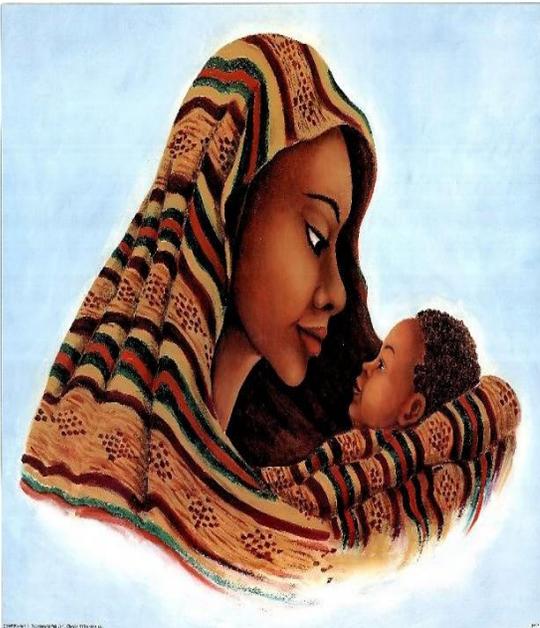




Date: August 24, 2013

Healthy Sunday Topic: Protecting Our Future

Our future belongs to our children and protecting our future means that we have to work on giving them the opportunity to live without disparities or with fewer disparities in health.



Facts

Infants and maternal mortality rates in African-American communities are twice as high as the rates for white women in the U.S. And African-American women die in childbirth at four times the national average (NC Healthy Start Report, 2010). In North Carolina, racial disparities remain, with minorities continuing to have an infant mortality rate more than two and half times higher than whites. Minority women also continue to experience higher rates of low and very low birth weight births (13.5%) compared with whites (7.7%). These higher rates are responsible for much of the gap between white and minority birth outcomes (NC Healthy Start Report, 2010).

What Can We Do?

1. Women who are planning to become pregnant should visit their healthcare provider to have preconception counseling, a physical examination and laboratory studies performed. Counseling and testing for genetic disorders may be recommended prior to attempts at conceiving.
2. Women who are planning to get pregnant or are pregnant should ensure that they eat a healthy diet, participate in an exercise program, stop smoking, and stop drinking alcohol.
3. After achieving pregnancy, early initiation of prenatal care is recommended to confirm and maintain a healthy gestation. A complete prenatal history will help your healthcare provider identify any risk factors for the pregnancy.
4. Parents should advise their girls to delay motherhood until they are ready. Infants of teen mothers are more likely to be low birth weight, to be born prematurely, and to have chronic respiratory illnesses.

Durham County

According to the Durham County Health Report (2010), in Durham infant mortality rate (when a child dies before their first birthday) is 6.8 per 1,000 live births. The leading causes of in Durham are: Prematurity and low birth weight, congenital malformations and chromosomal abnormalities, and pregnancy complications.

Most of these conditions can be prevented through reproductive health screenings; addressing tobacco, alcohol and recreational and prescription drug use; addressing stress; exercising and improving fitness; and improving nutrition. Additionally, pregnant women should be screened for Diabetes (may have no symptoms or symptoms that seem harmless); High blood pressure (also generally symptomless); Anemia; Thyroid problems; and STDs.



Remember Your ABCs

- **A**lways eat a well-balanced diet with a multivitamin supplement and exercise regularly
- **B**efore trying to conceive, learn about your family history (some illness 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**autious: 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.

Health Tip is a message from your **Community Health Coalition, Inc.** and is written in partnership with Durham Academy of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, Old North State Medical Society, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Durham Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!

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