

# **Birth Defects Prevention Month - January 2009**

## **Obesity Prevention and Weight Management – Before, During, and After Pregnancy**

### **Sharing the Entire Packet**

This packet can be reproduced by downloading materials from the NBDPN website [www.nbdpn.org](http://www.nbdpn.org) and requesting copies of brochures from the creators. Suggestions for packet dissemination include:

- Health educators and school nurses at middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities in your state can share materials with teachers and students.
- March of Dimes chapters, health care advocates, and family support groups can promote information to policy makers.
- Your state's professional organizations, such as American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Practice, American Academy of Pediatricians, nursing organizations, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, genetic associations, or Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, can share up-to-date materials through their meetings and conferences.
- Contact your state's Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Program; Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program; Reproductive Health and Family Planning Program; Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program and Medicaid. Offer them enough packets to distribute to each of their offices around the state.
- If your state has a Governor's Council on Physical Fitness or a Women's Commission, contact a representative or your agency's liaison and tell them about the work of NBDPN and Birth Defects Prevention Month so they can let interested members know.
- Your state's Health and Hospital Association, American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association, for example, may be particularly interested in issues surrounding overweight and obesity during pregnancy, and in helping spread prevention messages.

### **Using Materials in this Packet**

Individual activities and those conducted with partners at the state or community level will raise awareness about healthy pregnancies and good birth outcomes.

- Contact state or local businesses. Companies may add information about birth defects to their corporate or wellness newsletters, sponsor events such as baby fairs, or donate door prizes such as folic-acid rich food baskets to bridal fairs, health fairs, and other community events.
- Share the important prevention messages and resources in the packet with staff at your state's Diabetes Control Program, Cardiovascular Program, and Office of Drug Control Policy. They may have ideas for distribution to local public health and other community

partners.

- Ask local food banks, women's shelters, and other similar services to provide information to their clients.
- Ask community colleges and universities to place materials in their health center waiting rooms. Information about alcohol consumption and the importance of folic acid is especially relevant, given the number of unplanned pregnancies.
- Supply pamphlets or fact sheets for patients and professionals to health care provider groups, such as managed care organizations, doctors' offices, clinics, and HMOs.
- Collaborate with hospitals or clinics on community outreach projects to promote the importance of reaching a healthy weight before pregnancy. Topics may include: genetic screening, preconception counseling, healthy lifestyles, and avoiding teratogens.
- Volunteer to present information on overweight/obesity in pregnancy to professional groups such as pharmacists, nurses, or genetic counselors, as well as community health workers and health advocacy groups.
- Connect with supportive partners in the media. Prepare PSA scripts and write educational articles that may be used or adapted by local media. Recruit a "birth defects prevention champion" for media interviews.
- Contact the Communications lead for your agency. Ask that Birth Defects Prevention Month and the packet be announced in the agency newsletter, in an "ALL" email or included as a stuffer in payroll envelopes.