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# MCHD HEALTH BLOG

*The greatest wealth of a community is the health of the people.*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



## BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION MONTH

Did you know that January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month? Birth defects and infant disorders are common, costly, and critical conditions that can cause lifelong health challenges. Birth defects are structural changes 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.

Annually, the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) raises awareness of birth defects and promotes strategies that reduce the risk of birth defects and their complications. National Birth Defects Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness about birth defects and highlight efforts to improve the health of people living with these conditions across their lifespan. This year, NBDPN's theme is "Healthy Communities, Healthy Babies." 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

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

There is hope for a healthier future. To learn more, visit [www.nbdpn.org/bdam.php](http://www.nbdpn.org/bdam.php).