

FOR BABY'S SAKE

**PREVENT BIRTH
DEFECTS**

CARESS

West Virginia Department of Health and Human
Resources
Office of Maternal Child and Family Health
Bureau for Public Health

CARESS

**Congenital Abnormalities
Registry, Education and
Surveillance System**

What is a Congenital Abnormality

- It is a condition that occurs during the baby's development. It could affect how the body looks, works or both. It may be found during pregnancy, at birth or a few years after birth.

How can it be recognized

- Some are easily recognized, while others can only be identified by specialized testing. The abnormality can range from mild to severe, even ending in death.

Neural Tube Defects

- Birth defects that affect the brain or spine
- Most common are Spina Bifida and Anencephaly
- Develop between the 17th and 30th day after conception
- Occur when the neural tube does not close properly

Spina Bifida

- Occurs when lower end of neural tube fails to close
- Spinal cord and backbones do not develop properly

Anencephaly

- Fatal condition
- Brain does not develop completely or is entirely absent
- Statistics WV

Congenital Heart Defects

- At least 8 out of every 1000 infants born a year have a heart defect
- Means inborn or existing at birth
- Heart or blood vessels near the heart do not develop normally
- Some may not be detected until childhood

Prevention Before Pregnancy

- Many birth defects occur before a woman even realizes she is pregnant. Since almost half of all pregnancies are unplanned, birth defects prevention measures should be in place at all times to ensure a healthy pregnancy.

Folic Acid

- This is essential for all ages. It helps form and repair the cells in the body. It is especially important for women who may become pregnant.
- Folic acid helps form the baby's spinal cord and brain.

Sources Of Folic Acid



Folic Acid Statistics

- Currently one 1 in 3 women take a multivitamin with folic acid
- Can prevent 50% - 70% of all Neural Tube Defects

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Risk Factors

- Not taking folic acid
- Smoking
- Drinking
- Drugs
- Harmful chemicals
- Diabetes



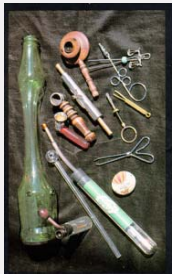
Smoking



- Increases risk of miscarriages
- Increases premature labor
- Can cause low-birth weight babies
- Impairs growth, emotional development,
- Reduces flow of oxygen and nutrients to fetus

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Drugs



Increase the risk of baby being born with a small head (and brain), poor growth, low birth weight, and deformities. This included cocaine, LSD, marijuana, heroine and inhalants (puffing)

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Obesity



- Obese women can develop gestational diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease
- Metabolic diseases
- Increase chances of certain defects, such as omphalocele (intestines protruding through naval)

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Alcohol

"But just a few drinks won't hurt me."

Don't believe this.

Even one drink can affect an unborn child. A pregnant woman must realize if she has one drink, her unborn child has one drink.



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What is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome?

- A term used to describe a range of permanent mental and physical birth defects caused by drinking during pregnancy.



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Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- Mental Retardation
- Delayed physical and mental development
- Behavioral, reasoning and learning difficulties
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Hearing loss

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Symptoms of FAS

- Nervous system damage
- Growth delay
- Abnormal facial features
- Accurate information that the child's mother drank during pregnancy

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For A Health Baby

- See Doctor Before Getting Pregnancy
- Control Medical Concerns (Obesity, Diabetes)
- Don't Smoke
- Don't Drink
- Don't Take Illegal Drugs
- Take 400 mg Folic Acid Daily