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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROMOTES HEALTHY PREGNANCIES



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Tallahassee, Fla.—Today is the second annual World Birth Defects Day and the Florida Department of Health is raising awareness about birth defects surveillance, prevention, care and research. The department encourages women who are pregnant or may become pregnant to plan for a healthy pregnancy so children are born with the best possible health.

“Every child is precious, and at the department we are committed to improving the health of all babies so they reach their full potential,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Today, I hope all potential parents consider the importance of having a plan prior to pregnancy that supports the best health possible for both mother and child.”

Of the more than 220,000 babies born in Florida each year, 1 in 33 may be diagnosed with a major birth defect before their first birthday. Though not all birth defects can be prevented, steps can be taken to increase a woman’s chance of having a healthy baby. The department encourages all pregnant women and those who may become pregnant to make a **PACT**:

- **Plan ahead**
 - Before becoming pregnant, discuss your family medical history with your health care provider.
 - Work to achieve a healthy weight and control medical conditions to be as healthy as possible before becoming pregnant.
 - Consume 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day to help prevent certain birth defects.
- **Avoid harmful substances**
 - Avoid drinking alcohol and using tobacco products.
 - Be careful with harmful exposures at work and home.
- **Choose a healthy lifestyle**
 - Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, and lean proteins.
 - Be physically active daily, if possible.
 - Work to get medical conditions like diabetes under control.
- **Talk to your doctor**
 - Seek prenatal care as soon as you think you may be pregnant.
 - Discuss all medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.

The Florida Birth Defects Registry is a statewide population-based surveillance system that identifies children born with birth defects with the goal of determining risk factors, identifying prevention opportunities, and promoting collaboration to prevent birth defects and reduce

associated morbidity and mortality. For more information about the Florida Birth Defects Registry, please visit www.fbdr.org.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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