

## Little evidence for benefits of routine pre-pregnancy health promotion

<b>Clinical question</b>	How effective is routine pre-pregnancy health promotion for improving pregnancy outcomes for mothers and babies?
<b>Bottom line</b>	There was some evidence that compared with no pregnancy care or usual care, health promotion interventions (encompassing education, advice and general health assessment) encouraged women to have more healthy lifestyles, such as lower rates of binge drinking. Overall, there was little evidence from one trial on the effects of pre-pregnancy health promotion on the health of mothers and babies (preterm birth, congenital anomalies or weight for gestational age). The babies of women who had received the health promotion intervention had slightly lower birthweights. This finding needs to be interpreted with caution, as pregnancy outcome data were available for only half of the women randomised. More evidence is needed before widespread implementation of pre-pregnancy health promotion can be recommended.
<b>Caveat</b>	For most outcomes, data were only available from individual studies. In only one study were women followed up through pregnancy. This review included only trials aimed at the general population of women of childbearing age, in developed countries, and excluded trials targeting specific high-risk women
<b>Context</b>	Smoking, drinking excess alcohol, poor nutrition and other lifestyle factors can lead to poor outcomes for mothers and babies. The provision of routine health promotion (including advice and education and sometimes screening tests) before conception may encourage changes to improve health, and may be an opportunity to identify risk factors, such as infection that can be treated before pregnancy begins.
<b>Cochrane Systematic Review</b>	Whitworth M and Dowswell T. Routine pre-pregnancy health promotion for improving pregnancy outcomes. Cochrane Reviews 2009, Issue 4. Article No. CD007536. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD007536.pub2. This review contains 4 studies involving 2300 participants

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners. They are funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases.

View PEARLS online at:

- [www.cochraneprietarycare.org](http://www.cochraneprietarycare.org)



PEARLS

Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

PEARLS No. 231, February 2010, written by Brian R McAvoy

[References]



COCHRANE  
PRIMARY HEALTH  
CARE FIELD

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners. They are funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases.

View PEARLS online at:

- [www.cochraneprimarycare.org](http://www.cochraneprimarycare.org)