

# For Starters

Healthy Start of North Central Florida Newsletter  
Summer 2009

## Health Tips for Expectant Mothers and New Moms

The Healthy Start program is all about having healthy babies. It's important that expectant moms maintain good health so that their babies will be born healthy and strong. Even after their babies are born, moms should maintain a healthy lifestyle on behalf of their babies and themselves. This issue of "For Starters" gives an overview of ways pregnant women and new moms can achieve good health. Good health is more a "process" than a "condition." It often requires an effort to change the way a person lives—exercising more, eating healthier food, having routine health checks. Below are some tips to help you in the process.

**Step Out for Good Health** The benefits of regular exercise have been well documented. Heart health, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, weight control, stress reduction and maintenance of bone density are some of

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## Healthy Start Can Help

The Healthy Start program offers a number of services to help pregnant women and new moms achieve good health. Good nutrition is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, and Healthy Start can provide nutritional information as well as referrals to the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutritional supplement program. If you are a smoker and need help to quit, Healthy Start offers smoking cessation classes and support. Healthy Start can also provide you with breastfeeding education and support so that both you and your baby can take advantage of the many benefits of breastfeeding. Counseling services are available if you need help with stress reduction or other counseling needs. Helping you improve your health is a major goal of the Healthy Start program.

**Healthy Start** is for all pregnant women and their newborns. Just ask your health care provider and say "YES" to a healthy start for you and your baby!

 **Healthy Start**  
of North Central Florida  
*Every baby deserves a healthy start*

## Care Coordinators

To find out more about Healthy Start services, call your local Healthy Start Care Coordinator. Be sure to ask about courses in how to quit smoking, parenting, breastfeeding and more!

**Alachua County**  
Peggy Exum  
(352) 334-7940

**Bradford County**  
Traci Wilson  
(904) 964-7732

**Columbia County**  
Enid Yarbrough  
(386) 758-1135

**Dixie County**  
Cheryil Johnson  
(352) 498-1360

**Gilchrist County**  
Kathleen Cooper  
(352) 463-3120

**Hamilton County**  
Hope Crawford  
(386) 792-1414 ext. 238

**Lafayette County**  
Colleen Cody  
(386) 294-1321

**Levy County**  
Diane Wilson  
(352) 486-5300

**Marion County**  
Sharese Ajuzie  
(352) 629-0137

**Putnam County**  
Bobbie Long  
(386) 328-0108

**Suwannee County**  
Colleen Cody  
(386) 362-2708

**Union County**  
Cindy Kent  
(386) 496-3211

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## Health Tips for Expectant Mothers and New Moms, *cont.*

the major benefits of regular exercise. Exercises such as walking, stretching, swimming and yoga are beneficial during pregnancy. Exercise can reduce stress, improve sleep, manage weight gain, strengthen muscles and endurance and reduce the aches and pains of pregnancy. Be sure to get approval from your doctor before beginning an exercise routine.

**Eat for a Healthy You** A healthy diet is essential both during and after pregnancy. According to the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutritional supplement program, a healthy daily diet for women should consist of the following food groups:

- Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta Group (6-11 servings)
- Vegetable Group (3-5 servings)
- Fruit Group (2-4 servings)
- Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group (2-3 servings)
- Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts Group (2-3 servings)
- Fats, Oils and Sweets Group (these foods should be limited as they contain calories but little or no vitamins and minerals)

### Did You Know?

There are things that you can do even **before** you become pregnant that can help you have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

- Exercise to keep fit
- Reach a healthy weight
- Eat a well-balanced, nutritional diet
- Take folic acid supplements and eat leafy dark-green vegetables, citrus fruits, beans and enriched breads and cereals. Folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube defects in the fetus.

In addition to the food groups listed above, it's important that you drink plenty of water, milk and juices. Sodas and other sugary drinks should be limited. Your doctor may prescribe prenatal vitamins to be sure you and your baby are receiving adequate nutrition. Finally, learn to cook food in the healthiest ways such as steaming, stir-frying, microwaving, broiling, baking or poaching. Frying and deep-frying are not good choices.



**Get Regular Checkups** An important part of good health is to see your doctor regularly. Some key things to be checked include blood pressure, cholesterol, breast health (mammogram and self-exam) and bone density. An old saying that "a stitch in time saves nine" is certainly true when it comes to discovering and taking care of health problems at the earliest stage.

**Take Care of Emotional and Mental Needs** Being pregnant and having a baby are challenging events, both physically and emotionally. Sometimes, women may need extra support during this time. Don't be ashamed to ask for help and support from family, friends or your physician if you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or depressed. These feelings are not uncommon and it's OK to ask for help.

## Oral Health: A Key Part of a Healthy Pregnancy

An increasing number of studies show that good oral health plays a role in reducing risk factors for pregnant women and their babies. The evidence indicates that women with poor oral health are more likely to have preterm, low birthweight babies.

If you are pregnant, see your dentist to be sure that you have no conditions such as "gingivitis" or "periodontal disease" that could increase these risks. Your dentist can provide treatment and give you advice on how to maintain good oral health, such as healthy nutrition and plaque control.



## Avoid Substances that Could Hurt Your Baby

**Alcohol, drugs and tobacco pose a health risk to an unborn baby. If you are pregnant, it is in the best interest of your baby not to use these substances.**

**Alcohol** The effects of alcohol on an unborn baby are well documented. "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome," a direct result of alcohol use by a pregnant woman, includes mental retardation and neurodevelopmental disorders. Miscarriage and preterm birth are other risk factors. It is unknown what, if any, amount of alcohol is safe, so it's best to avoid it entirely during pregnancy.



**Drugs** Illegal drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin and marijuana should not be used during pregnancy. The unborn baby will be exposed to these substances and may suffer ill effects. Even legal drugs, such as sedatives and tranquilizers, should be discussed with your physician before use during pregnancy.

**Tobacco** Smoking is linked to increased risks of miscarriage, stillbirth, preterm delivery and low birthweight. If you smoke and are pregnant, it is strongly recommended that you make every effort to quit. Even after the baby is born, you don't want to expose him or her to the dangers of second-hand smoke.



## What services does Healthy Start offer?

Healthy Start provides FREE services for women, babies and children (up to age 3). Services include education and support in:

- Childbirth
- Parenting
- Breastfeeding
- Nutrition
- Smoking cessation
- Pregnancy education
- Between pregnancy care
- Mental health counseling
  - Stress management
  - Postpartum depression

## How do I know if I qualify for Healthy Start services?

Healthy Start is not based on income, education or ethnic background. Healthy Start services are based on the results of a screening—a simple set of questions.

In the early stages of your pregnancy, your prenatal care provider will ask if you'd like to take the Healthy Start Prenatal Screen. After your baby is born, be sure to ask at the hospital about the Healthy Start Infant Risk Screen.

By saying "Yes" to the Healthy Start Prenatal and Infant Risk Screen you open the door to obtaining our free services.

For more information about Healthy Start call your local Care Coordinator as listed on page 2 or call:

1-800-451-BABY

## Useful websites

### American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Information on different aspects of women's health  
[www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

### Florida Department of Health

Maternal and child health section has information on different health topics  
[www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us)

### US Department of Agriculture

Eating plans and help with planning food choices  
[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

### Food and Nutrition Information Center

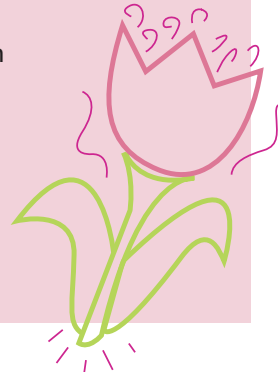
Provides links to resources for pregnant women  
[www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs/bibs/topics/pregnancy/pregcon.pdf](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs/bibs/topics/pregnancy/pregcon.pdf)

### Environmental Protection Agency

Information regarding mercury content in fish and shellfish  
[www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advice](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advice)

### American Academy of Periodontology

Information about oral health for mothers-to-be  
[www.perio.org](http://www.perio.org)



## Healthy Start speakers

Is anything more important than having healthy babies? Unfortunately, sometimes problems during pregnancy cause poor outcomes for both mother and baby. The cost to society for babies with health problems is enormous, not to mention the heartache for their families. Healthy Start's mission is to ensure that mothers and babies have good outcomes by identifying risk factors and providing free services to address them. Meredith Kauth, Community Liaison for Healthy Start of North Central Florida Coalition, is available to present to any organization that would like to know more about this exciting program. You may contact Meredith Kauth at: 352-313-6500 X132 or 352-214-2430.

## GOOD HEALTH FOR MOM AND BABY WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

L H H X Q O M V V I Y P A I  
 D I C A C I L O F T V U G X  
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BONE DENSITY  
 CHOLESTEROL  
 EXERCISE  
 FOLIC ACID  
 FOOD GROUP  
 FRUITS  
 GINGIVITIS  
 ORAL HEALTH  
 SCREENING  
 STRETCHING  
 TOBACCO  
 VEGGIES  
 YOGA

## Did You Know?

Being at a healthy weight is especially important for pregnant women. State statistics show that in 2007, 73% of women whose deaths were "pregnancy related" fell into the "overweight" and "obese" categories.