daily multivitamin now can help you have a healthy baby later. Make sure if you are thinking about having sex that you use a dual method of protection- that means condoms to prevent STIs and another more effective form of birth control to prevent pregnancy.

### **Stay Out of the Fog Zone**

So many young adults think that pregnancy should be planned, but they don't take the precautions to avoid unplanned pregnancy. Make sure you are living consciously, making active decisions to keep you on track for your goals.

### **Learn Your Family History**

Ask your family members about any history of poor birth outcomes, diabetes, high blood pressure or other health issues. Share this information with your health care provider and make sure you get annual check-ups and visit your dentist regularly for cleanings.

### **Make a Promise...To Yourself**

Promise yourself to stay healthy and seek healthy relationships. It will make you feel good about yourself now and will help give you the best chance of having a healthy baby if and when the time is right.

**Have a plan, work hard for your goals, stay true to yourself and in the meantime...take a multivitamin every day, eat well and exercise regularly to look and feel great at a healthy weight.**

Adapted from Delaware Teen Reproductive Life Plan/ Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium