



Ready... Set... Plan!

Route to Planning a Family

Do you dream of a big family with lots of children?

Is one or two enough? Maybe you don't see any children in your future.

Do you have a plan for your future?

What can I do before, during and between pregnancies to be as healthy as possible and to have a healthy baby?

Half of the pregnancies in North Carolina are unplanned. An unplanned pregnancy can cause a lot of stress on you and your family. Planning your family can make things much easier.

Planning a family? What routes should you take first?

Are You Ready?

What's Your Plan?

The routes help people make choices about how to have a healthy life, a healthy family and a healthy body.

Ready, Set, Plan!

Ready, Set, Plan! (RSP) takes three routes to a healthier life and a healthier family.

1. Health and Wellness Route
2. Emotional Health and Wellness Route
3. Family Planning Route

All of the routes share the same goal of bringing people together to talk about the importance of family health and family planning in community-based conversations.

All of the routes ask the questions “Are You Ready?” and “What’s Your Plan?” The “Are You Ready?” questions focus on choices people make that impact their health and the health of their families. The “What’s Your Plan?” questions prompt people to make decisions on what they can do to be healthier.

The training materials you receive will give you different ideas on how to talk about each of the routes. You can present the routes in any order. You might want to focus on the Route to Emotional Health first or only the Route to Family Planning. That’s up to you. Ready, Set, Plan! is your project. We encourage you to use the training materials in your own way.

Route to Planning a Family

Table Of Contents

Planning A Family?

How Many?	4
Birth Spacing	5
Is It Time Yet?	6

Family Planning

The Methods Path	7
Options?	8
Family Planning Methods (handout).....	9, 11
Birth Control Flash Cards	10, 12
Family Planning Waiver (Medicaid)	13

Safe Sex

What's The Excuse?	14
How To Persuade Your Partner To Use A Condom (handout).....	15
Safe Sex Or No Sex	16

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Common STI Signs, Risks And Treatment.....	17
Q & A On STIs	18
Take The Tests That Save Lives.....	20

Time For A Baby?

The Route To Parenthood	21
Steps To Take When Planning Your Pregnancy	22
Cost Of Raising A Child.....	23
Are You Ready?	24
What's Your Plan?.....	25
RSP Action Plan (handout)	26

Types Of Activities

- Discussion
- Learn More
- Presentation
- Reflection
- Writing

Use These Activities

You can use these activities to expand your Routes Flip Chart Presentation and as a way to start discussions. The activities are designed to stand alone and can be used over a period of weeks or months.

Reflection

How Many?

Do you dream of a big family with lots of children? Is one or two enough? Maybe you don't see any children in your future. Do you have a plan for your future?

Half of the pregnancies in North Carolina are unplanned. An unplanned pregnancy can cause a lot of stress on you and your family. Planning your family can make things much easier.

Planning a family? What route should I take first?

First, ask yourself a few questions:

- What are my plans for the future?
- Do I want to have children?
- When?
- How many children do I want to have?
- How far apart do I want their ages to be?
- How will I prevent an unplanned pregnancy?
- Do I know of any risk factors or conditions that I (or my partner) have that could affect a baby?

Birth Spacing

Birth spacing refers to the time between children. It is measured from one child's birth date until the next child's birth. There are many factors to consider in deciding what is the best amount of time between pregnancies. Researchers, however, tend to agree that at least 2 years between births is usually the best time to wait for the well-being of the mother and her children.

When babies come less than 1½ years apart or more than 5 years apart they may have greater health risks.

These risks include:

- Low birthweight (less than 5½ lbs)
- Preterm birth (before 37th week of pregnancy)
- Small size for age when born
- Death during the first 28 days

Learn More

Benefits of birth spacing:

- A healthier mom and baby
- A chance to improve finances
- Less stress

Writing

Materials Needed

- Calculator
- RSP Action Plan handout

Note: This activity does not have to be a personal discussion. Tell participants they can use any dates just to practice the calculations.

Is It Time Yet?

Ask your audience:

- How would you define effective birth spacing?
- What steps would you take to ensure effective birth spacing?
- Why would you want to wait to have a second or third child?

Write their answers on the board, flip chart or sheet of paper and tape them to the wall.

Have them calculate how many months between their babies or between their brothers and sisters.

For example, the first child was born on January 1, 2000.
The second child was born two years later on July 15, 2002.
To determine the birth spacing, count the months in between.
The answer is 30 months.

Example:

First year: January 1, 2000 - December 31, 2000
Second year: January 1, 2001 - December 31, 2001
January 1, 2002 - July 15, 2002 is 6½ months

These children are 2½ years apart in age.

The Methods Path

So, you decided to put off having a child until you do a few other things. There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it is a great decision if you know that you are not ready for a family. Have you thought about how you are going to prevent getting pregnant? It's no secret: If you have sex without using a method of protection, you are planning to get pregnant. There are many kinds of family planning methods (birth control). Each has advantages and disadvantages.

Benefits of Using Family Planning Methods

- Reduces the chances of unplanned pregnancies
- Increases the chances of having a healthy baby when you are ready
- Improves the chances of continuing in school

Group Activity

Ask your group to use the chart on page 9 in this section and pick what they think is the best family planning method for them. Then encourage the group to talk to their doctor to get started or to ask about the methods they would like to know more about.

Using *My Health Journal*, ask the group to write down any questions they have for their healthcare provider. Remember that most local health departments have free or low-cost birth control options. Some types of birth control may be covered by health insurance.

Discussion

Which family planning method is right for you?

Materials Needed

- Family Planning Methods Chart
- *My Health Journal*

Discussion

Materials Needed

- Family Planning Methods handout
- Birth Control Flash Cards

Options?

Ask the group what types of birth control methods they have heard about.

Make a list.

Use the Family Planning Methods handout and the sheet with pictures of all the birth control methods on it. As a group, read aloud each method of birth control and how each method works. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages to each method, if time permits.

Route to Planning a Family

Family Planning Methods

Birth Control Method	How It Works	Advantages	Disadvantages
Abstinence (not having sex)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No semen and sperm enter the vagina. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's free. The only way to be sure not to get pregnant. Prevents STIs including HIV. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be practiced 100 percent to be completely effective. May not be realistic.
The Pill, Vaginal Ring The Patch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops ovaries from releasing eggs. Must get from a healthcare provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very effective if used correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. Need to remember to either take a pill daily or to remove and insert/apply the vaginal Ring or the Patch as directed.
Contraceptive Injections healthcare provider injected hormone method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops ovaries from releasing eggs. Must get from a healthcare provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last for 3 months. Very effective if used correctly. Don't need to remember to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. May take a little while to get pregnant after stopping. May cause appetite increase and weight gain. Need to remember to go to appointments for shots. May cause spotting. Periods may stop or be irregular.
Contraceptive Implant healthcare provider inserted hormonal method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops ovaries from releasing eggs. Must have this inserted under your upper arm skin by healthcare provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lasts up to 3 years. Very effective. No need to remember to use because it is already in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. Periods may last longer. May cause spotting. Periods may stop or be irregular.
Intrauterine Device (IUD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare provider puts small T-shaped device in the uterus to stop sperm from joining with the egg. Must get inserted by a healthcare provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lasts up to either 5 or 10 years, depending on the type. Very effective. No need to remember to use it because it's always in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. For the first few months, may cause spotting, heavier or lighter periods and cramping.

continued on page 11

Route to Planning a Family

Birth Control Flash Cards

Abstinence

**Not
Having Sex**

The Pill



Vaginal Ring



The Patch



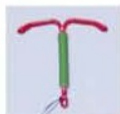
Contraceptive Injections



Contraceptive Implant



Intrauterine Device (IUD)



Hormonal



Intrauterine Device (IUD)



Copper



continued on page 12

Route to Planning a Family

Family Planning Methods

continued from page 9

Birth Control Method	How It Works	Advantages	Disadvantages
Condoms male and female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed over penis or in vagina to block egg and sperm from mixing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can prevent STIs (including HIV) if used correctly. Very effective if used correctly. Can get at the drug store. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people don't like how they feel. You must remember and be motivated to use it every time so it is effective.
Diaphragm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small cup covers the opening of the uterus to stop sperm from entering. Used with spermicidal cream or jelly. Must be fitted by a healthcare provider. Recommend refitting after weight gain or loss of 10 pounds or more; after an abortion or after a full-term pregnancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective if used correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. You must remember and be motivated to insert it and remove as instructed so it is effective.
Cervical Cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small cup fits over the cervix and blocks sperm from entering the uterus. Used with spermicidal cream or jelly. Must be fitted by a healthcare provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective if used correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. You must remember and be motivated to insert it and remove as instructed so it is effective. Some people don't like how it feels.
Spermicidal Foam and Cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foam or cream kills sperm. Place it in your vagina right before sex. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can get at the drugstore. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not very effective at preventing pregnancy. Does not prevent STIs.
Sterilization male and female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgery cuts or blocks a woman's fallopian tubes to permanently prevent eggs from reaching the uterus. Surgery cuts (vasectomy) or seals a man's vas deferens to permanently block the release of sperm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely effective in preventing pregnancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs.
Emergency Contraception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops ovaries from releasing eggs. Must get from a healthcare provider or with a prescription if under 17 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective if used correctly. Can get at the drug store. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not prevent STIs. Not for routine use. Most effective if taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex, within 5 days (120 hours) maximum time period for use.

Route to Planning a Family

continued from page 10

Birth Control Flash Cards

Condoms



Male Condom

Female Condom

Diaphragm



Cervical Cap



Spermicidal Foam and Cream



Sterilization

**Surgical
procedures for
men and women**

Emergency Contraception



Family Planning Waiver (Medicaid)

Helps You Decide When The Time Is Right

The North Carolina Family Planning Waiver is a FREE insurance program that pays for family planning services at local health departments and some community health centers and private doctor's offices.

With the Family Planning Waiver, you can get:

- your physical each year.
- help with planning to have a baby.
- most types of birth control methods (including getting your tubes tied or vasectomy).
- pregnancy tests.
- testing for sexually transmitted infections.
- doctor referrals.

Who Can Apply for the Family Planning Waiver?

- Women between the ages of 19 and 55, and men ages 19 through 60
- Residents of North Carolina who are U.S. citizens or legal residents
- If your income is around \$20,000 per year or less
- If your family is larger, you can make more income and still qualify

You can call the CARE-LINE at 1-800-662-7030, your local health department or talk to your healthcare provider for more information on the North Carolina Family Planning Waiver.

Discussion

Is the Family Planning Waiver right for you?

Discussion

Materials Needed

- How To Persuade Your Partner To Use A Condom handout

What's The Excuse?

It can be difficult to talk about using condoms. But you shouldn't let embarrassment make you risk your health. The person that you are thinking about having sex with may not agree at first when you say that you want to use a condom.

Ask the group for some of the "excuses" people use. The next page has responses to combat the excuses that might be made. There are many reasons to use condoms when having sex.

Ask:

What are reasons to use a condom, you can discuss with your partner in group.

See what she/he thinks.

You could ask participants to role play.

Ask participants to find a partner. One of them will practice giving an excuse for not wanting to wear a condom. The other will practice giving an answer (response) to the excuse. It will be fun to have a few pairs practice in front of the whole group. Make sure each participant gets a copy of these excuses and replies to take with them after the exercise is over.

See the excuses and replies on the next page.

Route to Planning a Family

How To Persuade Your Partner To Use A Condom

There are many reasons to use condoms when having sex.
You could go through these reasons with your partner and see what she/he thinks.

EXCUSE	ANSWER
Don't you trust (love) me?	Trust isn't the point, people can have infections without realizing it and I would rather be safe than sorry.
It doesn't feel as good with a condom.	I'll feel more relaxed. If I am more relaxed, I can make it feel better for you.
I don't stay hard when I put on a condom.	I'll help you put it on, that will help you keep it hard.
I am afraid to ask him to use a condom. He will think I don't trust him.	If you can't ask him, you probably don't trust him.
I can't feel a thing when I wear a condom.	Maybe that way you'll last even longer and that will make up for it.
I don't have a condom with me.	I do (be sure to keep a supply of condoms with you).
It's up to him ... it's his decision.	It's your health. It is your decision too!
I'm on the pill, you don't need a condom.	I'd like to use it anyway. It will help to protect us from infections that we may not realize we have.
Putting it on interrupts everything.	Not if I help put it on.
I guess you don't really love me.	I do, but I am not risking my future to prove it.
I will pull out in time.	Women can get pregnant and get STIs from pre-ejaculate.
But I love you.	Then you'll help us to protect ourselves.
Just this once.	Once is all it takes to get an infection or to get pregnant.

Learn More

Safe Sex Or No Sex

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are spread mainly from one infected person to another through sexual contact. A person can get an STI without having vaginal (penis to vagina) sex. Anal sex, oral sex or even vulva (the area around the vagina) to vulva contact can spread these infections. Those types of contact are ALL considered sexual contact, and all are risks for spreading STIs. Some infections may also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth. Another way that infections are passed on is through the sharing of blood products or tissue transfers, including during IV drug use or by getting a tattoo. Some diseases caused by STIs include cirrhosis of the liver, infertility and cervical cancer.

Most STIs are caused by infections from bacteria, protozoa and/or viruses. STIs caused by bacteria and protozoa can usually be cured with antibiotics or prescription topical creams and lotions. Among the most common STIs are three bacterial infections: syphilis, gonorrhea (the “clap”) and chlamydia. All three may be cured with antibiotics, but they can cause serious complications if left untreated.

STIs caused by viruses cannot be cured, but the symptoms (problems that go with the infection) are treatable with different medicines. Some medications can also help decrease the chance that you will pass on certain infections to your partner. These STIs include herpes; human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes genital warts; and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which produces AIDS. Treatment may help relieve the symptoms and/or slow the progression of the disease. Hepatitis and certain strains of HPV are the only STIs for which a vaccine exists.

STIs often exist without symptoms, particularly in women. Thus, men and women with sexual partners or who engage in sexual activity should be regularly tested for STIs regardless of a clear indicator of infection. Whenever an infection is diagnosed or suspected, effective treatment should be provided promptly to avoid future difficulty.

Route to Planning a Family

Common STIs Signs, Risks And Treatment

STI	Common Signs and Symptoms	Risks	Treatment
Chlamydia	Burning when peeing; pain during sex; heavy discharge from the vagina or penis; bleeding between periods.	Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) in women; problems getting pregnant.	Cured with antibiotics but damage can be permanent.
Genital Herpes	Itching, burning, or pain in the legs, buttocks, or vagina or penis; heavy vaginal discharge; pressure in the stomach area; small red bumps or sores that crust over and heal in days; flu-like feelings.	Symptoms throughout life; can cause miscarriages early in pregnancy.	No cure, but medicines can help decrease the number of outbreaks and the chances of passing on the infection to your partner.
Gonorrhea (“The Clap”)	Yellow or bloody discharge from the vagina, penis or rectum; pain when peeing; stomach pain; bleeding between periods.	Damage to joints, heart, and brain; problems getting pregnant; PID in women.	Can be cured with antibiotics but damage can be permanent.
Hepatitis B (HBV)	Tiredness; diarrhea; nausea; dark, foamy pee; pale colored bowel movements; stomach pain; yellow skin or eyes; joint pain; headaches.	Serious liver problems including cancer; immune system problems.	No cure, but can be prevented with vaccinations; treatments help ease signs.
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)	SYMPTOMS MAY TAKE MANY YEARS TO APPEAR! Swollen glands; tiredness; night sweats; yeast infections; diarrhea.	Cause of AIDS which leads to problems fighting off illnesses; death.	No cure but antiviral medicines can help ease signs and extend life for many years.
Human Papilloma Virus (HPV or genital warts)	Small, hard, painless bumps inside or around vagina, penis, anus or mouth; bumps with tops that look like cauliflower; more vaginal discharge than normal. The HPV strains that cause cervical cancer do not cause the symptoms listed previously.	Difficult childbirths; higher risks for genital cancers.	No cure, but medicines help decrease outbreaks and chances of passing infection to your partner. Treatment done by woman/man or healthcare provider.
Syphilis	Painless sores on or near vagina, penis, anus or mouth that go away by themselves; rash on hands, feet or other body parts; more vaginal discharge than normal; muscle aches; fever; sore throat.	Problems getting pregnant; miscarriages; damage to heart; blindness; mental illness; death.	Cured with antibiotics but damage may be permanent.
Trichomoniasis (“Trich”)	Yellow, green or gray vaginal discharge; itching, swelling or redness in vagina; pain during sex or when peeing.	Problems with pregnancy; premature births; fallopian tube damage.	Cured with antibiotics.
Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) This may be a naturally occurring bacterial infection, but it can also be sexually transmitted.	White, gray or thin vaginal discharge with a smell; pain or burning when peeing; itching around vagina.	Increased chance of premature births and for other infections.	Cured with antibiotics.

Learn More

This is background information for you. You are not being trained as a health expert so Community Health Coaches should not give out medical advice.

Refer people to their local health department or tell them to call the CARE-LINE 1-800-662-7030 for free and confidential information.

Q & A On STIs

1. What are STIs?

Answer: Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are spread through person-to-person sexual contact. There are more than 30 different sexually transmitted bacteria, viruses and parasites.

The most common diseases they cause are gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, trichomoniasis, genital herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B.

Herpes, hepatitis B, syphilis, HPV and HIV can also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth, and through blood products and tissue transfer. Others like chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause infections and even death of the baby.

2. How can I protect myself against STIs like HIV/AIDS?

Answer: The only certain way to protect yourself against STI transmission is to abstain from sexual activity that puts you at risk. For effective protection and safer sex, you can use male or female condoms, although you will not be 100% protected.

3. What is safer sex?

Answer: People who have decided to become sexually active can make choices to practice safer sex. Safer sex is anything you can do during sexual activities to reduce your risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease. Most people use the term "safe sex" instead of "safer sex," but there is no kind of skin-to-skin sex play with a partner that is totally risk-free. But being "safer" is something you can always do.

Route to Planning a Family

Important Ways To Practice Safer Sex

You should:

- understand and be honest about the risks you take.
- keep blood, ejaculate, semen or vaginal fluids out of each other's bodies.
- always use male or female condoms for anal, oral or vaginal intercourse.
- not have sex when a sore caused by a sexually transmitted infection is present.
- stick to your limits. Don't let alcohol, drugs or an attractive partner make you forget to protect yourself.

Practicing safer sex also provides protection against pregnancy. There are many ways for you to share your loving and sexual feelings with your partner without being risky at all.

Some of them include:

- Hugging
- Holding hands
- Massaging
- Rubbing against each other with clothes on
- Sharing fantasies
- Phone sex
- Masturbation
- Mutual masturbation (without being near any opening or broken skin)

4. What if I already have an STI?

Answer: If you are already infected with an STI or think you have been infected with an STI seek medical treatment immediately. You should complete the treatment plan the doctor prescribes for you. Do not stop taking the medicine when you feel better, continue to take it as prescribed and do not share your medicine with your partner. You should inform your sexual partner(s) about the infection and strongly encourage him/her to seek treatment. You must abstain from sexual contact while infectious to avoid spreading the disease and you must remember to protect yourself every time you have sex.

Presentation

Take The Tests That Save Lives

Get Tested

If you are sexually active and having unprotected sex you are at risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease or HIV.

HIV is a sexually transmitted infection that can cause AIDS. You can also contract HIV from sharing needles used to inject drugs or medicines. Both men and women should be tested if they could be at risk.

Before You Become Pregnant

Before you even think about getting pregnant you and your partner should take an HIV test. Both of you should also get tested for other STIs (sexually transmitted infections). If you get tested before you become pregnant, knowing the results of your test can help you and your healthcare provider better plan your prenatal care, delivery and the care of your baby after the baby is born. If you test positive for HIV, your healthcare provider will give you medicine to decrease the chance of you passing the virus along to your baby. The quicker you start taking the medicine the better for you and the baby. STIs can be very harmful to your baby's and your health if untreated.

If You Are Pregnant

North Carolina laws requires all pregnant women to be asked about getting tested for HIV while they receive prenatal care. If they tell their doctor that they don't want to be tested at that time, the doctor will offer them the test again when the woman goes into labor. If she refuses HIV testing during labor, it is mandatory that the doctor test the baby as soon as the baby is born. If a new mother has HIV, the healthcare provider will recommend that she does not breastfeed.

The Route To Parenthood

Okay, so you have decided that the time is right for you to have a baby. Where do you begin? You need a plan in place to have a healthy family. The first thing you should do is talk to your partner and make sure this is something both of you want and are ready for. Then discuss the possibility of getting pregnant with your healthcare provider. Make sure you are in good health before becoming pregnant. If you do have health challenges, make sure your healthcare provider knows. Do follow the orders your healthcare provider gives you. The more ready you are; the better your chances for having a healthy, happy pregnancy and family.

Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby

Women who have certain medical conditions like obesity, diabetes, hypertension and asthma are more at risk for problems during their pregnancies which can affect their babies' health. Women who smoke, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs may also negatively affect their health and their babies' health during pregnancy. These medical conditions and risk behaviors of the mother may cause their babies to be born early or born at a low birthweight. These mothers also have a higher chance of having a baby born too large or too small, or a baby born with birth defects or other mental and physical problems.

It is important that women with chronic conditions be under a healthcare provider's care so that their health can be well-managed before, during and after their pregnancies. It is also important for women to be aware of risk behaviors that affect their health and their baby's health in the event of a pregnancy and to seek help to stop these behaviors before becoming pregnant.

[Learn More](#)

Learn More

Steps To Take When Planning Your Pregnancy

- Continue using your birth control until you have made your final decision about having a baby and until your healthcare provider tells you you're in good health.
- Discuss your plan to get pregnant with your healthcare provider. Make an appointment to find out if your body is as healthy as possible. Do not be embarrassed to ask questions that you may have. Now is the time.
- Know what risk behaviors and medical conditions you or your partner have that can affect your baby.
- Decide how you will pay for your healthcare while you are pregnant and when you deliver your baby. Find out if your health insurance will cover all of your prenatal care. If you don't have health insurance or your insurance won't cover the costs of your care, how will you pay for it?
- Take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day. It may prevent certain birth defects. Is also can improve your health and may help reduce the risk of some types of cancer and heart disease.
- Decide if you are financially ready to have a baby.

Cost Of Raising A Child

How much does it take to raise a child through high school?

According to guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it would cost \$1,006 per month or about \$12,072 a year. That's formula, food, diapers, wipes and child care expenses only ... not clothes, doctor's visits or anything extra.

Low birthweight babies or babies born with special needs cost even more.

Ask participants the following questions:

- What do you think could make these costs even higher?
- How can you reduce the cost of having a baby?
- Are you currently financially ready to have a child or another child? Why or why not?

When it comes to feeding a baby. Tell the audience that breastfeeding is the healthiest, least expensive way to feed your baby. Also mention applying for publicly funded child health insurance (Health Check/NC Health Choice). Applications are available by calling the CARE-LINE (1-800-662-7030) or at www.nchealthystart.org.

Raising a child takes a significant amount of personal and financial resources. Parents need to provide support by giving their personal time and energy, as well as by providing for all of the child's financial needs. Family planning allows you time to get financially and emotionally ready to handle the many challenges of parenthood.

In addition, not only does a couple want to have enough resources and energy for their child, the potential parents need to be able to maintain their own psychological and physical health. A would-be parent cannot let their own health suffer because of a failure to plan ahead.

Discussion

Learn More

Are You Ready?

- Find out if there are any health issues that could be a problem if you get pregnant.
- Know your family health history, it could affect your pregnancy.
- You should get tested for any diseases or health conditions before you get pregnant.
- Let your healthcare provider know of any medicines that you are taking before you get pregnant.
- Check with your healthcare provider to find out when you should stop using your birth control method.
- Talk to your healthcare provider to see if you should change your diet and exercise plans.
- Check to see if there are any risks in your home or work environment that could be harmful when you get pregnant.
- Check with your healthcare provider to find out when you should start prenatal care.

Route to Planning a Family

What's Your Plan?

All women (and men) should plan ahead when they are ready to have another baby. Preparing beforehand will help parents, children and babies to be their healthiest.

It is suggested that a woman try to resolve any health problems, review the safety of any medications that she may be taking, be up-to-date on her immunizations, be tested for any sexually transmitted diseases and find out if she may have any medical conditions that could affect a pregnancy.

If there are lifestyle issues present such as violence or abuse, or high levels of stress, a woman should seek help to resolve those issues before becoming pregnant again.

Following good habits such as eating healthy, exercising, taking a vitamin with folic acid, and stopping smoking will help her be healthier and have a healthier pregnancy, newborn baby and entire family.

**For free and confidential family planning
information call the
CARE-LINE
1-800-662-7030.**

Activity

Materials Needed

- RSP Action Plan handout or paper

Think about your plan and discuss with your partner.



Ready... Set... Plan!

Action Plan

**What's Your Plan?
For A Healthy Life.
For A Healthy Family.**

Being healthy and having a healthy family are very important to me.
I will work hard to make some changes to my life in order to be healthier.

Please think about the comments below and write your responses.

My health goal:

My goal to improve my general, emotional and reproductive health is to...

Things I will do to reach my health goals:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

The Ready, Set, Plan! Project is supported in part by project H5MMC10862 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act).

