



Birth defects

All birth defects can't be prevented.

In the U.S., about one out of 33 babies is born with a birth defect. This includes cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome, heart defects, sickle cell disease, spina bifida, and Tay-Sachs disease.



A baby's neural tube starts to develop about 3 weeks after conception (before many women know they are pregnant).

Females of childbearing age should take a daily supplement with 400 micrograms of folic acid (a B vitamin). Women who have had a baby with a neural tube defect should follow their doctor's advice about folic acid for future pregnancies.

Learn about birth defects from the March of Dimes at marchofdimes.com.