



Public Service Announcement

January 3, 2011

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

In recognition of National Birth Defects Prevention Month, Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) reminds everyone that "Healthy Moms = Healthy Babies". This year's focus is on congenital heart defects, "And the Beat Goes On... Looking to the Future for Healthy Hearts." It is important for women to realize that birth defects can happen very early in pregnancy, sometimes before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

"Women who are pregnant or planning to get pregnant should exercise good health habits," said Amy Guccione, Public Health Nurse Supervisor for JCPH. "Frequent handwashing; avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and street drugs; eating a healthy, balanced diet; and, seeing a health care professional regularly are habits that can greatly reduce infections in pregnancy."

Other prevention measures to help keep your unborn baby safe are:

- Take a vitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) folic acid every day.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and street drugs.
- Keep hands clean by washing them often with soap and water to prevent infections.
- Try not to share forks, cups, or food with young children.
- See a health care professional regularly. Talk with the health care professional about any medical problems and medicine use (both prescription and over-the-counter).
- Ask about avoiding any substances at work or at home that might be harmful to a developing baby.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Avoid unpasteurized (raw) milk and foods made from it.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat.
- Do not touch or change dirty cat litter.
- Get tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, and protect yourself from them.
- Talk to your doctor about vaccinations (shots).
- Ask your doctor about group B strep.
- Avoid people who have an infection.

While Pregnant:

- Keep up these healthy habits.
- Get early prenatal care and go to every appointment.

Jefferson County Public Health offers a wide range of resources for women and men. Some of these are...

- Family Planning
- Nurse Family Partnership / Partners for Healthy Families
- Prenatal Plus Program – Choose to have a healthy pregnancy
- STD/HIV Testing and Counseling

For more information about these programs or to schedule an appointment please call 303-232-6301 or visit our website at www.jeffco.us/health.

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