

# Community Health Coalition, Inc.

407 Crutchfield Street P. O. Box 15176  
Durham, NC 27704  
Tel: (919) 470-8680

[www.chealthc.org](http://www.chealthc.org) [healthcoali@gmail.com](mailto:healthcoali@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/chealthc](https://www.facebook.com/chealthc) [www.twitter.com/chealthc](https://www.twitter.com/chealthc)



August 2017

## What to Expect Before Expecting

Every woman should be thinking about her health whether or not she is planning to get pregnant. One reason is that about half of all pregnancies are not planned. Unplanned pregnancies are at greater risk of preterm birth and low birth weight babies. It is important to know how health conditions and risk factors could affect a woman or her unborn baby if she becomes pregnant. It is especially important for African Americans because African American women have 4 times the risk of dying during childbirth than white women.



**Maria Small, MD. MPH.**, and Associate Professor Obstetrics & Gynecology and Medicine at Duke University states, " I serve on the NC maternal mortality review committee and my main focus is on maternal health. This committee is composed of health care providers and community members from across the state of NC. We review all maternal mortalities to determine the factors that may contribute to the preventability of catastrophic outcomes. It is evident that we can prevent these outcomes by taking steps to educate the community, maintaining a healthy weight, management of chronic diseases, and breastfeeding"

Leading causes of maternal deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth result from: 1) Cardiovascular disease, 2) Hypertensive complications of pregnancy, 3) Hemorrhage, 4) Blood clots

Women who plan pregnancy or who want to remain healthy during pregnancy should plan to have:

- **Optimal management of hypertension and diabetes** --If you have these conditions, your doctor will recommend you take baby aspirin after the first trimester to decrease the risk for preeclampsia (a form of high blood pressure that occurs during pregnancy and can put your baby at risk for being preterm and can be a cause for maternal mortality)
- **Try to achieve a normal body weight** - Obesity puts you at higher risk for pregnancy complications.
- **Plan to Breastfeed** --Breastfeeding decreases subsequent obesity for both the mom and baby. It also decreases risk for hypertension and diabetes in moms who choose to breastfeed.
- **Community engagement** --Communities can help improve the health of women and girls by improving education access, decreasing neighborhood food deserts, helping communities become more walkable/moveable and safe. Chronic stress and our responses result in a higher risk for poor pregnancy outcomes such as hypertension and low birth weight. Support for stress management through social engagement, meditation, and spiritual renewal are key.

## A partner's role before pregnancy

Pregnancy can still seem like it is all about the mom, but it is also important for the partner to be part of the experience. A partner can do a lot to support and encourage the mom in every aspect of preparing for pregnancy. For example:

- Make the decision about pregnancy together. When both partners intend for pregnancy, a woman is more likely to get early prenatal care and avoid risky behaviors such as smoking and drinking alcohol.
- Screening for and treating sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can help make sure infections are not passed to female partners.
- Male partners can improve their own reproductive health and overall health by limiting alcohol, quitting smoking or illegal drug use, making healthy food choices, and reducing stress.
- Your partner should also talk to his doctor about his own health, his family health history, and any medicines he uses.



## For more information

March of Dimes <http://www.marchofdimes.org>

Women's health [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

Black Mamas Matter <http://blackmamasmatter.org/>

## Remember Your ABCs

- **A**lways eat a well-balanced diet with a multivitamin supplement and exercise regularly
- **B**efore trying to conceive, learn about your family history (some illnesses are inherited), and if you have pre-existing health conditions, discuss your desire for attempting pregnancy with your healthcare provider first; then, follow your healthcare provider's recommendations
- **C**autions: Stop smoking; do not drink alcohol while trying to conceive and after conceiving; seek prenatal care early; check your blood pressure regularly; and check for gestational diabetes.

## Duke Energy Safety Tips for Expecting Women:

- Don't touch an electrical appliance while in a pool, hot tub, bathtub or shower.
- During a lightning storm, stay out of the water and away from puddles. When inside, stay out of the tub or shower, and off the phone. Currents from lightning can enter through plumbing and phone lines.

**Please Make a Donation to Community Health Coalition through SECC or PayPal: Did you know that Community Health Coalition is an approved SECC charity? If you are a state employee or retiree, choose (Code 3770) to send your SECC gift to us! Thank you.**



Click below to make a payment ↓

<http://www.chealthc.org/makeadonation.html>

Thank you.



Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with



Public Health



BlueCross BlueShield  
of North Carolina

**REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!**