



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **St. Charles County Government**

**Department of Governmental Communications**

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

County Offers WIC Nutritional Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*St. Charles County* – St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is joining the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to alert women and their families about the urgent need for good health before even thinking about pregnancy. “Good Health Habits for a Lifetime” is the theme of National Birth Defects Prevention Month this January, 2006.

“We are excited to be part of this national movement. Efforts across the country reach millions of women and their families with vital prevention information,” says Nancy Duncan, Director of the St. Charles County Division of Public Health.

Good health habits for women over their lifetime includes knowledge of one’s family history, a “preconceptional” visit with a health care provider before considering pregnancy, management of any ongoing or chronic diseases before trying to become pregnant, seeking reproductive genetic counseling, and daily consumption of 400 mcg of folic acid every day **starting** prior to conception.

“Small steps like taking a multivitamin everyday can make a big difference,” says Duncan. The NBDPN is working with health care providers around the country to encourage good “preconceptional” health for more than 60 million women in the U.S. who are of childbearing age.

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment offers WIC services (The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children), which provide specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education to pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 at no cost to the individual.

The program, administrated by the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment, has sites in O’Fallon, Wentzville, and the city of St. Charles. Persons interested in applying or in need of more information should contact the WIC office at (636) 949-7402. Those interested in learning more about the services of the Department of Community Health and the Environment may visit [www.scchealth.org](http://www.scchealth.org)

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