

Newsletter Article #1:

Birth defects are structural changes that can affect almost any part of the body, such as the heart, brain, or foot, and can cause lifelong health challenges. Birth defects are common, affecting 1 in every 33 babies born in the United States each year. Not all birth defects can be prevented, and they can occur in any family, regardless of race, ethnicity, health history, or economic status.

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) raises awareness of birth defects and promotes strategies that reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. National Birth Defects Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness about birth defects and highlight efforts to improve the health of people living with these conditions across their lifespan. As early identification, medical care and treatment have improved, babies and children with birth defects are living longer and healthier lives. That is why NBDPN's 2024 theme is "Every Journey Matters", highlighting that from prior to diagnosis, throughout childhood and adulthood, every individual impacted by birth defects matters.

NBDPN encourages all pregnant people and prospective parents to make healthy choices and adopt healthier habits to help lower their risk of having a baby born with a birth defect.

5 Healthy Pregnancy Tips:

- Tip 1: Be sure to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day at least one month prior to conception.
- Tip 2: Plan a visit with your health care provider to support a healthy pregnancy.
- Tip 3: Reduce your risk of infections.
- Tip 4: Care for your body and mind before and during pregnancy to set you and your baby up for success.
- Tip 5: Avoid harmful substance during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Join NBDPN and our partners in improving the health those living with birth defects and reduce the risks of babies being born with birth defects. NBDPN resources can be accessed at <https://www.nbdpn.org/bdam.php>. Also included are links to the [CDC website](#) that has resources for before and during pregnancy, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

Thank you in advance for promoting resources for National Birth Defects Awareness Month!

The NBDPN is a volunteer-based organization that addresses the issues of birth defects surveillance, research, and prevention under one umbrella by maintaining a national network of state and population-based birth defects programs. Contact us at nbdpn.org for more information.

National Birth Defects Awareness Month materials and activities are an output of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN). The contents of the awareness month materials and related promotional messaging are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by state public health agencies or other NBDPN members and partners.

