



NEWS RELEASE

St. Charles County Government

Department of Governmental Communications

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“Good Health Habits for a Lifetime”

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

St. Charles County, Missouri – The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is joining the National Birth Defects Prevention Network 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 for January 2007.

Nationally, one in 33 babies is born with a birth defect. Millions of dollars are spent every year for the care and treatment of children with birth defects. While not all birth defects can be prevented, there are a number of things women can do to increase their chances of having a healthy baby. They include:

- Taking a daily multivitamin containing 400 mcg of folic acid
- Having regular health check-ups
- Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet
- Avoiding alcohol, tobacco, and street drugs
- Talking to a health care provider about any medical problems and medicine use, including over-the-counter and prescription medications

Women of childbearing age should also be aware of their family medical history, have a “preconceptional” visit with their health care provider, manage any ongoing or chronic diseases before trying to become pregnant, and seek reproductive genetic counseling.

To help expectant and new mothers, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment offers WIC services. The special supplemental program for women, infants, and children provides specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education at no cost to the individual.

The WIC program, administrated by the Department of Community Health and the Environment, has sites in O’Fallon, Wentzville, and the city of St. Charles. Those interested in applying or who need more information about WIC should call 636-949-7402. To learn more about the Department of Community Health and the Environment, visit our website at www.scchealth.org.

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