

# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER!

**#FACT:** In the United States, high blood pressure happens in 1 in every 12 to 17 pregnancies among women ages 20 to 44.

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## PREGNANCY & YOUR HEART HEALTH: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Did you know that health issues during pregnancy — even if they disappear after delivery — can signal trouble for your heart?

February is American Heart Month. Each year, we observe this holiday to bring awareness that heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S. — even though it is mostly preventable.

Heart health is also especially important to people who are pregnant. This is because your body experiences many changes during pregnancy. These changes put extra stress on your body and cause your heart to work harder than usual to pump blood to you and your baby. Sometimes, this extra stress causes new problems to emerge during pregnancy, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or preeclampsia (high blood pressure with signs of damage to another organ system such as the kidneys).

Similarly, pregnancy can also expose risks to your heart health that were there before you got pregnant. According to new research, Pregnancy-related heart attacks — especially in the period after childbirth — are on the rise in women who are 30 or older. For this reason, it is important for all pregnant people to:

- Understand your risk.
- Develop heart-healthy habits.
- Watch for warning signs of a problem during and after pregnancy.

For more information and tools to help you **Take Action Toward Better Heart Health** go to the **Page 4!**



# 7 HEART HEALTHY STEPS TO PREVENT HEART DISEASE

## 1 Learn Your Health History.

Know your risks and talk to your family and doctor about your health history.

## 2 Eat a Healthy Diet.

Make healthy food choices like more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products. Eat less salt, saturated fat, and added sugar.

## 3 Move More, Sit Less.

Get regular physical activity, but talk with your healthcare provider before you start a new exercise plan. Discuss how much and what types of physical activity are safe for you. Even modest amounts of physical activity are good for your health.

## 4 Quit Smoking.

If you smoke, quit. Smoking can raise your risk of heart disease and heart attack and worsen other heart disease risk factors. Talk with your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit smoking. Also, try to avoid secondhand smoke. Exposure to second-hand smoke during pregnancy is linked to a 23% increased risk of stillbirth and 13% increased risk of congenital malformation.

## 5 Manage Stress.

Learning how to manage stress and cope with problems can improve your mental and physical health. Stress can contribute to high blood pressure and other heart disease risk factors. So if you are dealing with stress, practice healthy stress-reducing activities such as: talking to a professional counselor, participating in a stress management program, practicing meditation, being physically active, trying relaxation techniques, and talking with friends, family, and community or religious support systems.

## 6 Aim for a Healthy Weight.

A healthy weight for adults is generally a body mass index (BMI) between 18.5 and 24.9. Always talk to your healthcare provider about what your BMI means for you.

## 7 Monitor Your Blood Pressure at Home.

Self-measured blood pressure monitors are easy and safe to use, and your doctor can show you how to use one if you need help.





# WE'RE CELEBRATING 31 YEARS OF HEALTHY STARTS!

SUPPORTING LEON & WAKULLA FAMILIES  
SINCE 1992

**ENTER TO WIN!**



**BABY SHOWER  
PRIZE INCLUDES:**

**Portable Crib  
Car Seat  
Diaper Bag  
Sleep Sack  
Sippy Cups  
Children's Books  
\$200 Piggly Wiggly  
Gift Card**

Includes a \$200 Gift Card  
from Tallahassee South Monroe

**piggly wiggly**  
**FoodLESS**

**Winner will be notified by email  
the week of March 6, 2023**

Celebrate this milestone with us! For 31 years, Capital Area Healthy Start has been walking hand in hand with our community in Leon & Wakulla counties to support moms-to-be, new parents, and babies up to 3 years of age. Our mission is healthy babies ~ and we know that starts with healthy moms, healthy dads, and healthy families. We encourage you to explore our vast support network and resources to see how we may support your family, too!

To celebrate 31 years of Healthy Starts, we're giving away the Ultimate Baby Shower! To ENTER TO WIN, scan the QR code or visit our website at [www.capitalareahealthystart.org/baby-shower-giveaway/](http://www.capitalareahealthystart.org/baby-shower-giveaway/)



# 3 Ways to Take Action Towards Better Heart Health

are 3 ways to take action towards better heart health for you and your baby!

Pregnancy can be an exciting time, but finding time to take care of yourself can be difficult — especially after giving birth. Paying attention to your heart health and taking care of yourself is more important now than ever because your health affects your unborn child. So, here

## 1) Understand Your Risk.

Pregnancy-related heart problems can happen to any woman, but your risk may be higher if you:

- Are 40 or older
- Are African American, American Indian, or Alaska Native
- Are overweight or have obesity
- Have heart problems
- Get little physical activity
- Use opioids or other illegal drugs
- Drink alcohol
- Smoke Cigarettes
- Have existing heart disease, such as congenital heart disease or heart valve disease
- Have an existing health condition, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, blood clotting disorders, sleep apnea, anemia, or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)

## 3) Watch for warning signs of a problem during & after pregnancy.

These signs can suggest a life-threatening situation. Seek medical care quickly if you have any symptoms listed below:

- Headache that won't go away or gets worse over time
- Dizziness or Fainting
- Changes in your vision
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Extreme swelling of your hands or face
- Thoughts about harming yourself or your baby
- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain or fast-beating heart
- Severe nausea and throwing up
- Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- Baby's movement stopping or slowing
- Vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking during pregnancy
- Vaginal bleeding or discharge after pregnancy
- Severe swelling, redness or pain of your leg or arm
- Overwhelming tiredness

## 2) Heart Healthy Questions to Ask your Doctor.

Talk to your doctor about your risk and how it affects this pregnancy and your risk in future pregnancies. Here are some questions to ask your provider at your prenatal checkups:

- What is my risk of developing heart disease?
- What is my blood pressure? What does it mean for me, and what do I need to do about it?
- What are my cholesterol numbers? What do they mean for me, and what do I need to do about them?
- What is my body mass index (BMI) and waist measurement? Do I need to lose weight for my health?
- What other screening tests for heart disease do I need? How often should I return for checkups for my heart health?
- What is my blood sugar level, and does it mean I'm at risk for diabetes?

## CAHSC 2022-2023 Board of Directors

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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: All About Me Child Care



THIS MONTH: Brandon's Place At Lincoln

# 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.

Don't bed-share!!! This is when babies and parents sleep together in the same bed. Bed-sharing is the MOST common cause of death in babies younger than 3 months old!

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you and your baby sleep in the same room, but not in the same bed, for the first year of your baby's life but at least for the first 6 months. So, always keep the "ABC's of Safe Sleep" in mind- Babies should be put to sleep alone, on their backs, and in a crib!

