

Healthy Waldo County



A Local Healthy Maine Partnership



January 2010

Birth Defects Prevention Month



Healthy Women - Healthy Babies

You may be surprised to learn that about **50 percent** of all pregnancies in the United States are not planned. It may also be news that many birth defects and other newborn health problems occur in the first few weeks after conception—when you may not even know you're pregnant.

A baby's health is strongly linked to the mother's health before pregnancy. That's another important reason for you to stay healthy. Whether or not you're planning to get pregnant, it's important to follow these guidelines:

Take a multi-vitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

Eat a variety of whole grains, fruits and vegetables every day and lower your intake of fat.

Ask your doctor about your risk of diabetes.

If you smoke, stop.

Do not drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.

Have a GYN exam annually.

If you are being hurt by a partner or someone else, call a local shelter or crisis hot line.

New Hope for Women 1-800-522-3304 or 338-6569 in Belfast

Also tell a health care worker you trust.

Top Ten New Year's Resolutions

- Get Fit
- Eat Nutritious Foods
- Start Exercising
- Quit Smoking
- Quit Drinking
- Lose Weight
- Make More Time for Family & Friends
- Take a Class/ Go back to School
- Save Money
- Get involved in Community



"The future is not some place we are going, but what we are creating."
- John Schaar, Sociologist

National Blood Donor Month

Call 1-800-GIVE LIFE



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Healthy Choices - Healthy Babies - Healthy Communities



Healthy Lifestyle Choices for Healthy Babies

Diet & Exercise

The golden rule of good health can be summed up like this: **Be good to your body so it will be good to you.** That means eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly. Health problems are linked to weighing too much or too little before and during pregnancy. Your health is affected by what you eat and by your physical activity.

Here are a few important guidelines for healthy eating:

Eat lots of vegetables, fruits and whole grains such as whole wheat, oats, barley and brown rice. These are excellent sources of the vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber you need every day to feel your best.

Eat less of the foods that are high in saturated fat and cholesterol, such as meat, poultry and whole milk dairy foods (low-fat dairy is okay). Saturated fat and cholesterol are strongly linked to heart disease, cancer and obesity.

Regular physical activity helps control weight, strengthen your heart, and give you more energy. It also reduces depression and relieves stress. It's a good idea to exercise at least 3 times a week for at least 30 minutes.

Alcohol and drugs

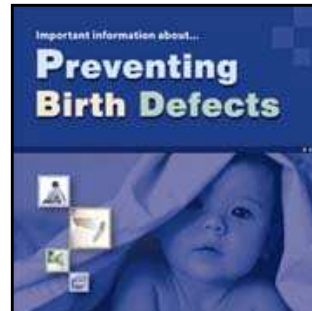
Drinking alcohol or taking any type of legal or street drugs during the early weeks of pregnancy can badly hurt your unborn baby. That's when the brain and other organs are forming.

If you drink alcohol, so does your unborn baby.

Alcohol abuse during pregnancy is a leading known cause of mental retardation.

If you are considering a pregnancy, it's best to stop drinking alcohol before you conceive.

Cocaine, crack, heroin, amphetamines and other street drugs can badly hurt your baby if you use them while you are pregnant. Your baby could suffer lifelong health problems. Get help to stop using drugs before you become pregnant and stay clean.



www.nbdpn.org

National Birth
Defects
Prevention Network

Keep in Mind...

- There is no safe level of alcohol during pregnancy.
- Women who drink heavily or binge drink may have babies with serious alcohol-related birth problems.
- If you need help to give up drinking or using drugs, talk with your doctor or other health care worker. They can help you find local resources.
- If you take any medicine for a medical condition, talk with your doctor before you become pregnant. Some prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines can hurt your unborn baby.





Keep in Mind...

- Your doctor or other health care professional can help you develop a plan to stop smoking.
- Some people like to join quit-smoking groups. You can get a referral to a local group from:
 - Healthy Waldo County, 207-930-2650**
 - The American Cancer Society, **800-227-2345** (Spanish service available)
 - The American Lung Association, **800-586-4872**
- Some people prefer to quit on their own. You can get a self-help guide from the American Cancer Society or the American Lung Association.
 - www.cancer.org**
 - www.lungusa.org**
- Nicotine gum or patches often help heavy smokers quit.
- Even if you don't smoke, the smoke from someone else's cigarette can hurt your health and the health of your unborn baby. Stay away from places where people are smoking.
- Call the Maine Tobacco Helpline

1-800-207-1230

THE MAINE TOBACCO HELPLINE

Dangers of Smoking

Smoking is linked to many serious health problems for women. These include heart disease, lung cancer, emphysema and stroke. If you smoke during pregnancy, your fetus is exposed to more than 2,000 harmful chemicals with each puff. You also lower the amount of oxygen and nourishment that reaches your developing baby. No amount of smoking is safe, especially early in pregnancy.

Smoking during the first days and weeks after conception—when the organs are forming—can cause damage to the developing baby that lasts a lifetime. Also, if you're trying to get pregnant, smoking may make it harder.

Whether or not you are planning a pregnancy, you should quit smoking. If you've tried before and failed, try again. Most people who try to quit need to keep trying before they succeed. If you can't quit, at least cut down.

It's best to stop smoking before you become pregnant.

If you smoke while you are pregnant:

You are more likely to have a miscarriage or stillbirth.

Your baby could be born too small or too soon. Babies born too small may have breathing and other health problems.

Your baby may have learning and behavior problems in childhood.

Your baby is at increased risk of dying from crib death (sudden infant death syndrome). This illness causes a baby who seems healthy to die without any warning.

Your baby may be at increased risk of a cleft lip/palate.

Cervical Health Awareness Month

The United States Congress designated January as Cervical Health Awareness Month.

Cervical cancer is nearly 100 percent preventable if it is detected early; in fact the occurrence of deaths from cervical cancer has declined significantly over the last 20 to 30 years. Screening younger women using the Papanicolaou (Pap) test is an important strategy that can actually prevent cervical cancer from developing almost 100 percent of the time.

Risk factors associated with cervical cancer:

- **Failure to receive regular Pap test screening**
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection**
- **Certain sexual behaviors**

The sexual behaviors specifically associated with greater risk are intercourse at an early age, multiple male sexual partners, and sex with a male partner who has had multiple sexual partners.

- **Immunosuppressive disorders such as HIV/AIDS**

Experts agree that one of the most important things women can do to reduce their risk of cervical cancer is to receive regular screening with a Pap test.

Many organizations, including the American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, and others also Recommend that Pap testing:

- **Begin pap testing 3 years after onset of sexual activity or at age 21.**
- **For women 30 and under, test annually with conventional pap test or every 2 years if using a liquid based pap test.**
- **For women over 30, testing may be done every 2-3 years after 3 consecutive normal pap tests (unless DES exposed or immunosuppressed).**

Women who are past menopause (change of life) still need to have regular Pap tests. However, women who have undergone a hysterectomy in which the cervix was removed do not require Pap testing, unless the hysterectomy was performed because of cervical cancer or its precursors.

For more information talk with your physician or call National Cervical Cancer Coalition
(800) 685-5531



Maine Breast & Cervical Cancer Program

You may qualify for free Pap tests:

- 40-64 years old
- Have little or no insurance
- Meet income guidelines

Call **1-800-350-5180** for more information.

Or on the web at:

www.maine.gov/dhhs/bohdcfh/bcp/

New Year's Resolutions

Keep your good intentions alive during the year ahead.

- **Make** a plan - write it out
- **Make** it specific - what exactly are you going to do, how will do it, and when will you start.
- **Start** right now - don't put it off
- **Make** your resolution personal - know the **Value** it has for you.
- **Write** a personal affirmation and put it up where you'll see it. "I am at my ideal weight and enjoy eating small nutritious meals with my family", for example.
- **Share** it - make a real commitment to your life.
- **Celebrate** your successes along the way.

Healthy Waldo County

www.healthywaldocounty.org

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