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**Preconception Misconceptions: The Difference Midwifery-Led Preconception Care Can Make**

In Australia, midwifery-led preconception care is virtually non-existent, and no national guidelines exist. There is growing evidence to support the benefits of preconception care in general; but how best to provide this care is still emerging; especially in an Australian setting.

Women who receive preconception care have been found to have improved knowledge and demonstrate positive health behaviours. Behaviours include decreased smoking, increased use of folic acid and greater engagement in antenatal care. There is further, higher quality evidence showing that health problems like obesity, rubella, diabetes, and depression; and behaviours such as tobacco and alcohol use contribute to poor maternal and child health outcomes. Midwifery-led preconception care has the possibility to target preconception misconceptions and start making a difference in health outcomes before a woman is even pregnant.

The aim of this policy is to introduce preconception care. Implementation will be through trialing a small midwifery-led preconception care clinic in an Australian setting, for interested women who are planning a pregnancy in the next 3-6 months. Midwives will receive specific training in content and change management techniques. Individual consultations will have the goal of identifying and discussing potential lifestyle changes and choices prior to conception to optimize health. Effectiveness of the trial will be evaluated through examining maternal experiences after birth and documenting whether any lifestyle changes were made. If the evidence shows that midwifery-led preconception care results in improved experiences and positive lifestyle changes the clinic can be expanded further while continuing to measure outcomes.

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