

● Sample News Release ●

National Birth Defects Prevention Month 2018 – Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 1, 2018

Contact: [*Name of person submitting release*]
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[*City, State*] – During January, National Birth Defects Prevention Month - 2018, [*Organization*] is joining with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the March of Dimes, the Teratology Society and MotherToBaby to increase awareness of birth defects and how they can be prevented. During the 2018 campaign “**Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection**”, special emphasis is focused on the importance of preventing infections before and during pregnancy that can increase the risk of having a baby with a birth defect.

[*Organization*] is actively working to raise awareness of how common birth defects are and what steps can help to prevent them. In the United States, a baby is born with a birth defect every 4½ minutes - about 120,000 babies each year - with around [*prevalence information for your state*] cases occurring in [*State*]. Birth defects are the most common cause of death in the first year of life and the second most common cause of death in children aged one to four years.

Although not all birth defects can be prevented, many steps can be taken to increase a woman’s chance of having a healthy baby. It is important to prevent those infections that can increase the risk of birth defects and other health problems for mothers and babies.

Here are some helpful tips for pregnant women or women who may become pregnant:

Get vaccinated.

- Get the flu shot and the whooping cough vaccine.
- Become up-to-date with all vaccines before getting pregnant.

Prevent insect bites.

- Use insect repellent.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outside.
- Consider avoiding travel to areas with Zika virus.

Practice good hygiene.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid putting a young child’s cup or pacifier in your mouth.

Talk to your healthcare provider.

- Ask about how you can prevent infections, such as Zika virus.
- Discuss how to prevent sexually transmitted infections.

In addition to following these tips to prevent infections, all women capable of becoming pregnant should eat a healthy diet, be physically active, and take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day whether they are currently planning a pregnancy or not. These steps can go a long way in promoting a healthy you and a healthy baby.

[*Organization*] is participating in National Birth Defects Prevention Month by [*include information about your local, state or national activities and provide pertinent contact information*].

[*Organization*] encourages you to be an active participant in National Birth Defects Prevention Month. Learn more by following “National Birth Defects Prevention Network” on Facebook and #Prevent2Protect on Twitter. The complete 2018 information packet, including this year’s theme, **Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection**, and other resources is available at: <https://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm.php>. Additional materials and resources are available at www.CDC.gov/ncbddd, www.marchofdimes.org, www.healthychildren.org, www.MotherToBaby.org and www.Teratology.org.