


Family Planning and Pregnancy Guide



Help Me Grow[®]
Char-Em



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
of Northwest Michigan




Welcome! If you are holding this guide it's likely you are considering growing your family or perhaps you are already in the process of that growth. For some that bring pure excitement and elation, for others, it brings questions, concerns, and worry. No matter where you stand, we hope you know you are not alone.

Parenting is a tough gig. We are not sure there is any other scenario that can bring so much joy and so much grief and require such unending flexibility and barrier-busting. As you set out on this journey, we hope to provide you with information that will help you make the best, most informed decisions for your family planning journey and that we can connect you to the many resources in our community to support you and uplift you throughout the journey.

In the pages that follow we share information highlighting health and wellness topics that you may wish to consider and understand as early as the moment you stop actively taking steps to prevent pregnancy all the way through to the early postpartum period. You can be confident in the information provided within this guide, knowing that the competent and capable professionals at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan have prepared the health-related messaging just for you, in hopes that it will guide you and increase your confidence as you work to make the best, most informed decisions for yourself and your future family.

Surely, there will be topics and resources that may apply to you, and yet still, others may not be what you are looking for at this moment. We hope you will take what you need, share bits with friends and family that may benefit, and know that this is your journey and you get to make the decisions that best fit your needs. We are here to help; in whatever ways you see fit.



As you continue on this journey, we'd love to support you along the way. Help Me Grow Char-Em serves as the early childhood hub for our community. We bring together various community members, organizations, businesses, and parents as we work together to coordinate a system of community resources and support to strengthen families and improve child outcomes, prenatal to age five. Whether you are looking for information on family-friendly community events, knowledge, and resources for child development and parenting, an opportunity to make other friends walking the path of parenting, or share your voice and experience to help improve systems and programs to better support families in our community, we have a space for you and look forward to meeting you. Cheers to health, wellness, and confidence in your parenting journey and access to resources and supports when you hit bumps along the way!

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Help Me Grow[®]

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CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL GROWTH?

We sort through all the resources available so that families don't have to.

- child development check-ins
- parent support
- quality early learning, like child care and preschool
- basic needs
- healthcare or behavior support
- home visiting programs

Complete a
Developmental
Screening!



www.helpmegrow-mi.org/charemcouny

231.308.0289



Healthy Futures is a **FREE** local program that connects you with local resources and information that will help you make the best decisions for you and your child. We all know that every child is different. So, whether you are a first-time parent or an experienced one, situations and new questions arise with each child and Healthy Futures is here to help!

There are several ways that Healthy Futures can help you.

Website

The Healthy Futures website includes timely, local, and relevant stories & videos. You can also access information you may need such as finding doctors, classes, and ideas for family fun.

Newsletters

Once you are registered with Healthy Futures, you will receive regular newsletters mailed to your home address that are personalized based on your expected due date or your child's age. The newsletters include timely tips, reminders and other information that is timed to your pregnancy and your child's development.

Home Visits

Healthy Futures nurses can visit you at your home – at no cost to you. During a typical home visit, the registered nurse will weigh your newborn and answer any questions you may have about feeding, sleep, and other common concerns. This program is a reflection of our community's commitment to children and is available to all families from all income levels and backgrounds.

Social Media

Like Healthy Futures on Facebook as a way to receive regular information in your news feed and to connect with other families in northern Michigan.

Text Updates

Sign up for regular text updates that are customized to your child's due date or age.

Register Today!

<https://healthyfuturesonline.org/about/enroll/>

For more information call (231) 935-5640 or toll free at 1-888-403-8468 or email us at contact@healthyfutures.com





HEALTH DEPARTMENT

of Northwest Michigan

The mission of the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is to serve our entire community and to achieve health equity by promoting well-being, preventing disease, and protecting the environment through partnerships, innovation, and excellence in public health practice.

We provide many different services to help support families in Northern Michigan. Some of these include:

- **Blood Lead Testing**
- **Breastfeeding Support**
- **Children's Special Health Care Services**
- **Community Connections**
- **Dental Services**
- **Healthy Families Northern Michigan**
- **Hearing and Vision Screening**
- **Immunizations**
- **Insurance Assistance**
- **Maternal Infant Health Program**
- **Healthy Futures Visits**
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

These are just a handful of services we provide!

**For a complete list of services
visit our website, nwhealth.org,
or call 1.800.432.4121.**





Doula Initiative

Are you pregnant or in the early postpartum period? You might benefit from the support of a doula. Doulas are caring helpers who support families from pregnancy through birth and beyond. Did you know doula services are covered by Michigan Medicaid? You can use this resource to learn about local doulas and see how they can help you have a truly positive birth experience.

Find a Doula
bit.ly/mi_doulas

Are you interested in learning more about your child's development?

Help Me Grow® Char-Em can help! We promote early identification of developmental, behavioral, or educational concerns and link families to community-based services and supports at no cost to parents and caregivers.

How does Help Me Grow® work?

1. Contact Help Me Grow® Char-Em, 231.308.0289, for local resources that address concerns about health, development, behavior, and learning.
2. A Family Resource Coordinator will listen, provide support, and assess the needs of your child and family.
3. Help Me Grow® Char-Em will offer free screenings to help provide insight on your child's developmental and behavioral skills.
4. An Early Childhood professional will communicate the screening results with your family, and appropriate referrals to local services and supports will be provided.
5. Scheduled follow-ups will occur to inquire about previous referral given and any additional concerns that your family may have.

Call us!

231.308.0289

ASQ Online Screening
www.helpmegrow-mi.org/asq



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Planning Your Family

Planning your family involves thoughtful consideration about various aspects of your life. Before you plan to have a baby, make sure you're healthy by eating well, staying active, and taking care of any existing health problems. The decision of when to expand the family requires a delicate balance between personal, financial, and career goals. Factors such as emotional readiness, stability, and support networks play pivotal roles. If you don't want to have a baby right now, there are ways to prevent it, and it's good to know about them and what might happen with each choice. Whatever you choose - whether it's having kids, waiting before having more, or not having any more at all - making good choices by talking honestly and sharing what you think is super important for planning your family well.

Not planning on expanding your family anytime soon or ever?

- Talk with your primary care provider about what needs you may have for preventing pregnancy.
- Don't have a primary care provider or not comfortable talking to them about this? Make an appointment at the Health Department or Planned Parenthood. No insurance? Both offer low or no-cost services.

Planning on expanding your family soon or trying to expand your family currently?

- Make an appointment with your primary care provider to discuss your health in preparation for the changes pregnancy might bring.

Recently delivered a baby?

- There are many options for preventing pregnancy during the postpartum period. Talk to your provider about what will work best for your goals and body.

Health Insurance

- There are many options for healthcare available. Community Health Workers are available at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan to help decide what works best for each family.
- Many clinics offer services for clients that do not have health insurance or have high deductibles.
- No one should go without basic healthcare, birth-control, cancer screenings, etc. due to cost. There are many options available in the community for assistance.



Take Care of Your Own Health

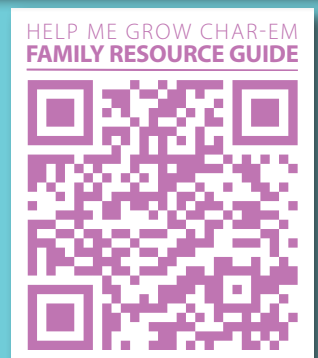
One of the best ways to prepare for pregnancy is to take care of your own health. The Healthy Futures website provides resources and educational information that will not only prepare you for pregnancy, but also help you navigate through the first five years of parenting.

Deciding if you should grow your family is a monumental choice that requires a great amount of foresight and conversations between both parents.

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Resources to Check Out!

- **MyPlate for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding**
<https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>
- **Quick Tips for Eating Healthy During Pregnancy**
<https://bit.ly/eathealthyduringpregnancy>
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>



healthyfuturesonline.org

Health Before, In Between, and After Pregnancy

Taking care of yourself when you are not pregnant is just as important as taking care of yourself during pregnancy. Preconception refers to the time period before a person is pregnant, and interconception is the time period between pregnancies. A person's preconception and interconception health can impact their baby's health during pregnancy and in the future. Before pregnancy, you should talk to your healthcare provider to identify and manage chronic risk factors, like diabetes, hypertension, and depression, and discuss lifestyle choices to ensure a healthy and safe pregnancy.

Healthcare

- Every person should have a primary care provider that they see at least once a year. Discuss your plans for pregnancy or not with your provider.
- Discuss any chronic conditions or risk factors for those conditions with your primary care physician before pregnancy.

Oral Health

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste for two minutes.
- Clean between your teeth daily (floss).
- See a dentist regularly for prevention and treatment for oral health disease.

Weight Management During Childbearing Years

- Reach a healthy weight for your body before pregnancy. This reduces the risk of preterm delivery, cesarean section, neural tube defects, and hypertensive and thromboembolic disease, all of which are associated with obesity.
- Each week it is recommended that adults have 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity and 2 days of muscle strengthening activity.
- Review options for weight management and physical activity with your primary care provider.

If you are looking to grow your family through adoption, foster care, or fertility services, you can find additional resources in the Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide at bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG.



See a Dentist Before You Deliver

You may be more prone to gum disease and cavities when you're pregnant and having them can affect your baby's health. Also, when your baby arrives, you could pass that bad bacteria from your mouth to theirs and increase their likelihood of getting cavities too. Seeing a dentist while pregnant is totally safe and it's good to get this done before your hands are full (literally) with your new baby.

Oral health is essential to general health and well-being **across the lifespan.**



During pregnancy, women may be more prone to gum disease and cavities.



If mothers have high levels of untreated cavities or tooth loss, their children are 3X more likely to have cavities.



A mother's oral health status is a strong predictor of her child's oral health status.

www.cdc.gov/oralhealth

Resources to Check Out!

- **Dental Clinics North**
dentalclinicsnorth.org
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**
nwhealth.org/wic.html
- **Preconception Health Resources from Healthy Moms. Strong Babies**
bit.ly/preconceptionhealthtips
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>

Infant and Pregnancy Loss

Pregnancy and infant loss can be a deeply painful and life-changing experience. Families may face emotional, physical, and practical challenges as they process their grief. This guide offers information and resources that may help support you and your loved ones during this time.

Understanding Your Grief

Grief after pregnancy or infant loss can affect emotional, physical, and mental health. Common emotional responses include:

- Shock or numbness
- Deep sadness or crying spells
- Anger or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety about future pregnancies
- Feeling isolated or misunderstood

Grief does not follow a timeline. Some days may feel manageable, while others may feel overwhelming. Partners, siblings, and extended family members may grieve in different ways.

Caring for Yourself During Grief

There is no right way to grieve. Some families find comfort in:

Honoring your baby

- Naming your baby
- Creating memory items
- Writing letters or journaling
- Celebrating important dates

Taking care of your body

- Rest when possible
- Eating nourishing foods
- Gentle movement when you feel ready

Seeking connection

- Talking with trusted friends or family
- Connecting with other parents who have experienced loss
- Counseling or therapy



Asking for Help

It isn't always easy to ask for help, but it is a necessary step in coping with the pain of loss. Healing doesn't mean forgetting; it's about honoring your baby's memory while caring for yourself. Embracing this journey is an empowering opportunity to understand your feelings and build resilience. You deserve all the support you need.

Physical Recovery After Loss

Your body may still go through postpartum changes even after a pregnancy or infant loss.

You may experience:

- Bleeding or cramping
- Breast milk production
- Hormonal changes
- Fatigue
- Sleep disruptions

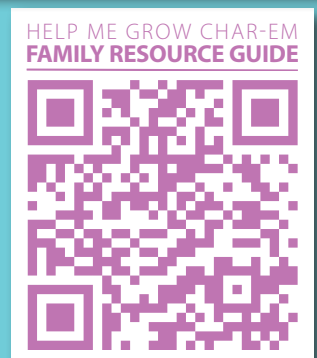
Contact your healthcare provider if you experience:

- Heavy bleeding (soaking a pad every hour)
- Fever
- Severe abdominal pain
- Signs of infection
- Persistent feelings of hopelessness or inability to function

Your provider can also discuss:

- Physical recovery
- When to try for another pregnancy (if desired)
- Birth control options
- Follow-up care

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Infant and Pregnancy Loss (continued)

Supporting Partners & Family Members

Everyone processes grief differently. Some people may want to talk often, while others may cope more privately.

Ways to support each other:

- Check in with each other regularly
- Allow different grieving styles
- Consider couples counseling if communication becomes difficult

Siblings may also need support and reassurance.

Supporting a Friend or Family Member After Pregnancy or Infant Loss

If someone you care about has experienced pregnancy or infant loss, you may want to help but feel unsure what to say or do. Your support can make a meaningful difference. Helpful ways to support someone who is grieving:

Acknowledge Their Loss

- Say the baby's name if the family has shared it
- Let them know you are thinking about them

Listen Without Trying to Fix the Situation

- Sometimes the most helpful thing is simply being present
- Allow them to share their feelings if they want to talk

Offer Practical Help

- Bringing meals
- Helping with household tasks
- Offering childcare for other children

Remember Important Dates

- Due dates
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries of the loss

Avoid Minimizing Statements

Examples of what **NOT** to say:

- "Everything happens for a reason"
- "You can try again"
- "At least it happened early"

Simple and Compassionate Statements Can Help

Examples of what to say:

- "I'm so sorry for your loss."
- "I'm here if you want to talk."
- "Your baby mattered."

Grief after pregnancy or infant loss can last long after the initial weeks following the loss. Continued support and understanding can be very meaningful for families.



Everyone Grieves Differently

Grief is a profound testament to the bonds we share, yet it remains one of the most painful experiences a human can endure. It is the natural, aching response to being separated from someone we love—a journey through a landscape that is often as unwelcomed as it is unfamiliar.

While grief is a universal human experience, the way we walk that path is deeply personal. No two journeys look the same; the intensity and duration of your mourning are shaped by a unique tapestry of factors, including:

- Cultural and belief systems
- Your relationship with the one you lost
- The circumstances surrounding the death
- Individual coping styles and gender roles

Because of these variables, there is no "right" way to feel. You may find yourself navigating constant thoughts of your loss or experiencing deep psychological distress. These are not signs of failure, but markers of the difficult pathway you are currently traveling.

"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever."

- Winnie the Pooh

Thinking About the Future After Loss

Many families wonder about future pregnancies after experiencing a loss. While every situation is different, many people go on to have healthy pregnancies. Before trying to conceive again, it may be helpful to:

- Schedule a follow-up visit with your healthcare provider
- Talk about any recommended medical testing
- Discuss when it may be physically safe to try again
- Ask questions about steps that may support a healthy future pregnancy

Emotional readiness can take longer than physical recovery. Some families feel ready to try again soon, while others need more time. Both responses are normal. It is also common to experience anxiety or mixed emotions during a pregnancy after loss. If you become pregnant again, your healthcare provider and support network can help you navigate those feelings. Grief does not disappear when a new pregnancy occurs. Your baby will always be part of your story.



Infant and Pregnancy Loss (continued)

When to Seek Additional Support

It may help to talk with a professional if you experience:

- Persistent feelings of hopelessness
- Severe anxiety or panic
- Difficulty sleeping for long periods
- Loss of interest in daily activities
- Thoughts of harming yourself

Support from a mental health professional, social worker, or grief counselor can help you process this loss.

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Organizations

- **Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support**
www.nationalshare.org
- **Postpartum Support International**
www.postpartum.net
(Offers pregnancy and infant loss support groups)
- **March of Dimes**
www.marchofdimes.org
- **MISS Foundation**
www.missfoundation.org
24/7 Emotional Support
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
Call or text 988



Local Resources (Charlevoix & Emmet Counties)

Mental Health & Grief Counseling

- **North Country Community Mental Health**

Phone: 877-470-7130

Provides outpatient counseling, crisis services, and mental health support for residents of Charlevoix and Emmet counties. A 24-hour crisis line is available for immediate support.

- **Third Level Crisis Intervention Center**

24/7 Crisis Line: 800-442-7315

Provides immediate emotional support, suicide prevention, and crisis counseling.

Hospital & Medical System Support

- **Munson Healthcare Charlevoix Hospital**

Phone: 231-547-4024

Provides maternity services and can connect families to grief support and follow-up care

- **McLaren Northern Michigan (Petoskey)**

Phone: 800-248-6777

Hospital-based services and referrals for pregnancy, infant care, and bereavement support.

Community & Family Support

- **Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan**

Phone: 231-347-0067

Provides counseling, crisis support, and advocacy services for families and individuals.

- **Health Department of Northwest Michigan**

Phone: 800-432-4121

Offers maternal-infant health programs, referrals, and connections to local resources and support services.

Book Suggestions

Something Happened

By Cathy Blanford

A book for children and parents who have experienced pregnancy loss.

We Were Gonna Have a Baby, But We Had an Angel Instead

By Pat Schwiebert

Created especially for children who are suffering the loss of their family's pregnancy.

Healing your Grieving Heart After Miscarriage

By Alan Woelfelt

Contains 100 practical ideas to help those affected by miscarriage.

Healing your Grieving Heart After Stillbirth

By Alan Woelfelt

Contains 100 practical ideas to help those affected by stillbirth.

Nutrition During Childbearing Years

Nutrition during childbearing years, which include the years leading up to conception, pregnancy, and postpartum, is of utmost importance for both the parent's health and the health of the developing fetus. A well-balanced diet that provides essential nutrients supports fetal development, prevents birth defects, maintains maternal health, and contributes to a smoother pregnancy and postpartum experience. It's important for individuals planning to become pregnant, pregnant people, and new parents to work with healthcare professionals to create a personalized nutrition plan that meets their specific needs.

Nutrition is Vital to Good Health

Nutrition affects how you feel both mentally and physically and is the daily basis for good health. The nutrients needed every day for optimal health are macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals, especially folate, iron, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium). Below are some helpful ways to ensure you get the nutrients you need:

- Eat regular meals and snacks.
- Include a variety of foods including foods with fiber and lots of color such as beans and lentils, vegetables and fruits, whole grains. Include fortified whole grain cereal each day to give you a dose of iron and have a source of vitamin C with the cereal to enhance the absorption of the iron.
- Drink plenty of fluids – including low fat or fat free milk and water. Limit intake of beverages that give you calories but no nutrients (such as pop, energy drinks, juice drinks, sports drinks).
- Include a protein food and some fiber each time you eat or snack – it will help you feel more satisfied. Cheese and whole grain crackers, vegetables with a yogurt dip, peanut butter sandwich on whole grain bread are just some ideas.
- Cook at home! The more you cook at home from ingredients vs ready-to-eat/processed/fast foods the more you can ensure you are getting the nutrients you need.
- Keep added fats to a minimum and choose healthier fats such as olive oil and soft margarine spreads whose first ingredient is liquid olive, canola oil, nuts and avocados.
- Learn to read Food Facts Labels – they will help you compare foods you buy and choose the most nutritious food for you. Find help reading food labels at: <https://bit.ly/foodlabeltips>.
- Check with your doctor about getting started on a prenatal vitamins/mineral supplement before pregnancy.



Serving Size Guidance

PROTEIN

1 oz. cooked meat, fish, poultry, tofu; 1 egg; 2 TBSP. Nut Butter; ¼ cup cooked dried beans or lentils; 1 oz. hard cheese

DAIRY

1 cup low fat milk, yogurt, or cottage cheese

GRAINS

1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal, ½ cup cooked cereal or whole grains such as brown rice, pasta, farro, millet, barley, ½ of a bun or English Muffin.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

1/2 cup canned or cooked, 1 medium piece of fruit or two cups of raw leafy greens, 1 cup of 100% juice = 1 serving of fruit – limit to one serving/day.

BEVERAGES

Drink water throughout the day and limit caloric, sugared beverages such as flavored milk, pop, sports drinks, energy drinks. During pregnancy minimize or eliminate caffeine (coffee, tea, pop) and do not drink energy drinks.

Daily Nutritional Needs

	Normal Nutrition	Pregnancy	Postpartum Non-Breastfeeding	Breastfeeding
Fruits	2 c	2 c	2 c	2 c
Vegetables	2 ½ c	3 c	2 ½ c	3 c
Grains <i>Make at least half of your servings whole grain!</i>	5 Servings	7 Servings	6 Servings	8 Servings
Protein Foods	6 - 7 oz.	7 - 8 oz.	8 oz.	8 oz.
Dairy, low fat or fat free	3 c	3 c	3 c	3 c

Nutrition - Continued on Next Page



Nutrition During Childbearing Years (continued)

Nutrition During Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, you don't need many extra calories (just one snack's worth!) but your nutrient needs go up during pregnancy. A prenatal vitamin will help you meet your daily needs, and your food and drink choices help you meet the rest of your needs. Make sure your prenatal includes folate, iron, and iodine unless otherwise indicated by your OB, Midwife, or other provider. They will review foods you should avoid during pregnancy.

Include Daily

- Iron is essential during pregnancy. Fortified cereal, red meats, beans, and lentils are good sources.
- Calcium - Get at least 3-8 oz servings of dairy/day (includes milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, fortified soy beverage).
- Folate is important to include in your daily diet. Fortified cereals, beans, grains, and dark green leafy vegetables are good sources.
- Make half your plate vegetables and fruits – aim for 7 servings a day. Make sure to include a source of vitamin C (citrus, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers) and Vitamin A (dark orange vegetables, leafy greens) every day.
- Get 7-8 oz of lean good quality protein (meats, eggs, 1 oz nuts and seeds, ½ c cooked beans).
- Eat several times a day, throughout the day - 3 meals and 2 snacks is a good place to start.
- Drink plenty of water, caffeine -free beverages without sugar, and up to one 8 oz glass of 100% juice. Eliminate or minimize caffeine during pregnancy (coffee, tea). Do not drink energy drinks. No amount of alcohol has been proven safe during pregnancy.

Nutrition Postpartum

Eating well after birth will help you recover quicker and promote healing. Check with your OB, Midwife, or other provider to see if you should continue your prenatal vitamin and mineral supplement especially if you are breastfeeding.

Every Day

- Eat foods with fiber to help prevent constipation (whole grains, fruits and veggies, dried beans). Drink plenty of water, too.
- Get vitamin C everyday to promote healing and prevent infection. Broccoli, citrus fruits, tomatoes, and peppers are all great sources.
- Maintain iron intake – meats, fortified cereals, dried beans are all good sources. Eat a source of vitamin C with non-meat sources of iron.
- Maintain folate intake from fortified cereals, dried beans, dark green leafy vegetables.
- Get your calcium from low fat dairy foods.
- You DO need extra calories and plenty of fluids if you are breastfeeding. Maintain a steady intake of food by eating a small snack that includes protein & fiber each time you nurse. Make sure to drink water with it.



Start Practicing a New Healthy Diet

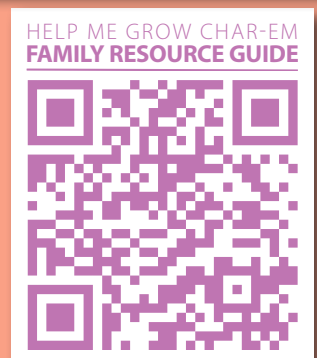
Talk to your doctor about starting a prenatal vitamin with folic acid, which can help prevent serious birth defects. Fortified foods like grains, pastas and breakfast cereal can also help you get more folic acid in your diet. Eat a variety vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean proteins. Diet and nutrition can be a challenge during pregnancy, especially if you find yourself suffering from nausea, so get a jumpstart and start nourishing your body now.

The best way to
keep your baby healthy
is to keep yourself healthy!

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Resources to Check Out!

- **MyPlate for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding**
myplate.gov/life-stages/pregnancy-and-breastfeeding
- **Quick Tips for Eating Healthy during Pregnancy**
bit.ly/eathealthyduringpregnancy
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>



healthyfuturesonline.org

Depression

Depression is a common illness that can be mild or very serious. It is more than feeling sad or upset for a short time or feeling grief after a loss. Depression changes your thoughts, feelings, behavior, and physical health. It affects how you function in your daily life. It can also affect how you relate to your family, friends, and coworkers. Depression can occur at different times of life or in different situations.

Causes of Depression

- **Family History**

A person who has family members with depression may be more likely to develop depression.

- **Hormonal Changes**

Pregnant and postpartum people can sometimes experience depression that is caused by hormone changes in their body.

- **Stress and/or Trauma**

Depression can be brought on by events in your life such as the death of a loved one, serious illness, or a difficult relationship.

Signs of Depression

- Feeling sad or empty
- Feeling anxious or a strong sense of worry
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Loss of interest in doing your favorite activities
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Feeling like you are unable to concentrate or remember details
- Over or undereating
- Oversleeping or not being able to sleep
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others



Ask for Help!

Many parents feel overwhelmed after they return home with a new baby. Some people don't tell anyone about their symptoms because they may feel embarrassed, ashamed, or guilty about feeling depressed when they are supposed to be happy. They may also worry they will be seen as a bad parent.

Depression during pregnancy or after having a baby happens to many people. It doesn't mean you are a bad parent. Don't be afraid to talk to your doctor about how you are feeling. They can provide you with the best resources.

Depression and Health Risks to You and Your Baby

Depression symptoms aren't just feeling sad, anxious, withdrawn, or tired. It can also cause you physical symptoms and illness like stomach issues, high blood pressure, and body aches.

For your baby, depression can affect their growth and development in or out of the womb since they are able to sense you're not feeling right. Depression can also affect your sense of being able to bond with or feel close to your baby.

Baby Blues

- Affects up to as many as 80% of postpartum people
- Parents with baby blues often feel weepy and moody
- Baby blues go away on their own

Postpartum Depression

- Baby blues are not resolved within 2 weeks
- Often requires treatment from your medical provider

Depression (continued)

Care and Treatment of Depression and Anxiety

- Talk to your medical provider regarding medications for treatment.
- Talk therapy with a mental health professional.
- Create healthy habits of coping and self care. Examples include exercise, journaling, support groups, meditation, healthy eating, doing something you enjoy every day, spiritual life, and exposure to sunlight.
- Create a safety plan. Go to <https://www.mysafetyplan.org/> for a free template.
- Call 911 or seek emergency medical attention if you are having thoughts of harming yourself or others.

Perinatal Depression in Partners

- Although welcoming a new baby can be exciting there may be new or different levels of physical, mental, and emotional stress for not only the parent to be, but also their partner.
- Studies are showing that 7%-9% of new fathers also develop or experience postpartum depression.

Symptoms of Perinatal Depression in Partners

- Irritability
- Aggression
- Anger
- Difficulty offering support to their partner
- Difficulty bonding with their newborn
- Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Low energy levels
- Brain fog that makes decision making difficult
- Guilt, shame, and/or doubt about their parenting ability



Mental Health and Support for Partners

Those providing support to pregnant individuals, such as a spouse, also face similar risks of experiencing depression during pregnancy or after childbirth, much like their pregnant partners. This also applies to parents of babies born through surrogacy or adoption.

There are several organizations that specialize and support partners struggling with depression. Talk to your doctor for options in your area.

Importance of Seeking Care

- Although some partners may find it difficult to prioritize their care or feel only the birth parent may need extra care at this point, it is important for each caregiver to consider their own mental health needs in order to be a healthy family unit.
- Depression in any form may not be able to go away on its own, and medical treatment may be necessary.
- For healthy brain development, infants rely on snuggles, smiles, and caregiver routines. Caregivers who prioritize their own well-being are better able to lay this foundation for their infant's secure attachment and developmental growth.

Resources

- **National Center for Fathering**
fathers.com
- **Help for Queer and Trans Parents**
postpartum.net/get-help/queer-parents/
- **Mr. Dad**
mrdad.com
- **National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse**
fatherhood.gov
- **Great Dad**
greatdad.com
- **Dad's Adventure**
dadsadventure.com
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence, also known as Domestic Abuse, is a type of behavior that is used by one partner towards another to have and maintain power and control over the other partner in an intimate relationship. Intimate partner violence is not limited to physical violence, it can also be intimidation, or manipulation to control the other partner, emotional abuse, financial control, or otherwise forcing their partner to behave in ways they don't want to. In a lot of cases, multiple forms of abuse are usually present at once.

Source- National Domestic Violence Hotline

What a Healthy Relationship Looks Like

- Communication**
 Communication helps make sure wants, needs, and expectations are shared. Both positive and difficult topics are important to discuss.
- Consent**
 Consent is when you agree to do something, but also gives you the option to say NO.
- Boundaries**
 Boundary setting is important and give you the opportunity to voice what you are and are not comfortable or ok with. Communicating boundaries allows you and your partner to be on the same page. If you notice your partner pushing you away, stiffening their muscles, painful expressions, or not responding to your touch, these are considered non-verbal ways of communication. It is important to respect verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.
- Respect**
 Respectful relationships are when both partners feel equal, safe, accepted, and valued.
- Support**
 To create a solid foundation of trust in your relationship, each person in the relationship needs to feel supported. It is important to validate each other's feelings, listen to each other, and be patient and present for one another.





Common Signs of Abusive Behavior in a Partner Include:

- Telling you that you never do anything right.
- Showing extreme jealousy of your friends or time spent away from them.
- Preventing you or discouraging you from spending time with others.
- Insulting, demeaning or shaming you, especially in front of others.
- Preventing you from making your own decisions.
- Controlling finances in the household without discussion.
- Pressuring you to be sexual in ways you are not comfortable.
- Pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol.
- Intimidating you through threatening looks or actions.
- Insulting your parenting or threatening to harm or take away your children or pets.
- Intimidating you with weapons.
- Destroying your belongings or your home.

A healthy relationship will never require you to sacrifice your friends, your dreams, or your dignity.

Resources to Check Out!

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
Website:
www.thehotline.org/support-others/
Call:
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)
Text:
Text "START" to 88788
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>

Source- National Domestic Violence Hotline

Smoking and Nicotine Use

The act of smoking while pregnant has detrimental effects on both you and your baby, spanning from before conception to after childbirth. The nicotine (the addictive component of cigarettes), carbon monoxide, and an array of other toxins you breathe in from smoking travel through your bloodstream via the placenta and umbilical cord, directly impacting your baby. These substances pose significant dangers to your baby, potentially leading to a reduction in oxygen supply, thereby hindering your baby's prenatal growth and causing potential harm to their lung and brain development.

Cigarettes

3 Ways to be Exposed

- Firsthand Smoke-Smoking cigarettes, pipes, or cigars
- Secondhand Smoke-Breathing other people's tobacco smoke
- Thirdhand Smoke-Touching the residue left by tobacco smoke on clothing, furniture, and other surfaces

Cigarette Use Prior to Pregnancy

- Leading cause of heart disease, cancer, stroke, and lung disease for women
- Can cause a person to have a harder time getting pregnant
- Causes lower rates of lung growth in preteen and teen girls

Pregnancy and Cigarettes

- May cause miscarriage, still birth, or early delivery
- Causes less oxygen to go to baby's brain
- Can cause heart defects, slow brain growth and overall poor growth for your baby
- May cause slower lung growth and function during pregnancy and childhood
- Can have a negative effect on learning abilities and behavior

Secondhand Smoke Risks

- Can cause low birth weight if exposed during pregnancy
- Increases an infant's chances of dying from SIDS
- Secondhand smoke can cause illnesses such as pneumonia, worsened asthma, bronchitis
- Secondhand smoke can cause ear infections in infants and children
- Can lead to a higher amount of asthma attacks in children



Myths: Smoking & Pregnancy

MYTH #1

I'm pregnant and have been smoking, so there is no point in stopping now.

FACT

Stopping smoking during any part of your pregnancy is good for your health. Just one day without smoking gives your baby more oxygen, which helps their lungs grow well. If you quit now, you're also less likely to have a baby with low birth weight.

MYTH #2

Quitting smoking will be too stressful on my baby.

FACT

Quitting smoking doesn't put extra stress on your baby. It's actually one of the smartest choices for your well-being and your baby's well-being while you're pregnant, and even after the baby arrives. If you stop smoking now, you're taking steps to keep your baby safe from secondhand smoke and lowering the chances of sudden infant death syndrome.

Source- smokefree.gov

Vaping

Pregnancy and Vaping

- Many vapes or e-cigs contain nicotine as well as chemicals that are known to cause birth defects.

Ready to quit?

- **Michigan 24- hour Quit Line**
1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669)
- **National Tobacco Cessation Collaborative**
tobacco-cessation.org
- **Nicotine Anonymous**
nicotine-anonymous.org
- **Speak with your Primary Care Physician**
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>

Substance Use

What you eat, drink, or use crosses the placenta to the fetus in various amounts. That's why pregnant individuals are instructed to quit smoking, avoid alcohol and other drugs, and to be aware that any medications you take could affect your baby. Your health care provider can give you more information on these issues. If you are pregnant and using any of these substances, contact your healthcare provider. Together you and your doctor can find the right treatment to help you quit.

If you are taking opioids or are addicted to drugs, don't stop taking them suddenly. That can be dangerous to you and the baby. Instead, contact your provider for help with getting off the drugs safely.

Marijuana

Pregnancy and Marijuana

- Marijuana's main chemical called THC passes through the placenta during pregnancy and can decrease the amount of oxygen and nutrients that your baby will get, which in turn will affect the growth of your baby.
- Places your baby at risk for being born premature or with a low birth weight.
- Marijuana can affect your child's ability to learn, behavior, and short-term memory as they grow.

Breastfeeding and Marijuana

- THC in Marijuana crosses into your breast milk and into your baby. THC is stored in body fat. Your baby's brain and body are made up of a lot of fat, so the THC gets stored for a long time.
- Due to the way Marijuana is stored in the body, "pump and dump" does not work the same way it does with alcohol.

Alcohol

Pregnancy and Alcohol

- Stop drinking alcohol as soon as you find out you are pregnant as alcohol passes through the placenta into your baby's bloodstream.
- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy increases your risk for miscarriage or preterm delivery.
- Alcohol during pregnancy can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) creating lifelong problems for your baby. Conditions include physical and mental birth defects, low birth weight, heart defects, growth problems, kidney problems, and issues with brain development.
- Alcohol use during pregnancy can also cause learning impairments, ADD or ADHD, speech and language delays, poor reasoning, and judgment abilities.

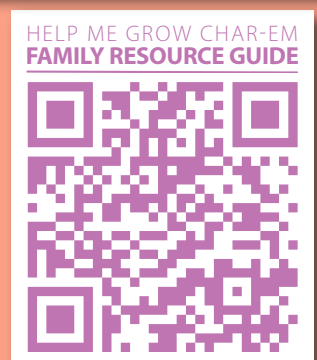


Positive Life Changes to Give Your Child a Healthy Start

Your pregnancy is a time of change so it's a perfect time to make some positive life changes that can help give your baby a good start.

During your pregnancy, everything you eat, drink and take into your body not only affects you but also your growing baby. The better you care for yourself, the better you are caring for your growing baby. And that's something to be proud of!

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healthyfuturesonline.org

Breastfeeding and Alcohol

- Alcohol passes into the breast milk and drinking large amounts should be avoided while breastfeeding.
- Consuming large amounts of alcohol can make caring for your baby difficult.
- If you choose to have an occasional drink, it is best to breastfeed your baby prior to having a drink and avoid breastfeeding again for 2 hours. Consuming small amounts of alcohol this way makes it unnecessary to “pump and dump.”
- The level of alcohol in your milk depends on the level of alcohol in your blood. With time, the amount of alcohol in the blood will break down and allow the alcohol to pass out of the breast milk.

Other Street Drugs

(Methadone, Morphine, Heroin, Cocaine, Pain Relievers such as Vicodin, etc.)

Pregnancy and Street Drugs

- Can cause your baby to have withdrawal symptoms called neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). These symptoms include sweating, frequent crying, rapid breathing, trouble sleeping, and back stiffness.
- Exposure to these substances increases your baby's risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Long term effects of exposure to these substances can include lower body size, issues with coordination, attention, behavioral problems, and lower cognitive function.

Substance Use - Continued on Next Page

Substance Use (continued)

Other Street Drugs (continued)

(Methadone, Morphine, Heroin, Cocaine, Pain Relievers such as Vicodin, etc.)

Breastfeeding and Street Drugs

- It is best to avoid street drugs while breastfeeding. There is no safe way to consume street drugs, like Methadone, Morphine, Heroin, or Cocaine while breastfeeding.
- Drug use during breastfeeding can cause issues like irritability, vomiting, and seizures.

Prescription Medications

Pregnancy and Prescription Medications

- Check with your doctor prior to taking any medications that are over the counter.
- Speak to your doctor about medications you are taking during pregnancy.
- Don't stop taking medications without speaking to your doctor first.
- Never take someone else's prescription medication.

Breastfeeding and Prescription Medications

Tell your health care provider and your baby's provider about any medications or supplements you are taking, including vitamins, herbs, and over-the-counter products. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, health care providers should weigh the risks and benefits when prescribing medications to breastfeeding individuals by considering the following:

- Need for the drug by the parent.
- Potential effects of the drug on milk production.
- Amount of the drug excreted into human milk.
- Extent of oral absorption by the breastfeeding infant.
- Potential adverse effects on the breastfeeding infant.
- Age of the infant.
- Proportion of feedings that are breast milk.



If you're pregnant,
don't drink.
If you drink,
don't get pregnant.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are a group of conditions that can occur in a person who was exposed to alcohol before birth. These effects can include physical challenges with behavior and learning. Often, a person with an FASD has a mix of these problems.

Because brain growth takes place throughout pregnancy, there is no safe time to drink during pregnancy. Alcohol can cause problems for a developing baby throughout pregnancy, including before a person knows they are pregnant.

FASDs last a lifetime and are preventable if a baby is not exposed to alcohol before birth. Consult with your healthcare provider for more information.

Resources for Substance Use Assistance

- **National Parent Helpline**
1-855-4A-PARENT
- **Alcoholics Anonymous**
www.aa.org
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>

Breastfeeding/ Chestfeeding

Did you know...

- 85% of individuals want to breastfeed
- 81% initiate breastfeeding
- Only 30% of people reach their breastfeeding goals without support

Source - med.stanford.edu

Breastfeeding Benefits You and Your Baby

Breastfeeding your baby has many long-term benefits to the parent by reducing the risk of diseases such as:

- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Ovarian cancer
- Breast cancer

Additionally, it can help you recover quickly after delivering by helping the uterus return to its normal size.

It is the perfect nutrition for your infant, as your body customizes breast milk to provide baby with exactly what the infant needs.

- Antibodies for protection
- Calories for growth
- Important fat for brain development

Finding support and Education Prenatally

- Most hospitals and local health departments have staff trained in lactation support. Signing up for a breastfeeding class during your second or third trimester can help you gain knowledge about the benefits and techniques while boosting your confidence. Additionally, having the opportunity to discuss any concerns with a trained professional will ultimately reduce anxiety.

Find Continued Support After Baby Arrives

- Surrounding yourself with family and friends is always a good plan when you are expecting a new baby. Lactation support is equally important. The first few weeks after the birth of the baby can be overwhelming for even the most prepared parent. Having a trained professional that you can call can be very reassuring. Lactation consultants in your community can be reached through your hospital, OB, Midwife, other provider, pediatrician and local health department. They can often provide support by helping with latch and positioning, weight checks for the infant and other breastfeeding difficulties. Many concerns can be quickly corrected and ultimately improve the breastfeeding experience.



What is Chestfeeding?

Did you know you can chestfeed even if you have never given birth? Many parents who adopt or are in a same-sex relationship where they are a non-gestational parent can successfully induce lactation.

Because parents who haven't given birth do not have pregnancy hormones to stimulate their milk production, they often need more information and support to make chestfeeding a reality. This can be in the form of nursing supplementers, medication, breast stimulation with a breast pump or other device and through hormone treatments.

For more information, talk to your healthcare provider.

Bottles fill the stomach,
but breastfeeding
fills the soul!

Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding Resources

- **CDC Breastfeeding Information and Support**
cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding/
- **WIC Breastfeeding Support**
wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/
- **NWMHD Breastfeeding Support Services**
nwhealth.org/bfss.html
- **Breastfeeding Facts for Trans and Non-Binary Parents**
bit.ly/breastfactsTNB
- **What is Chestfeeding and why it is Important**
bit.ly/chestfeed2
- **What You Need to Know When Chestfeeding**
bit.ly/chestfeed
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>

Safe Sleep

A Michigan baby dies every 2 - 3 days due to sleep-related causes. Following the safe sleep steps can help prevent these types of deaths.

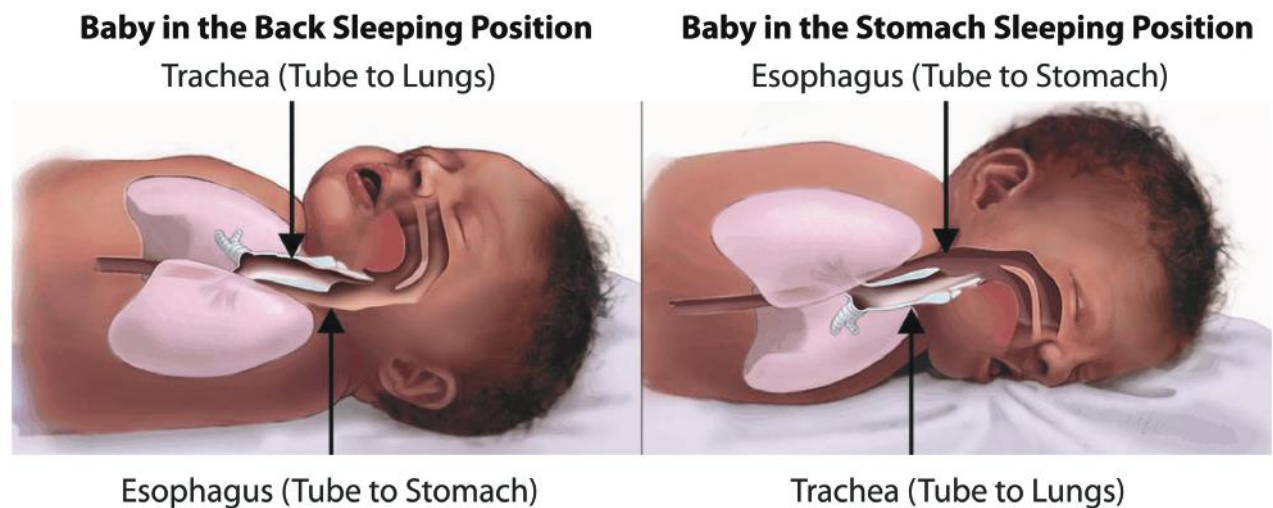
Source- michigan.gov/mdhhs

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death of a baby that is under the age of 1 year. This usually happens while the baby is sleeping and is also called a "sleep related death."

Safe Sleep

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends caregivers practice safe sleep with infants to reduce your baby's risk of sudden infant death syndrome. Safe sleep is placing your baby to sleep on their back, on a firm, flat surface (cribs, bassinet, or portable crib), with a tight-fitting sheet and no other bedding or blankets.
- Placing your baby to sleep on their back also reduces their risk of choking if they spit up during their sleep.





Your baby will spend
a significant portion of
their day sleeping.
Keep your baby safe!

Spread the Word About Safe Sleep!

Make sure everyone who cares for your baby knows the ways to reduce the baby's risk for sleep-related death. Talk with your health care provider about any questions or challenges related to safe sleep practices for your baby.

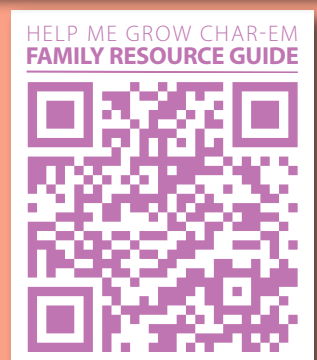
Help everyone who cares for your baby reduce your baby's risk by sharing these safe sleep messages with them.

For more information, talk to your healthcare provider.

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Resources

- **CDC Resources About Safe Sleep for Babies**
[cdc.gov/vitalsigns/safesleep/](https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/safesleep/)
- **Safe to Sleep Public Education Campaign**
safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov
- **Help Me Grow Char-Em Family Resource Guide**
<https://bit.ly/helpmegrowFRG>



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Family Resource Guide



Healthy Futures Website



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Great Start Collaborative Website



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