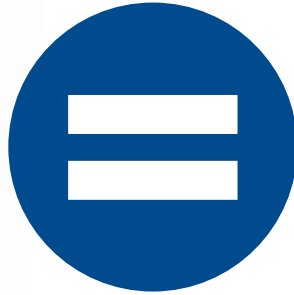




Healthier
WOMEN



Healthier
BABIES



African American babies are 2x more likely to be born with a low birthweight and 9x more likely to die in their first year of life. It is important for all women to be as healthy as they can. Being healthy before you get pregnant increases the chance that you will have a healthy baby. Take care of yourself now for you and for any future pregnancy.



HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW:

- **Plan your pregnancy!** Create a reproductive life plan and have a baby when you are ready.
- **Get 400 mcg of folic acid every day!** 75% of neural tube defects (defects of the brain and spinal cord) are preventable with folic acid and happen before most women know they are pregnant.
- **Know your medicine!** Find out if any of the medication you are taking is safe to take during pregnancy (including over the counter and herbals).
- **Manage chronic health problems!** Make sure your diabetes, high blood pressure, thyroid problems, etc. are under control.
- **Quit smoking!** Smoking increases the risk of preterm labor, low birthweight babies and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- **Stay infection free!** Use condoms to help prevent infections like gonorrhea, chlamydia, hepatitis B and HIV. And if you have an infection, make sure to get treated.
- **Manage your weight!** Eat well and exercise. Being overweight or underweight can make it harder to get pregnant. And obesity increases the risk of preterm delivery, diabetes, high blood pressure and cesarean section.
- **Decrease stress!** Find out what helps you relax – exercise, reading, talking with friends, taking a bath. Stress is bad for your overall health.
- **Get immunized!** Many illnesses that you can be vaccinated against (hepatitis B, chicken pox, Rubella) are dangerous to you and your baby.
- **Stop alcohol use!** Alcohol abuse is the leading preventable cause of mental retardation (fetal alcohol syndrome).
- **See a dentist!** Dental problems (periodontal disease) may lead to preterm birth.

For more information, call 410-576-1414
or visit www.plannedparenthoodmd.org

