

## ● Sample News Release ●

### **National Birth Defects Prevention Month 2017 - Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby's Protection** **(Long version)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: *(Name of person submitting release)*  
*(Phone here) – or – (Email here)*

**(Your City, Your State) – (Your organization)** is joining with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the March of Dimes, and the Teratology Society to increase awareness that preventing infections before and during pregnancy can protect babies from being born with birth defects. January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month. The theme for 2017 is **“Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby's Protection”**

As part of National Birth Defects Prevention Month - 2017, *(your organization)* is encouraging the general public, as well as healthcare professionals, educators, and social service professionals to support this effort to raise awareness. Every 4½ minutes, a baby is born with a birth defect in the United States. Not all birth defects can be prevented. But, women can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by preventing infections before and during pregnancy.

This year we are encouraging all women to **Prevent to Protect** by taking the following steps:

- **Properly prepare food.**
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.**
- **Protect yourself from animals and insects known to carry diseases such as Zika virus.**
- **Maintain good hygiene.**

By following these **Prevent to Protect** guidelines, women can reduce the risk of having a child with a birth defect and also reduce their risk of pregnancy complications such as early pregnancy loss, prematurity and stillbirths.

About 120,000 babies are affected by birth defects each year in the United States, with around *(prevalence information for your state from your state's birth defects tracking system or other source)* cases occurring in *(name of your state)*. Not only can birth defects lead to lifelong challenges and disabilities, they are also 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. Public awareness, expert medical care, accurate and early diagnosis, and social support systems are all needed for prevention and treatment of these all-too-common and sometimes deadly conditions.

“Most people don't know how common, costly, and critical birth defects are in the United States, or that there are simple steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of birth defects,” says *(your contact's full name)* of *(your organization)*.

“We know that infections are a major cause of birth defects. Research has proven that up-to-date vaccinations, safe sexual practices, good hygiene, and knowing of how to protect yourself from insect, animal and food-borne sources of infection can reduce the risk of having a child with a birth defect.” says *(your contact's last name)*.

“Steps like up-to-date vaccinations, avoiding infections, visiting a healthcare provider well before pregnancy, controlling your weight through healthy diet and activity, and taking a multivitamin every day, can go a long way in assuring a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby,” says *(your contact's last name)*.

The NBDPN is working with healthcare professionals and public health agencies around the country to encourage prevention and awareness of birth defects among the over 60 million women of childbearing age in the United States and their partners. In addition to efforts in prevention, the NBDPN works to improve nationwide tracking of birth defects, and to advance research into possible causes. It also offers support to families who are dealing with the realities of a child born with one of these conditions. Further information about the NBDPN can be found at [www.NBDPN.org](http://www.NBDPN.org).

*(Your organization) is participating in National Birth Defects Prevention Month by (add two details about your local activities, e.g., distributing information to women and their health care providers across the state, participating in health fairs, offering presentations at local schools. etc.). “We are excited to be part of this national campaign. Through our efforts across the country, we plan to reach millions of women and their families with vital prevention information and an opportunity to prevent birth defects.” says (your contact’s last name). You can contact (your organization) at (phone here) or (E-mail here).*

(Your 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 2017 NBDPN Birth Defects Prevention Month information packet, including this year’s primary message of prevention, **Prevent to Protect: Prevent Infections for Baby’s Protection**, and other resources for the public, and for professionals, is available online at: [www.nbdpn.org/bdpm#2017.php](http://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm#2017.php). All materials can be printed, electronically conveyed, or added to websites for distribution as needed. Further information regarding NBDPN, as well as past National Birth Defect Prevention Month packets, can be obtained at [www.NBDPN.org](http://www.NBDPN.org). Further information on birth defects can also be found at [www.CDC.gov/ncbddd](http://www.CDC.gov/ncbddd).