

5 Prevention Tips for Healthy Communities and Healthy Babies

Theme Resources

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NBDPN works to address birth defects through prevention as well as raising awareness about the impacts on individuals, parents, and families.

The CDC has a National Birth Defects Awareness Month [toolkit](#) which focuses on bringing awareness to birth defects across the lifespan. We encourage you to use these CDC materials along with our 5 Prevention Tips to address the multiple ways we can work together to prevent birth defects AND support those living with birth defects.

Not all birth defects can be prevented. But you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby by doing what you can to be your healthiest self both before and during pregnancy.

Tip 1: Be sure to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day at least one month prior to conception.

[Folic acid](#) is very important because when taken [before and during early pregnancy](#), it can help prevent some [major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine](#). Our bodies use this B vitamin to make new cells.

[Folate](#) is found naturally in certain fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Folic acid, the synthetic or man-made form of folate, is found in fortified foods (called "enriched foods"), such as breads, pastas, and cereals. Balancing all these foods to get the right amount of folic acid in your daily diet can be hard. The easiest way to get the right amount of folic acid is to supplement your diet with a multivitamin that has 400 mcg of folic acid every day.



Free vitamins containing folic acid are available in most states. Zoom in on your state on our Tips Resource Map on our webpage to get more information. Help us identify more resources by retweeting us with the local community resources that you've found to be helpful!