

# StarBabies



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Events listed on back cover.  
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## January is Cervical Health Awareness Month

Two screening tests help prevent cervical cancer—the Pap test and the HPV test. Cervical cancer can also be prevented by the HPV vaccines, which protect against the types of HPV that most commonly cause cervical cancer.

**Start the New Year off right!** Call your doctor today to schedule a Pap smear, cervical cancer screening or to discuss the HPV vaccine.

Source: [vaccines.gov](http://vaccines.gov)



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Texas Children's  
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## a word from Dr. Hollier

Pregnancy is an exciting time, but it also can be stressful. Knowing that you are doing all that you can to get ready for pregnancy and helping give your baby a healthy start will help you to have peace of mind.

Being at your best health before pregnancy is a great first step to help prevent birth defects. If you have questions about preventing birth defects, be sure to ask your provider at any time. Being informed in advance and planning your pregnancy can really help you relax.

Once you think you're pregnant, go see a provider and start your prenatal care. Getting early and regular prenatal care and learning more about healthy choices can help keep your baby healthy.

*Dr. Lisa Hollier*

*Chief Medical Officer of Obstetrics/Gynecology  
Texas Children's Health Plan*

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## What is folic acid?

## January is **National Birth Defects Prevention Month**

Texas Children's Health Plan wants you to have a healthy baby. That's why this issue of *Star Babies* has information about ways to decrease your chances of having a baby born with birth defects. Learn more about the healthy choices you can make for you and your little one.



Folic acid, sometimes called folate, is a B vitamin (B9). It is found mostly in leafy green vegetables like kale and spinach, orange juice, and enriched grains. But for most women, eating fortified foods isn't enough. The CDC recommends that all women of childbearing age—especially those who are planning a pregnancy—get about 400 micrograms (0.4 milligrams) of folic acid every day. To reach the recommended daily level, you'll probably need a vitamin supplement.

Source: KidsHealth.org

## Do you know about folic acid?

### Here are some facts you should learn

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) urges women to take 400 mcg of folic acid every day, starting at least one month before getting pregnant. This helps prevent major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine.

#### **About folic acid**

Folic acid is a B vitamin. Our bodies use it to make new cells. Everyone needs folic acid.

#### **Why folic acid is so important**

Folic acid is very important because it can help prevent major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine (anencephaly and spina bifida) by 50% to 70%.

#### **How much folic acid a woman needs**

400 micrograms (mcg) every day.

#### **When to start taking folic acid**

For folic acid to help prevent major birth defects, a woman needs to start taking it at least one month before she becomes pregnant and while she is pregnant. However, every woman needs folic acid every day, whether she's planning to get pregnant or not, for the healthy new cells the body makes daily. Think about the skin, hair, and nails. These, and other parts of the body, make new cells each day.

#### **There are two easy ways to be sure to get enough folic acid each day**

1. Take a vitamin that has folic acid in it every day. Most multivitamins sold in the United States have the amount of folic acid women need each day. Women can also choose to take a small pill (supplement) that has only folic acid in it each day. Multivitamins and folic acid pills can be found at most local pharmacy, grocery, or discount stores. Check the label to be sure it contains 100% of the daily value (DV) of folic acid, which is 400 micrograms (mcg).
2. Eat a bowl of breakfast cereal that has 100% of the daily value of folic acid every day. Not every cereal has this amount. Check the label on the side of the box, and look for one that has "100%" next to folic acid.

Source: National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

To learn more about folic acid and how to prevent birth defects, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/folicacid](http://www.cdc.gov/folicacid) or call 1-800-232-4636 (CDC-INFO).

# Get the facts about prenatal tests

Prenatal tests are medical tests you get during pregnancy. Some of these tests are routine during certain times in your pregnancy. Some are required by law. Be sure to talk to your doctor about which tests are right for you.

Here are the prenatal tests that are required by Texas law during pregnancy:

- The HIV, HBV, and syphilis tests will be done during your first prenatal visit.
- The HIV and syphilis tests will be done again in your 3rd trimester, after 28 weeks.
- When you deliver, the HBV test will be done. If there is no record of your HIV and syphilis test results from your 3rd trimester, it will be required at this time.
- Newborns must get an HIV test if there is no record of the result of the 3rd trimester test.

## Here are the routine tests you may have while you are pregnant.

### 1st trimester:

- Blood type and antibody screening. You will have this done at your first prenatal visit.
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea screening.
- Early ultrasound.

### 2nd trimester:

- An ultrasound makes sure your baby is growing and checks for birth defects.
- Glucose screening tests are done to see if you have gestational diabetes. This is a kind of diabetes that some women get during pregnancy.
- Neural tube defect screening.

### 3rd trimester:

- Group B Strep is an infection you can pass to your baby during birth. The test checks fluid from your cervix to see if you have GBS. It is done at 35 to 37 weeks.

Source: *MarchofDimes.org/Dr. Lisa Hollier, Texas Children's Health Plan*

If you haven't chosen a prenatal care doctor, call Member Services as soon as you can, toll-free at 1-866-959-2555 (STAR) or 1-866-959-6555 (CHIP). They can help you pick a doctor, help with scheduling a visit, and transportation arrangements.

## TYPICAL SCHEDULE FOR PRENATAL VISITS

**MONTH 6**  
Once a month during the first 6 months of pregnancy

**MONTH 8**  
Every 2 weeks during the 7th and 8th months

**MONTH 9**  
Weekly during the ninth month until the delivery date



## KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs)

The best thing you can do to protect your baby from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FASDs) is to not drink alcohol while you're pregnant. It's that simple. No safe amount of alcohol for pregnant women exists. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urges pregnant women to not drink alcohol any time during pregnancy.

### Why is alcohol dangerous during pregnancy?

When you're pregnant, whatever you drink, your baby also drinks. That means when you drink a glass of wine, your baby also drinks a glass of wine. It passes in your blood through the placenta to your baby through the umbilical cord. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and a range of lifelong disorders.

### Children with FASDs might have the following:

- Abnormal facial features. Such as a smooth ridge between the nose and upper lips.
- Small head size.
- Low body weight.
- Shorter-than-average height.
- Poor coordination.
- Hyperactive behavior.
- Trouble paying attention.
- Poor memory.
- Difficulty in school.
- Learning disabilities.
- Speech and language delays.
- Low IQ.
- Poor judgment skills and reasoning.
- Sleep and sucking problems as a baby.
- Vision or hearing problems.
- Problems with the heart, kidneys, or bones

### It's never too late to stop

If you are drinking alcohol during pregnancy, please stop now. It's never too late. The sooner you stop drinking, the better it will be for you and your baby.

To learn more about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

## Get the care you need

For help  
finding a doctor visit  
[TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org](http://TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org)  
under "Find a Doctor" or call  
**1-866-959-2555** (STAR) or  
**1-866-959-6555** (CHIP).

**We want our expecting moms to have a great pregnancy.** And that means it's important for you to go to the doctor. After all, a healthy mom and a happy baby begin with quality prenatal care!

**Don't wait. Get seen right away.** As soon as you think you're pregnant, you should schedule your first prenatal visit. Your OB/GYN will want to see you in your first trimester or within 42 days of joining Texas Children's Health Plan.

**Don't forget about your postpartum check-up.** It is also important for you to go for a postpartum checkup after having your baby. Your OB/GYN MUST see you within 3 to 6 weeks after delivery. To sign your newborn up for Medicaid, call 2-1-1 and report the birth of your child to Health and Human Services Commission or visit [yourtexasbenefits.com](http://yourtexasbenefits.com).

**Cervical Cancer Screening.** Routine pap smears are a key to the prevention and early detection of cervical cancer. Women ages 21–29 years should be tested every 3 years. For women ages 30–65, a pap smear with testing for human papillomavirus (HPV) every 5 years is preferred but screening with just a pap smear every 3 years is OK. Plan a visit with your doctor or local community clinic.

**Mammography.** Women are encouraged to talk with their doctor about screening for breast cancer with a mammogram. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends annual mammograms beginning at age 40. Early detection can lead to improved outcomes in women diagnosed with breast cancer. Plan a visit with your doctor or local community clinic.

# Eating right for moms-to-be

Eating right during pregnancy is important to you and your baby. Pregnancy affects your immune system. Therefore, you and your baby are more at risk to bacteria, viruses, and parasites that cause food-borne illness. You don't have to give up all the foods you like during pregnancy. Just be sure to make smart choices.

**Here are some tips:**

- Try to eat foods from all 5 food groups every day. This includes grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein.
- Be sure you are getting the right amount of vitamins and minerals. Eat foods with folic acid and calcium.
- Most women need around 300 extra calories per day during pregnancy. Talk to your doctor to learn more about a healthy eating plan for you.

Keep this checklist handy while you are pregnant. It can help you and your baby stay healthy.

**FOODS TO AVOID:**

- ✗ Soft cheeses like Brie, feta, queso blanco, and queso fresco.
- ✗ Raw cookie dough or cake batter.
- ✗ Certain kinds of fish like shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tilefish.
- ✗ Refrigerated, smoked seafood.
- ✗ Raw or undercooked fish like sushi.
- ✗ Unpasteurized milk or juice.
- ✗ Raw shellfish like oysters and clams.
- ✗ Undercooked poultry and meat.
- ✗ Unheated deli meats and hot dogs.

## Get ready, get set, draw!

**We want you to enter our annual T-shirt design contest!**

Your child won't want to miss the chance to be the winning artist for our 2017 T-shirt contest. Every member who enters the contest will get a soccer ball. We will pick a winner in February 2017. **The winner's design will be printed on a Texas Children's Health Plan T-shirt.** The winner will also receive prizes and have his or her drawings published in future editions of our newsletters.

Entries should be sent in on unlined, white letter-sized paper. You can use crayons, markers, pencils, or paints. **The deadline is February 1, 2017.**

Don't forget to include your child's name, age, and Texas Children's Health Plan Member ID number with each entry. Also, please make sure your child's drawing has our name, Texas Children's Health Plan, on it.

**Mail entries to:**

**Texas Children's Health Plan  
Marketing Department  
P.O. Box 301011, WLS 8366  
Houston, Texas 77230-1011**



Call our  
**Nurse Help Line**  
**24 hours a day,**  
**7 days a week at**  
**1-800-686-3831**

to speak with a registered nurse.

Call Member Services at  
**1-866-959-2555 (STAR)**  
**1-866-959-6555 (CHIP)**  
for help picking a doctor,  
midwife, or OB/GYN.



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