

## THE FIRST 1000 DAYS: WHAT ARE THEY? WHY DO THEY MATTER ANYWAY?



The first 1000 days are the period between conception and two years of life of the child and represent the most important period to positively influence his future health status, intervening with primary prevention on noncommunicable diseases (e.g. cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, obesity, type 2 diabetes). Already before birth, in fact, next to the genetic component, on which at the moment not much can be done, there is the influence of environmental and epigenetic factors, including the nutrition and physical activity of the mother, which are involved in the brain, immune and metabolic development of the child. It is therefore of fundamental importance the adoption and/or maintenance of correct lifestyles in people of childbearing age from a young age, which can also significantly reduce the risk of adverse reproductive outcomes (infertility, spontaneous abortion, malformations, prematurity).

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## IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE:

### GET INFORMED ON OFFICIAL WEBSITES

[www.ifmed.org](http://www.ifmed.org)

<https://www.first1000days.ie/>

<https://thousanddays.org/>



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## FEEDING IN THE PRECONCEPTION PERIOD



*The preconceptional period is the period between the moment when a couple is open to procreation because they want a pregnancy in the immediate future and the moment of conception.*

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A **healthy lifestyle** is of fundamental importance because it **has positive effects on both female and male fertility and on the good course of pregnancy**, since some crucial phases of foetal growth take place already in the very first weeks, at which time we may not yet be aware of pregnancy; moreover, lifestyle **also affects the health of the baby in the short and long term.**

**But on what factors can we act?**

**• Weight**

reaching or maintaining normal weight before pregnancy to reduce many of the risks associated with being overweight and obese, such as gestational diabetes, hypertension, and other complications related to pregnancy or childbirth



**• Fitness**

to be practiced on a regular basis for the psychophysical well-being of the woman



**• Alcohol and smoking**

complete abstinence in both preconception and pregnancy



**• Folic acid**

given its importance for proper foetal development already in the first weeks of pregnancy, it is important to start as soon as possible with the supplement of folic acid (to agree with your reference specialist)



**• Nutrition**

the Mediterranean dietary model, turns out to be the best for the mother first, then for the child, and for all the family always; this food model includes:



- \* a great variety of food, with mainly fresh foods, limiting the use of those packaged
- \* wide use of fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables and preferably whole grains
- \* good consumption of legumes as a protein source
- \* frequent consumption of small-sized oily fish in the week due to its high omega 3 content
- \* use of extra virgin olive oil as the main source of seasoning
- \* abundant water consumption throughout the day
- \* limited consumption of simple sugars (both those added and those contained in sweets and drinks such as soft drinks, tea, fruit juices, etc.)
- \* limited use of salt, preferring iodised salt, to ensure adequate iodine intake.

**• Food safety**

attention to the methods of washing, preparation and storage of the food and careful hand washing are important at all stages of life, but even more so at the beginning of a pregnancy to avoid the risk of transmission of dangerous infections to the foetus.

