

# BUMP AND BEYOND

*Cobb & Douglas Public Health Pregnancy Newsletter*



## Birth Defects

Birth defects are structural changes present at birth. These structural changes, which can range from mild to severe, can affect any part of your baby’s body and can affect how your baby’s body looks and works. One in every 33 babies is affected by birth defects.

Not all birth defects can be prevented. However, by developing healthy behaviors and managing health conditions, you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby. Here are some things you can do to help keep you and your baby healthy:

### TAKE FOLIC ACID

It is important to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day during your pregnancy and even up to one month before becoming pregnant. Folic acid is a B vitamin and having enough of this vitamin in your body can help prevent major birth defects in your baby’s brain and spine. You can get folic acid by taking prenatal vitamins and eating fortified foods.

(continued on next page)

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- BIRTH DEFECTS
- CONGENITAL SYPHILIS
- PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT
- REWARDS AND INCENTIVES
- UPCOMING EVENTS AND CLASSES



**COBB & DOUGLAS  
PUBLIC HEALTH**  
*Healthier lives. Healthier community.*

## PREVENT INFECTIONS

To protect you and your baby from infections during your pregnancy, wash your hands with soap and water frequently, avoid unpasteurized milk and cheeses, make sure your meats are fully cooked, do not touch or clean dirty cat litter, get tested for sexually transmitted infections like HIV, Hepatitis B, and Syphilis, avoid people with infections, and do not travel to areas with Zika virus.

## START PRENATAL CARE EARLY AND KEEP ALL OF YOUR APPOINTMENTS

Seeking prenatal care early and staying in prenatal care throughout your pregnancy should be a priority. Make sure to talk with your doctor about any medications you are taking. There are some medications that can cause serious birth defects, so it is important for your doctor to know what you are taking. Also, talk to your doctor about vaccines. Some vaccines, like Tdap and flu, are recommended during pregnancy.

## AVOID ALCOHOL

Using alcohol during pregnancy can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and disabilities. Alcohol is not safe in any amount or at any time during pregnancy. Alcohol in your bloodstream will pass to your baby through the umbilical cord. All types of alcohol are harmful, including beer and wine.

## AVOID SMOKING CIGARETTES

Smoking during pregnancy can cause preterm birth, certain birth defects such as cleft lip or cleft palate, and infant death. If you are a smoker and find out you are pregnant, quitting as quickly as possible will help protect your baby from some health problems.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/awareness-month/before-during-pregnancy.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/infections.html>

## AVOID MARIJUANA AND OTHER DRUGS

Using marijuana during pregnancy can cause low birth weight in your baby. No amount of marijuana is safe while you are pregnant. Pregnant women should not use marijuana even if it is legal in the state you live in. If you use marijuana for medical reasons, talk to your doctor about a safer alternative.

## KEEP DIABETES UNDER CONTROL

There is an increased chance of birth defects and other problems if a pregnant woman has unmanaged diabetes. It is important to keep your prenatal appointments and see your doctor as recommended during your pregnancy in order to keep your diabetes under control. Follow a healthy eating plan, stay active (talk to your doctor about what exercises are safe for you), take your insulin as directed by your doctor, and monitor your blood sugar.

## MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Obesity can increase the risk of birth defects and other complications during pregnancy. Talk to your doctor about ways to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Healthy eating and physical activity will help you reach this goal.

## AVOID OVERHEATING AND TREAT FEVER

Overheating during pregnancy can increase your chance of having a baby with certain birth defects. Exposure to high temperatures or fever can cause overheating. Hot tubs should be avoided during pregnancy and fever should be treated promptly.

Taking the steps above can help ease some of the stress you may experience during pregnancy by knowing you are doing all you can do to help your baby have a healthy start.

# Congenital Syphilis

Congenital syphilis is an infection that can be passed to a baby from the mother during pregnancy and/or delivery if the mother has syphilis. If a baby becomes infected with congenital syphilis during pregnancy, it can affect the health of the baby.

Congenital syphilis can cause:

- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Infant death
- Premature birth
- Low birth weight

If a woman gives birth and has untreated syphilis, their baby may be stillborn or die as a newborn after birth. A baby born with congenital syphilis may have:

- Deformed bones
- Severe anemia
- Jaundice
- Enlarged liver and spleen
- Brain and nerve problems, such as blindness and deafness
- Meningitis
- Skin rashes

It is possible for a baby born with congenital syphilis to not have any symptoms at birth. However, without treatment, these babies usually develop health complications a few weeks after birth. These problems can also develop years later.

Congenital syphilis cases have increased in recent years and the number of cases is continuing to rise. It is important to be tested for syphilis during your pregnancy even if you have been tested before.

If you are pregnant, you should be tested for syphilis the first time you go to see your doctor during your pregnancy. It is very important to see a doctor and start your prenatal care early in your pregnancy in order for this test to be done. You should be tested for syphilis again in your third trimester, between 28 and 32 weeks. If your doctor does not perform these tests or if you are unsure, ask your doctor about them. It is possible to have syphilis and not know it. The only way to know for sure is to be tested.

If you test positive for syphilis, you will need to receive treatment right away. Do not wait. If you are sexually active, your partner will need to be treated as well. You can become infected with syphilis more than once, so it is important to take precautions in order to not become re-infected. The following can help lower your risk of getting syphilis:

- Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with someone who has been tested for syphilis and does not have syphilis.
- Using latex condoms, the correct way, every time you have sex. Condoms can prevent syphilis infection by preventing contact with a sore, but keep in mind sores can occur in areas that are not covered by a condom. Contact with these sores can transmit syphilis.

(continued on next page)

# Congenital Syphilis

If a baby is born with congenital syphilis, they need to be treated right away with antibiotics. Follow-up care for a baby treated for congenital syphilis is important to ensure the treatment has worked.

Your baby will not get congenital syphilis if you do not have syphilis. Do these three important things to protect your baby from congenital syphilis and the health problems associated with the infection:

- Get tested for syphilis at your first prenatal visit.
- Get tested for syphilis in your third trimester at 28 to 32 weeks.
- Reduce your risk of getting syphilis before and during your pregnancy.

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/stdfact-congenital-syphilis.htm>

<https://dph.georgia.gov/congenitalsyphilis>

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2021/default.htm>

## COBB & DOUGLAS PUBLIC HEALTH OFFERS STD/STI TESTING AND TREATMENT AT THREE CONVENIENT LOCATIONS:

### Acworth-Kennesaw Public Health Center

Monday–Friday

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

### Marietta Public Health Center Building A

Monday–Friday

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

### Douglas Public Health Center

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Thursday

7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

## COBB & DOUGLAS PUBLIC HEALTH OFFERS STD/STI TESTING AND TREATMENT, AND RESULTS ARE ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL.

If you think you've been exposed or feel you are having symptoms, we encourage you and your partner to come in for testing. The STI/STD clinic accepts walk-in patients, but appointments are preferred. You can make an appointment by calling 770-514-2300 or request an appointment online at [www.cobbanddouglaspublichealth.org](http://www.cobbanddouglaspublichealth.org). Our goal is to offer affordable STD/STI testing and treatment. We test for several infections at once (including Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Herpes and HIV), and our costs are based on a sliding fee scale.

When you come in for your appointment, please bring proof of income, such as:

- Two recent pay stubs (One pay stub is acceptable in some cases)
- W-2 or Tax papers
- Award letter from Unemployment or Disability
- For College Students: Financial Aid/Loan Paperwork
- For High School Students (ages 18 and under): Progress Report or School ID with the current school year on it

What to expect during your appointment:

- Questions about your exposure risk and history
- STD/STI education
- Testing and treatment options



# PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

## PATRICE LAKE

We would like to highlight the accomplishments of one of our program participants, Patrice Lake who initially became involved with our Healthy Start (HS) program in October 2019. Since that time, she has given birth to two children, who were both enrolled in the program and have greatly benefited from the services, support, and resources provided by the assigned HS Care Team. One child remains involved in our programming and is expected to graduate from HS in August 2023. Despite the challenges of parenting two young children during a global pandemic, this 22-year-old mother pursued her goal of obtaining a college degree and we are happy to report that she is now a recent graduate of Kennesaw State University!

In addition, to her HS and educational accomplishments, this mother is a regular participant of our local Riverside Neighborhood Community Garden (RNCG), which will be sponsoring her for their Master Gardening classes that are scheduled to begin in February and run through June. This participant has accomplished much in a short period of time. We look forward to playing a role in her journey of continued growth, development, and success.



## Rewards & Incentives

### Customer Satisfaction Surveys

With Healthy Start, all participants are **Winners!** However, we want to extend a special congratulations to our recent raffle winners for their participation with completing their Customer Satisfaction Surveys.



***Congratulations to the winner of our January gift card raffle drawing. K. Barr will receive a \$25 gift card of appreciation!!***

As each of you communicate monthly with your care team, you should be given the opportunity to complete a survey; not only as a chance to be entered into our monthly drawing, but also, and most importantly, for you to be able to provide feedback on your experience with our programming/services and to let us know how we can improve. All that is required to be entered into the raffle is that you send confirmation of your completed survey to your Healthy Start Nurse or Care Coordinator within the month that you receive it, and your name can be entered. Please note that you do not have to participate in the raffle drawing and may complete surveys anonymously if you prefer.

### Client Referrals

We are also now offering gift cards as referral incentives for other eligible pregnant women you refer to our program. To qualify for this incentive, the referred woman must fully complete the enrollment process and subsequently keep her next scheduled appointment. Please let a member of your care team know if you have a friend or family member who may qualify for our program.

### More Incentives Have Arrived!

We hope many of you are finding the Moms' Group sessions through Georgia Hope to be enlightening. This service is provided for you twice a week as a means of support and camaraderie with other ladies that may be in similar stages of life as you. We want to see each of you happy, healthy, and thriving in every aspect of your life and our hope is that this is one way to help with that.

Going forward, as a consistent participant of the Moms' Group sessions (attending at least one weekly session 3-4 times a month) you may be eligible to earn gift cards for restaurants including Panera Bread and Chick-Fil-A while supplies last! This is just one of the small ways for us to thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey!

## Events & Classes

### • **Stork's Nest**

Our local Stork's Nest is offering **free**, app-based learning modules for prenatal education classes. Earn a \$10 gift card per module! Register at <https://tinyurl.com/36k55u56> using Rho Xi Zeta for question 4.

### • **Pickles & Ice Cream**

Pickles & Ice Cream offers free, live webinars covering prenatal, postpartum, breastfeeding, and newborn care. To view class dates and times, visit: <https://picklesandicecreamga.org/events>.

### • **Healthy Start Support Group**

CDPH's Healthy Start Program launched a virtual support group for moms, led by a therapist. Whether you're expecting or recently had your baby, you are welcome to attend. The group meets Tuesday evenings from 6:00pm - 7:30pm and Friday afternoons from 1:00pm - 2:30pm. To join the Zoom call, use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/2925874010>.

### • **Inspiring Fathers Program**

Inspiring Fathers is a program for individuals who support a mom in Healthy Start. We want to prepare fathers, partners, or other support figures for the mental, spiritual, and emotional responsibility of being actively involved in the child's life. The program includes a 12-week course that will teach the tools to care for the financial and emotional stability of your family. Topics will cover issues such as job training, housing assistance, self-esteem, relationship building and parenting skills. Meetings are held once a week over a hot meal as we help you build a safe, strong home life for your child. Contact 770-635-0523 to register or to answer any questions you have about the program.



**COBB & DOUGLAS HEALTHY START HAS  
OFFICES IN SOUTH COBB, DOUGLASVILLE, MARIETTA, & SMYRNA  
PHONE: (770)635-0523  
CDPHHEALTHYSTART.ORG**