

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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Florida Department of Health Promotes Better Health for Babies

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Health is raising awareness about the important steps families can take to improve the health of babies and decrease the impact of birth defects. January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month and the Department is encouraging women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy to take steps to have a healthy pregnancy.

“With birth defects impacting 1 in every 28 babies born in Florida, it is important that families are aware of this serious matter,” said Dr. Celeste Philip, Deputy Secretary for Health and Deputy State Health Officer for Children’s Medical Services (CMS). “The Department works hand in hand with health care providers, families and researchers to improve disease detection and ensure care.”

Birth defects are caused by genetic and environmental factors, or a combination of both. The majority of birth defects do not have a known cause. If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, the Department recommends that you:

- Go for a pre-pregnancy checkup and talk with your health care provider about any medical conditions such as diabetes, obesity or seizures.
- Women of child bearing age should take a vitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid daily.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet; maintain a healthy weight and exercise.
- Avoid cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Avoid exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- Check with a health care provider before taking any medications, including over-the-counter medications.
- Talk to your health care provider about vaccinations; many are safe and recommended during pregnancy. The right vaccinations at the right time can help keep you and your baby healthy.
- Seek prenatal care as soon as you think you may be pregnant.
- Discuss your family medical history with your health care provider and seek advice from a genetic counselor if there is a history of birth defects in your family.

The Florida Birth Defects Registry (FBDR) is a statewide population-based surveillance system that identifies children born with birth defects with the goal of determining risk factors, identifying clusters, and promoting collaboration to prevent birth defects and reduce associated morbidity and mortality. For more information about the prevention of birth defects in Florida, please visit www.fbdr.org. The Department also partners with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) and the 2014 NBDPN Birth Defects Prevention information packet is available online at: <http://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm2014.php>.

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Florida Department of Health

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