



KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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To Your Health **Birth Defect Prevention Month**

The Kendall County Health Department (KCHD) is joining the over 350 members of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to alert women of childbearing age about the critical link between diabetes and increased risk for birth defects. January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month and this year KCHD is focusing on addressing diabetes among women of childbearing age.

Although diabetes has been identified as a public health concern, the general public is unaware of the complications that uncontrolled diabetes can have on both the pregnant woman and her baby.

Studies have demonstrated that the key to a healthy pregnancy for women with diabetes is keeping blood glucose in target range -- both before and during pregnancy. Babies born to women with diabetes, especially women with poor diabetes control are at greater risk for birth defects.

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network is working with health care providers around the country to encourage diabetes prevention and control for the over 60 million women in the U.S. of childbearing age.

Along with controlling diabetes, the Kendall County Health Department would also like to remind prospective and expecting mothers that there is a lot more that can be done to protect an unborn child.

Medical advancement has allowed for new ways to prevent and treat birth defects as well as identify the genes that may cause them. Expecting parents can elect to receive genetic counseling which provides them with information about their risks based on family history, age, ethnic or racial background, or other factors.

The Kendall County Health Department would like to remind expecting mothers to keep up with healthy habits while they are pregnant, get early prenatal care, and go to every appointment.

Increase the chances for a healthy pregnancy by following these tips:

- Take a vitamin with 400 micrograms (MCG) folic acid every day.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and street drugs.

- See a health care professional regularly. Talk with them 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 milk and foods made from it.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat

For more information on Birth Defect Prevention contact the Kendall County Health Department at (630) 553-9100 (website, www.kendallhealth.org) or visit the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) website at: <http://www.nbdpn.org/index.html>.