

# BUMP AND BEYOND

*Cobb & Douglas Public Health Pregnancy Newsletter*



## What is health literacy?

Health literacy involves your ability to understand information about your body and your health. The information usually comes from a doctor or other healthcare provider and may be presented in different ways, including: spoken, written, as a visual image, as a video or slide show, or online. Health literacy is important for everyone. During pregnancy and childbirth, you will need to be able to use and understand health information and services to make the best decisions for yourself and your baby. Your health literacy affects your ability to:

- navigate the healthcare system, including finding doctors and services, as well as filling out forms and questionnaires and deciding on insurance plans
- share your personal information with healthcare providers
- do self-care and other at-home procedures
- understand concepts such as urgent maternal warning signs and risk-benefit ratios (weighing the risks and benefits of treatments)
- take advantage of preventive health services

While it's important for healthcare professionals to speak using plain language, acknowledge cultural differences, and ensure that you understand health information, there are also steps you can take to improve your health literacy, which we'll explore more in this issue.

\*Information adapted from Improving Your Health Literacy from Breastcancer.org

### HEALTH LITERACY ISSUE

**WHAT IS IT?**  
**HOW TO INCREASE YOUR HEALTH LITERACY**  
**HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CARE**  
**STAFF HIGHLIGHT: NEW CASE MANAGER!**  
**UPCOMING CLASSES AND EVENTS**



## How to advocate for yourself during labor

It can be hard to stand up for what you want, and even for things you need. This is especially true when you're in the middle of labor. To get the most of what you want and need in labor and birth, consider the following tips.

- **Know your options.** When you know your options, you know what to ask for, and what to decline. The best way to learn your options is by taking a childbirth class that teaches informed decision making. Books, can also be a great resource when learning options, benefits and risks.
- **Ask questions.** If advocating for yourself intimidates you, try starting out with simply asking questions. Things like, "Can you tell me more about...?" or "I don't understand what you just said, can you explain...?" or "What are the benefits of... / What about risks?" Asking questions is a good place to start.
- **Practice/role play.** Involve your partner, friend, or family member (ideally the person(s) who will also be present with you in labor), and practice asking for/speaking up for what you want/need or don't want.
- **Be polite.** Manners, niceties, and a kind tone of voice go a long way when working with staff and care providers. But when it's time to be direct, do so. This is your body, your baby, your birth, and it's your right to speak out directly for what you want.
- **Bring along a knowledgeable support person.** A doula can be an excellent way to make sure you're able to advocate for what you want in labor! If you don't hire a doula, make sure that your support person is willing to help you advocate for yourself. This person should know about your birth preferences, options and choices, and know how to speak to staff and providers. Ideally, this person will have attended a childbirth class with you.

Speaking up for yourself isn't always easy, but is always worth it. When you feel respected, listened to, and "heard" in labor and birth, you are more likely to look back on your birth experience as a more satisfying and positive one.

\*Adapted from Giving Birth with Confidence, 5 Ways to Better Advocate for Yourself During Labor



## Increasing health literacy

Health literacy is important! Here are some tips for how to increase your knowledge.

**Ask Questions.** If you don't understand what your provider is telling you or only understand part of it, ask questions. Don't be embarrassed! There is no such thing as a dumb question when it comes to your health. Let your provider know that you're having trouble understanding and ask that the information be explained again.

**Keep a running list of questions for your provider.** The list can include terms you don't understand, questions about research you saw, or side effects that you're concerned about. Bring it with you to each appointment.

**Repeat what your provider tells you in your own words.** Your provider may give you a lot of information in a short time. To make sure you understand, it can help to repeat what your provider said in your own words. This gives your doctor a chance to clear up anything you've misheard or don't understand.

**Bring a friend or loved one with you to your appointments, if possible.** If they can't come to the appointment in person, ask your doctor if they can join you virtually by phone or a video call. Ask the person to take notes for you, just in case you miss something.

\*Adapted from Improving Health Literacy from Breastcancer.org



# OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a time for all of us to speak up about domestic violence, raise awareness, and support survivors of this issue. Domestic violence can happen to anyone and it is present in every community, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomic status, religion, or nationality. In the United States, over 10 million adults experience domestic violence annually. Here are some warning signs that your partner might be abusive:

- Telling you that you never do anything right.
- Preventing or discouraging you from spending time with friends, family members, or peers. Or showing extreme jealousy when you do
- Insulting, demeaning, or shaming you, especially in front of other people.
- Preventing you from making your own decisions, including about working or attending school.
- Controlling finances in the household without discussion, including taking your money or refusing to provide money for necessary expenses.
- Pressuring you to have sex or perform sexual acts you're not comfortable with.
- Pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol.
- Intimidating you through threatening looks or actions. Or with weapons like guns, knives, bats, or mace.
- Insulting your parenting or threatening to harm or take away your children or pets.
- Destroying your belongings or your home.

If you think you or someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, please call the National Domestic Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or LiveSafe Resources at 770-427-3390. Both are available 24/7 365.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW CASE MANAGER VICKY FRANKLIN!



### About Vicky:

Vicky has been a nurse for over 30 years and has experience in Pediatrics, Oncology, Home Health, and School Nursing. She was also a nursing auditor and surveyor at the state level. Vicky is an Atlanta native, attended Bass High School, and attended Georgia State and Clayton State Universities. She served in the Army National Guard as a Captain for 6 years. Vicky's nursing career has always been in the public sector. She loves working with children and families. Vicky has 2 adult sons and one granddaughter. Her hobbies are: decorating, reading, cooking, and family events. Vicky is a case manager in our Healthy Start program and we are so excited to have her!

## 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.

### • **Riverside Neighborhood Community Garden, Sundays 1-2pm**

The garden offers **free** membership and classes. Free food is also given to volunteers. The garden is located at 875 Riverside Parkway, Austell, GA 30168. For more information, email: [RNCommunityGarden@gmail.com](mailto:RNCommunityGarden@gmail.com).

### • **Inspiring Fathers, Wednesdays 7-8pm**

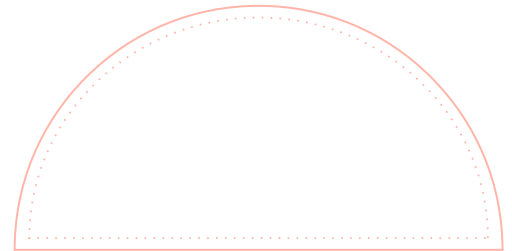
This **free** program is designed for dads and expecting fathers who wish to learn more about fatherhood skills, traits, and practices over a three-month program cycle. It focuses on strengthening family resiliency, fatherhood involvement, and knowledge about parenting skills. This class follows the 24/7 Dads Curriculum and is held via Zoom. Call Chris White at 404-782-7158, for more information.

### • **Prepare to Breastfeed Workshop**

In this **free** 90-minute online workshop, you will learn practical advice concerning common breastfeeding topics. To view dates and to register, visit <https://yourbabyacademy.com/free-prepare-to-breastfeed-workshop/>

### • **Healthy Start Support Group**

CDPH's Healthy Start program recently launched a 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 6-7:30pm. Contact Anna Long at [anna.long@dph.ga.gov](mailto:anna.long@dph.ga.gov) if you're interested in joining.



## FEATURED PROGRAM: ADULT HEALTH

The Adult Health clinic at Cobb & Douglas Public Health offers STD/STI testing and family planning services. STI/STD testing and treatment is offered to both male and female clients. Family Planning staff provide education on all contraception methods and devices. Services offered for family planning include: physical exams, breast cancer screening, cervical cancer screening, STI screening and Intrauterine Device (IUD) and other contraceptive methods. The Adult Health clinic is able to accept some walk-in clients, but appointments are strongly encouraged. Please call 770-514-2300 to schedule an appointment. Cost for services in the Adult Health clinic are based on a sliding scale fee. Please bring in verification of income to your appointment.