

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



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Governor

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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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 make a PACT with their health care provider to have a healthy pregnancy.

“Florida’s most precious resource is our children, and we are committed to improving the health of babies,” said Dr. Celeste Philip, deputy secretary for Health and deputy state health officer for Children’s Medical Services. “The department works hand in hand with families, health care professionals and researchers to improve early disease detection and ensure quality care.”

1 in 33 babies born in the United States will be diagnosed with a major birth defect before his or her first birthday.

Although 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 and seek advice from a genetic counselor if there is a history of birth defects.
 - Work to achieve a healthy weight and control medical conditions like diabetes to be as healthy as possible before becoming pregnant.
 - Consume 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day to help prevent certain 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.
- **Talk to your doctor**

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- 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, investigating possible 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 2015 NBDPN Birth Defects Prevention information packet is available online at <http://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm2015.php>.

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. The department is recognizing 125 years of public health in Florida with educational opportunities and events. Please visit www.FLHealth125.gov for more information.

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