

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER!



FREE Infant CPR Class
Saturday, February 4th!

Get trained in infant CPR by
Leon County EMS. Go to
Page 3 for more information.

BIRTH DEFECTS AND YOUR BABY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Nearly, 1 in every 33 babies is born with a birth defect each year in the United States. For this reason, January is National Birth Defects Awareness Month. A birth defect is a structural change in the body that can affect almost any part of the body (For example: the heart, brain, and foot). They can vary from mild to severe and they also affect how the body looks, works, or both.

Birth defects can develop at any stage of pregnancy. However, most occur during the first 3 months of pregnancy when the organs of the baby are forming. Similarly, some birth defects happen later in pregnancy when the tissues and organs continue to grow and develop. This normally occurs during the last 6 months of pregnancy.

Additionally, most birth defects are found within the first year of life. Some birth defects (such as cleft lip) are easy to see, but others (such as heart defects or hearing loss) are found using special tests, such as echocardiograms (an ultrasound picture of the heart), x-rays or hearing tests.

Unfortunately, birth defects are common, and can cause lifelong challenges. Past research has shown that birth defects can happen for many reasons, but not all of the causes are known. Although not all birth defects can be prevented, parents can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by practicing healthy behaviors before and during pregnancy. Please go to **Page 2** to see **6 Healthy Tips to Help Prevent Birth Defects!**

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**January is National Birth
Defects Awareness Month**

**6 Tips to Reduce the Risk of
Birth Defects**

**Are You a Folic Acid
Expert?**
Fun Cross-Word Search

6 Ways to Keep Your Unborn Baby Healthy

Sadly, not all birth defects can be prevented. But you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and by practicing healthy behaviors before and during pregnancy.

Here is a list of 5 steps you can take to help prevent birth defects and to keep your unborn baby healthy.

1) Take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

Folic acid is a B vitamin that our body uses to make cells. Folic acid is important because it can help prevent some major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine (For example: anencephaly and spina bifida). These birth defects develop very early during pregnancy when the neural tube — which forms the early brain and the spinal cord — does not close properly. You need to start taking folic acid at least one month before becoming pregnant and continue during pregnancy.

Folic acid can also be found in foods and drinks like breads, breakfast cereals, corn masa flour, broccoli, bananas, strawberries, orange juice and peanuts.



2) Get Prenatal Care Early & Go Regularly.

Prenatal care is the healthcare you get while you are pregnant. It can help reduce pregnancy & birth complications by catching potential concerns early. It's important to see a doctor early and regularly throughout pregnancy, so remember to keep all your prenatal care appointments.

Pro Tip: To avoid common birth defects — Book a visit with your healthcare provider before stopping or starting any medicine if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.



3) Choose a Healthy Lifestyle.

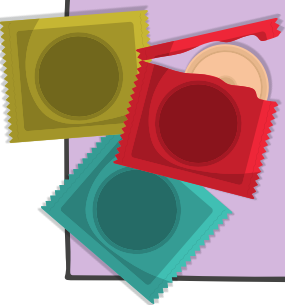
- Eat a healthy diet that contains fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, and lean proteins.
- Be physically active.
- Work to get medical conditions like diabetes and obesity under control. A woman who is obese (a body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher) before pregnancy is at a higher risk for complications during pregnancy. Obesity also increases a pregnant woman's risk for several serious birth defects.



4) Avoid Sexually Transmitted Diseases (or STDs)

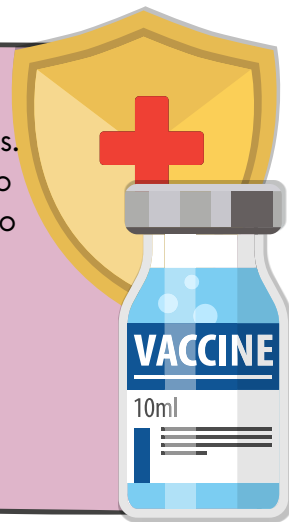
When left untreated, STDs can pass from the mother to their baby, harming your baby's development and causing serious problems. Birth defects like blindness, deafness, and bone deformities can be caused by sexually transmitted diseases and infections.

So, practice safe sex and get tested!



5) Talk to Your Doctor or Healthcare Provider About Vaccinations (or Shots).

- Vaccines help protect you and your developing baby against serious diseases.
- Women who become sick with the flu early in pregnancy are twice as likely to have a baby with a serious brain, spine, or heart birth defect than women who don't catch the virus.
- Get a flu shot and whooping cough vaccine (also called Tdap) during each pregnancy to help protect yourself and your baby.
 - **Flu:** You can get the flu shot before or during each pregnancy.
 - **Whooping Cough:** You can get the whooping cough vaccine in the last three months of each pregnancy.



6) Avoid Harmful Substances.



- **Alcohol:** Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and a range of lifelong physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities. Alcohol can pass from a mother to the developing baby through the umbilical cord. There is NO safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy or while trying to get pregnant.
- **Tobacco:** The dangers of smoking during pregnancy include birth defects (cleft lip or cleft palate), preterm birth, and infant death. Even being around tobacco smoke puts a woman and her pregnancy at risk for problems. Quitting smoking before getting pregnant is best, but quitting as early as possible can still help protect against some health problems for the baby.
- **Marijuana & Other Drugs:** A woman who uses marijuana or other drugs during pregnancy can have a baby who is born preterm, of low birth weight, or has other health problems, such as birth defects. Avoid these substances completely (Women using marijuana for medical reasons should speak with their doctor about an alternative therapy with pregnancy-specific safety data).



To learn infant CPR with Leon County EMS, please contact Danielle Brown at (850) 488-0288, ext. 109, or Danielle@CapitalAreaHealthyStart.org.



Sponsored by:



Learn Child & Infant CPR

FREE CPR Classes Available Now!



When & Where:

Saturday, February 4th, 2023
10:00am -12:00pm
872 W Orange Ave, Tallahassee, FL 32310
Registration is Required



ARE YOU A FOLIC ACID EXPERT? CROSS-WORD SEARCH

Most healthcare professionals recommend taking 400 mcg of folic acid before and during pregnancy to help prevent certain birth defects. However, folic acid can also be found in some common foods, like Fresh fruits, fruit juices, and dark green leafy vegetables (turnip greens, spinach, romaine lettuce, asparagus, and brussels sprouts). Take this word search to find out how much you know about folic acid.

Broccoli

Beans

Peanuts

Sunflower seeds

Orange

Whole grains

Liver

Seafood

Eggs

Bread

Cereal

Pasta

T	A	X	T	M	E	D	M	B	E	A	N	S	U	S	T	B	B
P	M	P	W	K	D	O	I	I	H	C	S	I	M	V	V	R	S
E	T	O	K	C	M	M	L	I	V	E	R	Q	P	I	A	E	S
A	U	S	E	A	F	O	O	D	O	R	A	N	G	E	F	A	H
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K	B	P	L	U	A	X	N	V	R	B	R	L	Z	Z	C	I	T



**For More Healthy Pregnancy Resources Please
Scan the QR Code or Visit Our Website at
www.CapitalAreaHealthyStart.org/healthy-mom-resources**



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The Traveling Crib

Follow the Traveling Crib!

In 2017, we launched a safe sleep initiative for Leon and Wakulla counties, called the "Traveling Crib"! The purpose is to provide a visual of a safe sleep environment for children from birth to 12 months old. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, babies should sleep Alone, on their Backs, and in a safe Crib.

LAST MONTH: A Woman's Place at Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare



THIS MONTH: All About Me Childcare

What is CONNECT?

Capital Area Healthy Start is dedicated to connecting new or expecting moms and families with community programs to help them during every parenthood stage. Our Connect program, also known as CI&R, assists pregnant women, caregivers, and families with young children by providing a one-stop entry point for needed services, such as healthy pregnancy education, child development education, breastfeeding education,



women's health education, and care coordination. Connect works to identify a family's needs and link them with local programs that can best serve them, creating a referral process that not only streamlines access to services but works to build a larger network of care during early childhood.



If your baby falls asleep in a car seat, stroller, swing, infant carrier, or sling, you should move them to a firm sleep surface as soon as possible. The American Pediatrics Association (APA) recommends infants be put to sleep on a flat, non-inclined surface without soft bedding to avoid suffocation hazards. But, always keep the "ABC's of Safe Sleep" in mind– Babies should be put to sleep alone, on their backs, and in a crib!

