

Oula



PREGNANCY 101:

Oula's Guide to Preconception & the First Trimester

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Congratulations on beginning your pregnancy journey



We're so glad you're here. Whether you're just starting to think about pregnancy, actively trying to conceive, or newly pregnant, we understand how all-consuming this journey can feel. This guide offers a streamlined, research-backed resource to address common questions that arise during preconception and the first trimester.

If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. We always want to hear from you.

– The Oula Team

A modern interior space featuring a wooden ceiling with a grid pattern. In the center, a red arched wall displays the word "Oula" in white. Below the arch is a wooden cabinet with a textured front. To the right, a white bench with a plant sits on a wooden floor. The left wall has two framed pictures.

Oula

PART ONE

Who we are

Oula

Oula's approach

Oula delivers maternity care that grows with you, offering comprehensive support before, during, and after pregnancy.



Caring for you, not just your pregnancy

Comprehensive care that considers your physical, mental, and emotional needs. We take your lived experience into account and support you at every stage of life—before, during, and after pregnancy.



A research-backed approach for better outcomes

Fewer C-sections, higher VBAC success rates, and fewer preterm births—we are setting a new standard in maternity care that delivers better outcomes for you and your baby.

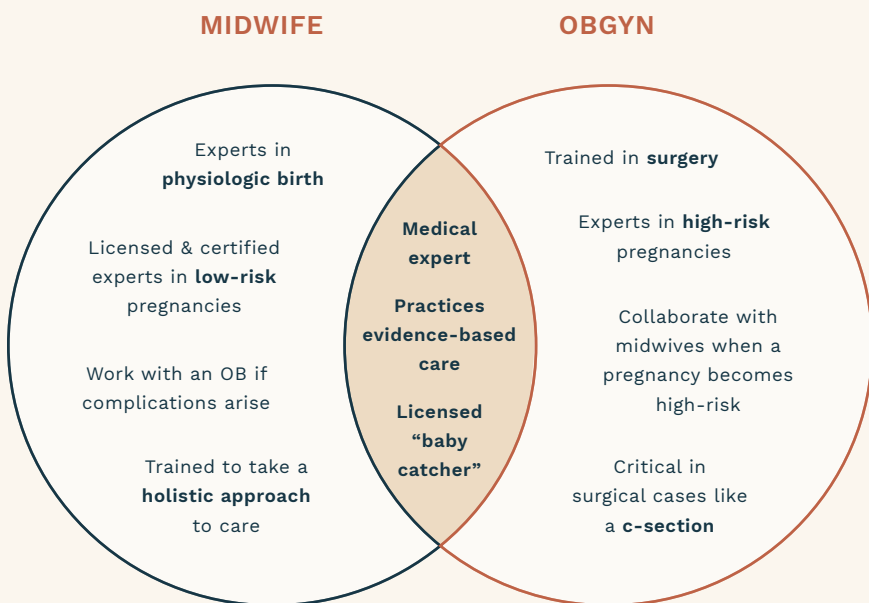


Meeting you where you are, without judgment

At Oula, there's no right way to give birth. We listen, respect your preferences, and make decisions with you, not for you.

The right provider, when you need them

Our team of trusted midwives, OBGYNs and dedicated care navigators ensure you get the type of care you need in the moments that matter most.



“ Finding Oula was such a blessing because I didn’t have to choose either or. I got the extra emotional support I craved from the midwives, but the peace of mind knowing that and OBGYN and Mt Sinai West Hospital were also at my disposal.”

— ABBY, OULA PATIENT

At Oula we combine the best of obstetrics and midwifery to provide comprehensive, research-backed care. Our team model allows you to meet all of our midwives during your prenatal care so you get to know everyone who will be at the hospital prior to your labor and birth experience.



Midwives

We like to say that everyone needs a midwife and some people need a doctor too. **Midwives are licensed and certified medical practitioners with particular expertise in low-risk pregnancies. Importantly, midwives are trained to pay particular attention to the “whole person.”** Many people feel judged or dismissed by their care providers today, but midwives work to understand how a person’s needs and their health are intertwined with their family, their community, their work, and their home.



OBGYNs

Just like midwives, OBGYNs are skilled, licensed, and certified medical professionals, yet they offer their services to both low and high risk birth (think pre-existing conditions, maternal or fetal issues that arise during pregnancy) and are **critical in cases where a surgical intervention like a c-section is necessary.** We believe the best care results from having access to both.

The experience you deserve, covered by insurance.

Get the time and attention you need in our welcoming clinics, plus access to virtual support, expert resources, and exclusive perks—all covered by insurance.



The Oula Portal

Keep Oula in your pocket between appointments.

- Navigate key decisions, build your personalized birth plan, and learn what's coming up next.
- Access educational resources, perks from brand partners, and virtual classes/workshops.
- Message your care team anytime you need support or guidance.



What we offer



Preconception counseling

From demystifying cycle tracking and fertile windows to preparing for genetic testing, we've curated **a preconception program that goes beyond routine care and offers personalized support**, uniquely tailored to meet your needs. We offer virtual preconception counseling for those ready to begin their pregnancy journey.



Prenatal visits

At Oula, **we offer support as soon as you get a positive pregnancy test, starting with a virtual or in-person consult**. We'll schedule monthly appointments up until 28 weeks, bi-weekly until 36 weeks, and weekly until birth. Prenatal visits include clinical assessment of you and your baby, necessary bloodwork, ultrasounds and referrals for specialized testing.



Virtual classes & visits

Meet with our care team from the comfort of your own home. **We include virtual classes in your care at Oula** to help you navigate birth preferences and prepare for the big day. We also offer **free workshops and discounts from our favorite brands** for both prenatal and postpartum patients.



Delivery

Today, all Oula babies are delivered at the hospital and your care team is on call 24/7 awaiting your labor! At the hospital, Oula midwives and/or OBGYNs will be leading your care in close partnership with hospital staff. We're committed to leading with research-backed care and including you in all decisions. Note that we do not offer home birth or water birth services.



Fourth trimester care

We'll keep supporting you after the baby has arrived. You can reach out to us anytime throughout those critical first weeks, and **join our free Newborn Feeding Group** with a lactation consultant.



Gynecology

Our midwives & OBGYNs take the time to get to know you, focusing on your reproductive health while prioritizing all your parts—not just the ones down there. Whether you're due for your annual, navigating a gynecological issue, or planning to start a family, **we'll support you at every stage of your journey.**

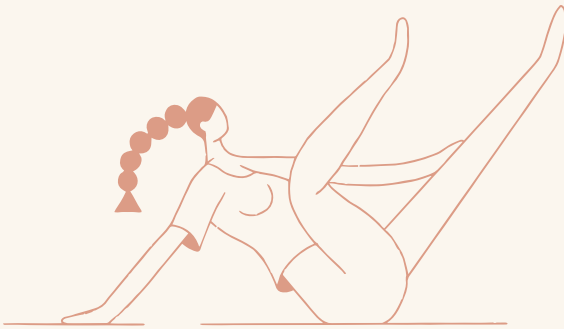


PART TWO

Preconception



Planning for pregnancy can be an amazing time of learning, self-reflection, and positive motivation!



This is a great time to tune into your body, identify any health issues you'd like to address, start taking prenatal vitamins, and understand your employer's parental benefits.

Throughout this process, it's important to remember that trying to conceive looks different for each person, so remember to be patient and kind to yourself.

Understanding your body & tracking your cycle

It's a good idea to start understanding your cycle whenever you're thinking about trying to conceive. A good place to start is to **track your ovulation and period using any of the available apps on your phone.**

You can buy “ovulation predictor kits” online that involve peeing on a strip to help you understand when in your cycle you typically ovulate. This could be around day 14, or perhaps later around day 21. **Note that your “fertile window” is 5 days prior to ovulation and the day of ovulation.**

Best ways to clue into your cycle:

- Measure your cycle length
- Monitor how your cervical mucus changes (there is usually a pattern!)
- Measure your “basal body temperature” right when you wake up in the morning



Provider tips:

1

Frequent exposure to sperm in your fertile window will increase your likelihood of conception. Have ejaculatory intercourse every other day beginning the week after your period starts.

2

If you are using intra-vaginal or uterine insemination at home or in a clinic setting, **work with a provider to determine the optimal sperm exposure date** based on your personalized data.

3

If you are having irregular cycles or conceiving with assisted reproductive technology (such as IVF or IUI), you may need additional testing, medication or education.

CYCLE TRACKING

- **Period tracking** app like Clue or Spot On
- A **sensitive thermometer** for body temperatures



OVULATION MONITORING

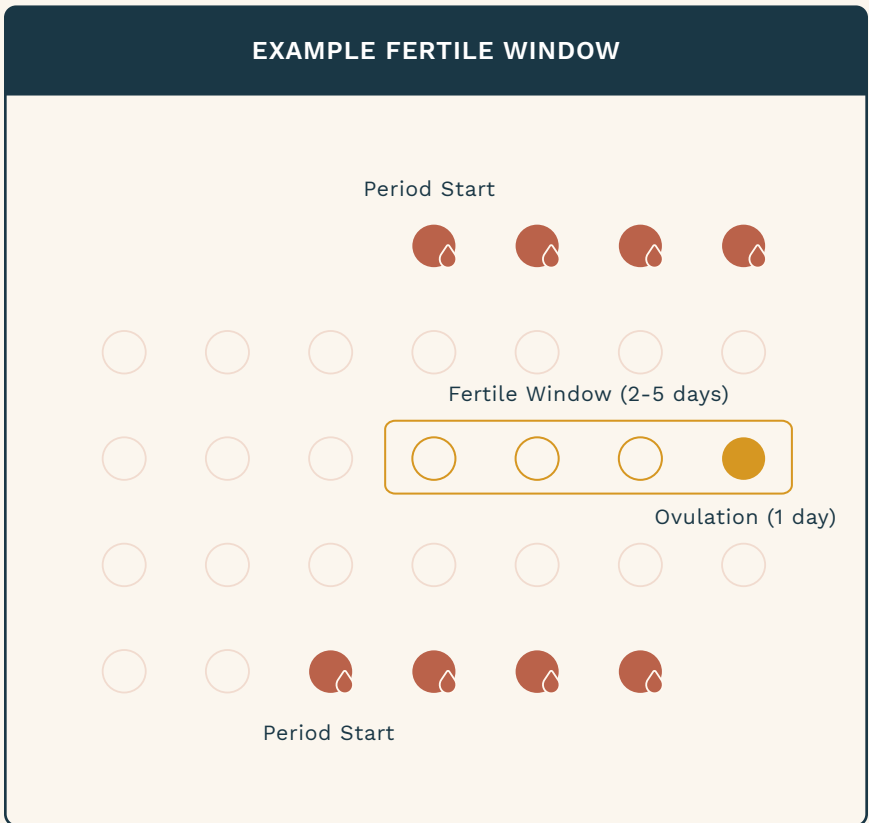
- **Ovulation predictor kits /** urine sticks
- **Checking cervical mucus** with your fingers



What is the “fertile window”?

The average menstrual cycle includes a specific period of time when exposure to sperm can result in pregnancy; **this “fertile window”** comprises the two to five days before ovulation and the day of ovulation.

EXAMPLE FERTILE WINDOW





When to seek help:

- You have been trying for:
 - **1 year** if you are <35
 - **6 months** if you are 35+
- You are **over 40**
- You are concerned you **aren't ovulating**
- You live with a **gynecologic health or hormone condition** (i.e. endometriosis, PCOS)
- You require **intra-vaginal** or **uterine insemination**



For more information on trying to conceive, check out [**THIS BLOG**](#) from our trusted partner, RMA of New York, one of the world leaders in reproductive medicine.

Nutrition

Lifestyle factors, like nutrition, play a vital role in preparing your body for pregnancy. You can start optimizing your nutritional intake about ~3 months ahead of trying to conceive.



When you are trying to conceive, it's important to support your body with **nutrient dense foods** while also **beginning to control your blood sugar**. This will ensure you've got stores of key nutrients your baby needs in the first few weeks of pregnancy.

THE KEY NUTRIENTS TO CONSIDER ARE:

Folate	Probiotic rich foods
Vitamin B6	Omega 3s
Iron	

PROVIDER TIP

Some of our favorite pregnancy superfoods are salmon, eggs, leafy greens, and sweet potatoes.



Vitamins & supplements

While we want you to get most of your nutrients from whole foods during preconception, **it's important to supplement with prenatal vitamins to fill in any nutritional gaps.** You can start taking Prenatal vitamins about ~3 months before trying to conceive.

When it comes to prenatal vitamins,
focus on the following:

Folate

**400-1000 MCG UNTIL
THE END OF THE
FIRST TRIMESTER**

Supports neural tube development for baby & is essential for you when it comes to DNA methylation and the support of red blood cell formation

Vitamin D

**600 INTERNATIONAL
UNITS**

Supports female fertility, bone health, and immune function

Iron

**30 MG UNTIL SCREENED
FOR ANEMIA**

Helps to prevent anemia, supports healthy egg quality, ovulation, and energy levels

Calcium

1,000 MG

Supports bone health

DHA

200-300 MG

Supports hormones, increases blood flow to the uterus, reduces inflammation, supports implantation



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Exercise & sleep

Many people wonder what type of exercise is best when trying to conceive. We believe it is best to **listen to your body** and choose a type of exercise that feels good to you, reduces stress or anxiety, and is something you can do consistently! **Try to move your body for 30 minutes, 3-4 times a week.**

Studies have shown that **getting enough quality sleep has a positive impact on hormone production** in women including progesterone, estrogen, Leptin, and FSH.

Tips for maintaining healthy sleep:

- 1 **Be consistent:** Go to sleep and wake up at similar times each day, regardless of whether it is a weekday or weekend.
- 2 **Create a nighttime routine:** Implementing a wind down routine (dimming the lights, reading a book) to help you fall asleep more seamlessly.
- 3 **Set up an ideal environment for sleep:** Set your room to a cool temperature, block out light, and make sure you have comfortable bedding and pillows.
- 4 **Cultivate a daytime routine:** Implementing healthy daily habits can support your circadian rhythms! Get exposure to sunlight, be physically active, ditch that afternoon coffee and night cap.

Mindfulness & stress relief

It is no secret that trying to conceive can be stressful and emotionally draining. And we've all heard that stress can have a negative impact on fertility, so then we are STRESSED about being stressed!

Tried and true methods we can employ to relieve stress and help ease anxiety:

1

Create a meditation practice: Research shows that meditation can reduce stress, anxiety, depression and the frequency of negative thoughts.

2

Keep moving: Physical activity is a great way to destress. Do whatever physical activity makes you feel your best—whether that means doing something outdoors or a yoga class.

3

Stay social, but be mindful of social media: Prioritize the activities you do with friends that bring you joy and make you feel like you. But set healthy boundaries with social media. Focus on you—everyone's journey looks different.

4

Try acupuncture: Acupuncture has been found to reduce anxiety and calm the nervous system. It may also increase blood flow to the uterus and ovaries, which may help conception.



Trust your
intuition

Understand your benefits

Prior to getting pregnant, it's a great idea to review your employee benefits and insurance plan to figure out which parts of maternity care are covered.



Figure out which parts of maternity care are covered.

PRENATAL CARE

- Prenatal visits
- Standard blood work & sonograms
- Hospital stay
- Additional care, if risk factors are identified

POSTPARTUM CARE

- Postnatal visits
- Breast pump
- Lactation consultation

PARENTAL LEAVE

- 6 weeks “paid” leave if vaginal, 8 weeks if cesarean
- Additional state-level parental leave (2021: 12 weeks of leave at 67% of average weekly wage)

PROVIDER TIP

You may want to change to a lower deductible plan during open enrollment—**usually at the end of the year!**



PART THREE

First trimester



Congratulations on your pregnancy!



While the first trimester is a time of excitement and joy, it is also a phase filled with a lot of anxiety, change, and new symptoms that make you feel “off.” This is especially difficult when you’re not always eager to disclose to people around you that you’re pregnant.

Just remember that it’s ok to slow down and acknowledge to yourself that your body is going through a significant change.

Common symptoms

Some people start experiencing symptoms as early as four weeks (right around the time you would miss your period), while others may not experience symptoms until a few weeks later.

SOME COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

Nausea

Light cramping

Fatigue

Tender, swollen breasts
or nipples

Increased urination

Nausea and Vomiting is one of the most common discomforts of early pregnancy. Some degree of nausea and vomiting occurs in up to 90% of people. Symptoms can occur at any point, day or night, making the term “morning sickness” lack accuracy for many people. Majority of symptoms will resolve by the 2nd trimester but in a small percentage of people, these symptoms can persist later into the pregnancy.



For more information on early signs of pregnancy and common symptoms, check out our **[BLOG POST](#)**. And if these tips don't help, as an Oula patient you can speak with one of our providers to discuss prescription medication.





Here are our recommended remedies for nausea:

VITAMINS/MEDICATIONS TO TRY & DOSING SUGGESTIONS

- **Vitamin B6**
25mg three times a day
- **Unisom**
1/2 tablet at bedtime, can increase to whole tablet



NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Small frequent meals every 2 hours**
Eat before rising (crackers at the bedside), ginger tea chews or candy, peppermint, wrist bands for motion sickness



Perks of being an Oula patient

As an Oula patient you can speak with one of our providers to discuss prescription medication. At Oula, we will see you as soon as you get a positive pregnancy test. This means you can see a provider as soon as you feel sick so you can get guidance and/or a prescription as soon as possible!

Making sense of do's and don'ts

Pregnancy is often accompanied by a laundry list of things you shouldn't do, which can leave you feeling overwhelmed and anxious. It's easy to fall prey to myths and misconceptions because there are SO many out there!

MYTH:

"I woke up and found myself on my back, does that mean I damaged the baby?"

MYTH:

"I was drunk before I knew I was pregnant, surely that will impact my baby's development."

MYTH:

"I heard I should not take any vaccines while I'm pregnant, including the flu vaccine."

MYTH:

"I should stop running or exercising because it will shake up the baby."

Per the evidence, what does matter?

PAY ATTENTION TO AND AVOID:

- **Listeria:** Be mindful of any listeria recalls in the news
- **Toxic habits during pregnancy:** Alcohol, smoking, drugs
- **Toxoplasmosis:** Raw meats and exposure to stray cats
- **Mercury exposure:** King Mackerel, shark, swordfish, marlin, tilefish
- **“Live” vaccines:** ie. MMR/Varicella

Per the evidence, what can you focus on less?

YOU CAN RELAX ABOUT:

- **Caffeine:** 1-2 cups a day is fine
- **Flu vaccine:** A “dead” vaccine
- **Exercise:** Whatever you did before is probably fine! Listen to your body
- **Fish consumption:** Sushi and most fish is probably fine!
- **Sex during pregnancy:** Will not hurt the baby and there is no “limit”
- **Ultrasound safety:** Routine ultrasounds are safe
- **Sleep positions:** Most important is getting good sleep!
- **Planes:** Make sure to stay hydrated and move around

Nutrition

Many of your first questions about early pregnancy will likely be related to nutrition.

You'll find a lot of bad advice which can leave you at best confused and at worst, misinformed. The best way to combat this is to focus on the things you **CAN** eat versus the things you **CAN'T**.

FOODS TO FOCUS ON:

- You might be experiencing low energy or nausea, but try to **focus on colorful fruits and vegetables that contain phytonutrients** and offer anti-inflammatory benefits. Tomatoes, carrots, and squash are great here.
- For nausea, **try bananas, seeded crackers, apples, berries, ginger, or chickpeas**. Also, don't forget to stay hydrated! You should be drinking at least 70 oz of water per day.



For more information on the best things you can eat during pregnancy, check out our **[BLOG POST](#)**.

Exercise

We encourage you to continue or start exercising during your pregnancy, but different types of exercise might be better suited or more comfortable depending on your current trimester.

CONTINUE WITH A ROUTINE:

Generally, **any exercise that you did pre-pregnancy can be continued** (perhaps with modifications) throughout your pregnancy. If you are a runner, keep running. If you are a yogi, keep up your yoga practice, but it's always a good idea to ask your teacher for pregnancy-safe modifications!



Medication

Your provider should always do a thorough intake of all medications you're taking when you first meet. There are a few **medications that are to be avoided completely in pre-pregnancy or early pregnancy**—these include acne medications like Retin-A and salicylic acid, and some chemotherapy agents.



Vitamins & supplements

If you haven't already started during preconception, start taking your prenatal vitamins!

When vetting a prenatal, here are the most important nutrients to focus on:

Folate	Supports neural tube development
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Iron	Provides adequate energy and red blood cell formation
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Calcium	Helps maintain bone health
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Vitamin D	For immune system support, and bone, muscle and teeth health
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Omega-3 fatty acids	Supports eye and brain growth
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Choline	Supports neural tube development
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B6	For developing brain and nervous system
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B12	Important for supporting the nervous system
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Key decisions & testing



Carrier Testing

Carrier Testing is an optional one-time blood test that **looks for recessive gene disorders that you or your partner (or sperm donor) carry**. It's very common to carry one of these genes without having the disorder, but you and your partner or sperm donor would both have to carry the same recessive gene and pass it on in order for there to be any chance of your child having one of these genetic disorders.



Genetic Screening: NIPT

“NIPT” stands for Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing and is **able to look for abnormalities in the baby's chromosomes by picking up small fragments of their DNA in your blood**. It's also the test that can tell you the baby's sex ahead of the 20 week anatomy ultrasound, if you would like to know it.



For more information on everything genetic testing, check out our [**BLOG POST**](#) and [**VIDEO**](#).



Finding out the sex of the baby

You have the option of learning your baby's assigned biological sex. **This can happen as early as Week 10** if you opt into Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT), or otherwise can happen at Week 20 during your anatomy ultrasound.

PROVIDER TIP

Make sure to tell your ultrasound tech at each appointment whether you know or want to know the sex of your baby!



Nuchal Translucency

The Nuchal Translucency scan is an optional, **specialized ultrasound screening test done between 11-14 weeks in your pregnancy**. During the ultrasound the sonographer will take an overall look at your baby, measure the “crown-rump” length (top of the head to the bottom of the tailbone) **to confirm that your due date is correct and that your baby is growing appropriately**.

Most importantly, this ultrasound will pay particularly close attention to an area at the back of the baby's neck called the nuchal fold or nuchal translucency (NT).



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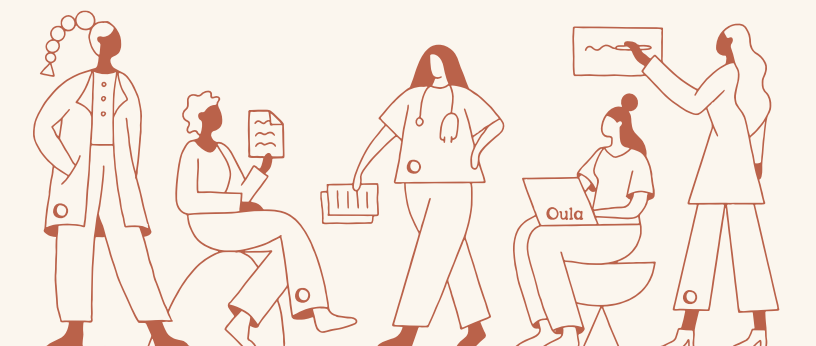
PART FOUR

FAQs

Does Oula accept insurance?

Yes! We firmly believe that everyone deserves access to the best care. **That's why we are proud to work with most major insurance plans, including some Medicaid.** Our dedicated financial counselors are available to assist you in navigating your bills and ensuring that you receive the support you need.

Note that each insurance company has dozens of plans, so we'll need to verify the eligibility of your exact plan.



Feel free to reach out to us directly by emailing **support@oulahealth.com** if you'd like us to check the status of your specific insurance plan. We're here to help!

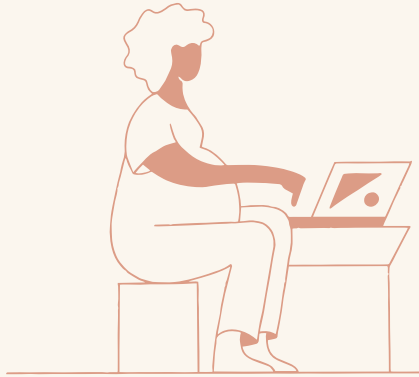


PART FIVE

Getting started with Oula



Book your first virtual consult



JUST STARTING YOUR PREGNANCY JOURNEY?

From demystifying cycle tracking and fertile windows to preparing for genetic testing, we've curated a preconception program that goes beyond traditional care and offers personalized support, uniquely tailored to meet your needs.

ALREADY PREGNANT? BOOK YOUR INITIAL INTAKE APPOINTMENT

Most maternity clinics won't see you until you're 8-10 weeks pregnant. At Oula, we're proud to support you as early as a positive pregnancy test.

BOOK YOUR FIRST VISIT



PART SIX

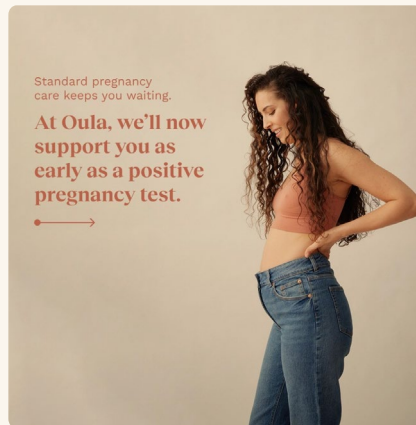
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