

Suggested Activities for Birth Defects Prevention Month

Listed below are activities that may be used to promote Birth Defects Prevention Month. In addition to providing pamphlets and other educational resources to local health departments and community-based organizations, states can:

- Enlist the support of the March of Dimes, Spina Bifida Association, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, or Planned Parenthood to mobilize their constituents to distribute materials and send letters to legislators.
- Partner with the state's Folic Acid Council to conduct community education activities.
- Seek support from statewide or local businesses. Companies may: add information about birth defects to their corporate or wellness newsletters; sponsor events such as baby fairs or folic acid food tastings; or donate door prizes such as 'folic acid rich' food baskets.
- Provide pamphlets or fact sheets to managed care plans to educate their patients and providers.
- Enlist the support of local school systems to distribute prevention materials to staff members and students' families.
- Distribute materials to the state's Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program, MCH programs including Reproductive Health and Family Planning, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and Medicaid.
- Collaborate with hospitals or clinics on community outreach projects. Topics may include preparing for pregnancy or prevention strategies to reduce the risk of birth defects.
- Distribute educational materials to reproductive genetics clinics that offer genetic counseling services to women prior to conception and in early pregnancy.
- Share prevention materials with pediatric and family medicine practices as well as OB/GYN providers.
- Partner with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) support groups or prevention projects to conduct community education activities.
- Connect with partners in the media who are committed to MCH issues. Prepare PSA scripts and write educational articles that may be used and adapted by local media. Recruit a birth defects prevention 'champion' for media interviews.
- Sponsor 'Folic Acid Awareness Days' in collaboration with student health centers or sororities on college and university campuses.
- Provide NTD recurrence prevention information to myelomeningocele clinics for distribution among patients and their families.