



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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January is National Birth Defects Awareness Month

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes January as National Birth Defects Awareness Month. Throughout this month, the Jackson County Department of Public Health would like to join the CDC and raise awareness about birth defects and highlight efforts to improve the health of people living with these conditions across their lifespan.

Birth defects and infant disorders are common, costly, and critical conditions that can cause lifelong health challenges. Birth defects are structural changes present at birth that can affect almost any part of the body, such as the heart, brain, or foot.

As medical care and treatment have improved, babies and children with birth defects are living longer and healthier lives. Most are now living into adulthood. Recent reports show that rates of infant deaths due to birth defects have declined by 10% in the United States. However, even today, every 4½ minutes a baby is born with a major birth defect.

Not all birth defects can be prevented. However, we encourage all pregnant people and prospective parents to make healthy choices and adopt healthier habits to help lower their risk of having a baby born with a birth defect.

5 Tips for Preventing Birth Defects:

1. Be sure to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.
2. Book a visit with your healthcare provider.
3. Become up-to-date with vaccines.
4. Care for your body and mind before and during pregnancy to set you and your baby up for success.
5. Boost your health by avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

There is hope for a healthier future. Together we can work towards a day when all babies are born with the best health possible.

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