

August 2018

Healthy Sunday Topics: Infant & Maternal Health and Family Health Screenings

Infant & Maternal Health

The North Carolina Women's and Children's Health Section and the State Center for Health Statistics reported that there are approximately 1.7 million women of childbearing age (between ages 18 to 44 years old) in North Carolina. The health of these women is directly linked to the health of their babies and can have an impact on the health of their families and community as well. Many women of childbearing age in North Carolina engage in risky behaviors which might make them more vulnerable to chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, liver disease, respiratory disease, and cancer. These risk factors include smoking, alcohol misuse, inadequate physical activity, and poor nutrition. Early tests and screenings can often detect potential problems in pregnancies before conception.

Maria Small, MD. MPH., an Associate Professor Obstetrics & Gynecology and Medicine at Duke University states, "**Taking action on health issues before pregnancy can prevent many future problems for the mother and baby. It is**



important for all women of reproductive age (between 18yrs and 44yrs) to adopt healthy behaviors." Here are some preventive measures:

- Talk to your health care provider about health screenings and proper management of chronic diseases.
- Talk with your health care provider about taking any medications.
- Visit your health care provider at the recommended scheduled time periods for your age and discuss if or when you are considering becoming pregnant.
- Get tested for Sickle Cell Anemia, HIV/AIDS, etc.



Maria Small, MD, MPH



Family Health Screenings

Rickey Baskett, Jr. MD. a family medicine specialist in Holly Springs, NC states, "**It is very important for people to get tested and screened regularly. Has your mother or sister had breast cancer? Does diabetes run in your family? Did your family members have colorectal (colon) cancer before age 50? If you answered "yes," you are more likely to get the same disease and should consider earlier screening. Talk to your doctor about when to start screening and what other steps to take to prevent the disease."**

Rickey Baskett, Jr., MD

Family Health Screenings



Regular health screenings and tests can help find problems before they start. **Screening tests**, such as mammograms, Pap smears, and colorectal cancer tests, can find diseases and conditions early when they are easier to treat. Preventive health screening services for children are also of vital importance. Screenings for children include immunization, eye exams and lead screening.

Remember the ABC's

- **A**lways eat a well-balanced diet with a multivitamin supplement and exercise regularly. Always get regular health screenings yearly.
- **B**efore trying to conceive, learn about your family history (some illnesses are inherited), and If you have pre-existing health conditions, discuss your desire for attempting pregnancy with your healthcare provider first then, follow your healthcare provider's recommendations
- **C**autions: Stop smoking; do not drink alcohol while trying to conceive and after conceiving; seek prenatal care early; check your blood pressure regularly; and check for gestational diabetes.

For More Information

- www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy
- www.nchealthystart.org
- www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/bd/abc.htm
- www.marachofdimes.com
- <https://www.cdc.gov/>

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