Weill Cornell Medicine

Recognizing National Birth Defects Awareness Month



What you can do to protect your baby.

Did You Know?

The Centers for
Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)
estimates that birth
defects affect about

1 in 33 babies born every
year in the United States.

changes in a newborn baby. They can develop in almost any part of the body, including the heart, brain, face, feet, arms and spine.

The severity of a birth defect determines how it impacts your baby's ability to function. It can also shorten lifespan.

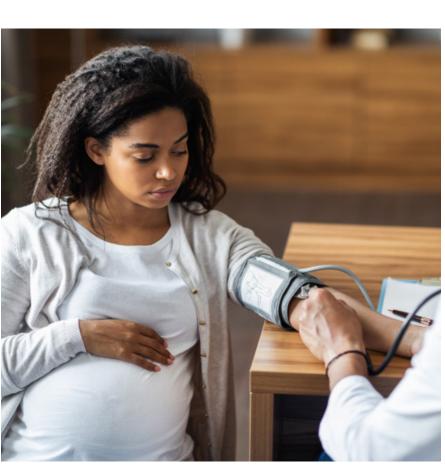


Common birth defects include:

- Spina bifida (a spine defect)
- Cleft lip or cleft palate (facial deformity)
- Narrowing of the aorta(a heart defect)
- Hearing loss
- Down syndrome

According to the CDC, risk factors for birth defects include:

- The mother having health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, or anxiety and depression
- Taking certain medications, such as isotretinoin use for acne treatment
- Smoking
- Infections, including cytomegalovirus or Zika virus
- Age of the mother, due to the increased risk of chromosomal abnormalities





What you can do:

- Visit your healthcare provider before getting pregnant to identify risk factors.
- Eat a healthy diet with plenty of green leafy veggies and other foods with folate.
- Take folic acid, which is essential for your baby's healthy development.
- Exercise regularly.
- Consult your provider before taking medications.
- Stay up-to-date on routine vaccines.

Concerned about your pregnancy? Find a provider: weillcornell.org/doctors