



NEWS RELEASE

St. Charles County Government

Department of Community Health and the Environment

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SCC HEALTH PROVIDES SERVICES, RECOGNITION TO ENHANCE FAMILY, CHILD DEVELOPMENT

St. Charles County, Missouri – There’s not a more blessed time for a family than that surrounding the birth of a child. The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment’s Division of Public Health recognizes this through assistance for individuals expecting a child and those who have infants or young children in their household.

Through its Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), the Division of Public Health provides specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education at no cost to pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five. The department recently signed a contract with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to continue offering these services for fiscal year 2011. The County’s WIC program, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is based at the Division of Public Health office at 1650 Boone’s Lick Road in St. Charles. Persons interested in applying for WIC or in need of more information should contact the WIC office at (636) 949-7402 or visit www.scchealth.org.

WIC participants are persons who meet the WIC income guidelines shown below (effective as of 1/1/11) and are determined by health professionals to be at nutritional risk. For these guidelines, an unborn child counts as a member of the family when income eligibility is determined.

Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
2	\$26,955	2,247	519
3	33,874	2,823	652
4	40,793	3,400	785
5	47,712	3,976	918
<i>Each Additional Family Member</i>	+6,919	+577	+134

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC, 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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To further help expectant and new mothers, the Division of Public Health joins forces each January with hundreds of other health agencies to recognize National Birth Defect Prevention Month, which reminds women that smart behaviors can lead to healthy pregnancies. This year, the theme for the annual observance is “*Medication Use Before, During, and After Pregnancy,*” to suggest that women of childbearing age have regular conversations with their doctors about the medicines they use and how it may affect their pregnancy.

Each year in the United States, one in 33 babies is born with a birth defect — resulting in physical or mental disabilities, and even death. Although not all birth defects are preventable, there are several steps a woman can take to increase her chance for delivering a healthy baby. A proper and balanced diet, while taking a vitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid each day, will help prepare a woman’s body for the pregnancy and provide essential nutrients for the baby’s development. In addition to a preconception checkup to identify health conditions, a woman should remain under the guidance of an experienced health care professional throughout the pregnancy. Other healthy behaviors include having an up-to-date immunization record and avoiding alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

Although many are aware that certain prescription medications can have adverse affects on pregnancies, they may not be aware that some over-the-counter treatments and everyday supplements may also harm a developing baby. That being said, not all medications should be discontinued during pregnancy; but some may need to be changed or adjusted. Medical conditions such as diabetes and asthma need to be managed during pregnancy, as they may harm both mother and baby if left untreated. A baby’s organs, such as the heart, brain, and spine, begin developing in the first few weeks, before a woman may realize she is pregnant. For that reason, it is important for women to have these conversations with their health care providers about their behavior before considering pregnancy.

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is committed to the protection and enhancement of health and the quality of life for all members of our community. To discover ways the department assists this region, please visit www.scchealth.org or call 636-949-7400.

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