

Healthy Women's Resource Guide

What You Need to Know

before, during and after pregnancy



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Introduction to Guide

This guide has been created in an effort to improve infant health in Kent County. Creating strong, healthy babies begins **before** they are born. A woman can take steps even before she gets pregnant to improve her own health and the health of her baby. The information in the following pages can help you make your baby strong and healthy—before you get pregnant, during your pregnancy, and after your baby is born.

Also included are some specific resources and agencies to help you care for yourself and your baby. Please be aware, that all area agencies that can help are not included in this guide. A more complete list of area agencies is available in ***The Family Resource Guide***, a yearly publication of the **Child and Family Resource Council**. They may be contacted at **616.454.4673** or on the web at **www.familyresourceguide.info**. Referrals may also be obtained through **First Call For Help** by calling **211 (459.2255)** or online at **referweb.net/grandrapids**.

This guide may be found online at **www.accesskent.com/health**. For additional copies call 632.7249.

Knowledge is power—but only if you act on it. Our children are our future, but the future begins now.

READINESS FOR PREGNANCY

It could happen to you! Nearly half of all pregnancies are “accidents”. It is important that you be “ready” for a pregnancy, especially if you are in the childbearing years, sexually active, and not using birth control. Being “ready” for pregnancy includes:

- Eating healthy foods
- Being physically active
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Taking care of your teeth
- Not smoking
- Not using alcohol and other drugs
- Not exposing yourself to sexually transmitted infections.



Not being ready for pregnancy can increase the chances that your baby will be born too early, too small, or with health problems. In the following section are ideas to help you be as healthy as possible and things to think about, such as what do you want your life to be like, what you want to achieve, and when you want to have children.

Folic Acid/Nutrition

Get your body ready for pregnancy. Women need plenty of folic acid *before* they get pregnant. **This nutrient helps prevent birth defects of the brain and spine.** It is found in leafy green vegetables, citrus fruits, and is added to many cereals. It is recommended that women in their childbearing years take 400 mcg of folic acid daily, either alone or in a multivitamin. Women that eat healthy and are at a healthy weight when they get pregnant improve their chances of having a healthy baby. To eat healthy you must eat a variety of foods every day including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat milk products, and protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs, and dried beans. It also means limiting junk food and foods high in fat and sugar. And don't forget to drink plenty of water—8 glasses per day.

Need help getting enough food?

Apply for food stamps at the Department of Human Services. Walk-in hours are 7 to 10 a.m., Monday through Friday. See **Basic Needs-Food** on page 17.

Birth Control/Family Planning

Having a positive pregnancy test should be a happy time, not one of sadness and confusion. Being a parent is an important job and you should consider where parenting fits into your goals and dreams in life. If you are sexually active and not sure you want to have a baby now, use birth control. For information and an exam to get birth control:

Contact your **health care provider** or

Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan

425 Cherry St SE Grand Rapids – 459.3101
3641 Byron Center, SW – 531.3070

Emergency birth control (morning after pill) is also available behind the counter at local pharmacies and at Planned Parenthood on a walk-in basis. You must take these pills within 5 days after unprotected sex. To be most effective, they should be taken within 72 hours. (This is for emergency purposes and should not take the place of long-term family planning.)

Plan First! The State of Michigan's “Plan First!” program offers free birth control and family planning services to women who:

- Are age 19 through 44 years
- Are US citizens or documented immigrants
- Are Michigan residents
- Have a moderately low income but do not receive Medicaid.

To see if you qualify you must provide two pieces of ID, including proof of US citizenship, and complete a simple application.

You can get information or an application in any of the following ways:

- Go to the Department of Human Services or call 248.1000
- Contact any Kent County Health Department clinic at 632.7100
- Call Plan First! at 800.642.3195
- Go to the Michigan Department of Community Health web page at www.michigan.gov/mdch

Dental

Dental problems with cavities and gums can cause infections that cause miscarriage and babies being born too early. Take care of your teeth—brush them twice a day, floss daily, and see a dentist.

Dental Clinics that are low cost and/or accept Medicaid:

Cherry Street Health Services – 235.7272

Ferguson Adult – 776.2340

Belknap Commons – 742.9942

Westside Cherry Street – 235.1480

Grand Valley Dental Care – 245.2767

Grand Rapids Community College – 234.4237

Eastern Dental Clinic – 974.0991 or 974.0992

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS

STIs can increase a woman's chance of having a tubal pregnancy (which is very dangerous), a miscarriage, or problems getting pregnant.

STIs can also result in harm to a baby. HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, can be transmitted to a baby during pregnancy and delivery. It is very important to practice safe sex and use latex condoms to protect yourself against STIs and HIV/AIDS. Early testing and treatment is important to reduce risks to yourself or your unborn baby.

For confidential and free testing contact:

Kent County Health Department – 632.7171

Or contact your **health care provider**

Adult Immunizations

Having your immunizations up to date before you get pregnant is very important. Immunizations can prevent disease. Some of these diseases can be passed on to the baby or cause birth defects if the mother gets them while she is pregnant. Before you get pregnant these immunizations should be up to date:

- Hepatitis B
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Tetanus/Diphtheria
- Polio
- Chicken Pox

Talk to your **health care provider** about your immunization status or contact the **Kent County Health Department** at 632.7200.

Pre-existing Medical Conditions

If you are under treatment for conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, seizures, lupus, kidney disease, or thyroid disease, it is important they are under control before you get pregnant. When left untreated, these conditions can increase your risks for pregnancy complications like stillbirth, birth defects, miscarriage, or your baby being born too early or too small. Your health care provider will review all of your previously prescribed medications and adjust or change the medication as necessary. Many prescribed medications are safe to use during pregnancy. You should never stop or change your medications without talking to your health care provider.



Smoking

Over 8.6 million people in the United States have at least one serious illness related to smoking, including chronic lung disease, heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Smoking also increases the risk of infertility. **While you're pregnant, smoking can cause miscarriage or your baby to be born too early or too small.** If you smoke during pregnancy, your baby might have asthma and allergies after being born. When a mother smokes, so does the baby.

The same thing can happen if people smoke around you while you are pregnant. **Secondhand smoke is always dangerous to an unborn baby and to children.** Smoking around babies can make them have ear infections and more colds. It can also increase your baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

The best time to quit is *before* you get pregnant.

It is hard to quit, but not impossible. To find out more about how to stop smoking talk to your health care provider or call:

- American Lung Association – 800.586.4872
- FREE Expectant Mother's Quit Kits (contains a lot of helpful information, motivation techniques, and strategies for quitting) – 800.840.7848
- Teaming Up To Quit (pregnant women or those with young children) – 391.6178
- Tobacco Free For Good – 616.975.0123



Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol can affect your baby's development in the very first weeks, even before you know you are pregnant. Stop drinking and using other drugs *before* you try to get pregnant.

Drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs can hurt you and your baby. Drinking alcohol during your pregnancy can affect how a baby looks, grows, learns and acts. All drinks with alcohol can hurt an unborn baby. (This includes beer and wine coolers.) Other drugs, even marijuana, may cause a baby to have brain damage and birth defects.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications you are taking to make sure they are safe to take should you become pregnant.

Stop drinking or using drugs if there is any possibility you might get pregnant.

To get help contact network180 – 336.3909



Stress Management

Having a baby can add stress to your life. If you are thinking of getting pregnant, it is important to keep your life in balance. This includes having a support system, like friends and family, and taking care of yourself by doing things you enjoy. Here are some ways to reduce stress:

- Eat healthy foods
- Get plenty of rest
- Talk to friends and family
- Exercise
- Pray, meditate, listen to music



Finances

Babies are expensive. Plan for the added expenses. Consider how you will pay for the medical care, clothes, diapers, food, crib, car seat, childcare, and many other costs that add up. Also look at your housing. Is it stable? Can a baby live with you where you are now? Can you afford to move?

If you want to learn more about managing your finances contact Michigan State University Extension at 336.3265.

Dad's Responsibility

Who you choose to be the father of your baby will affect you and your baby's life. Think about your choice. Will he be there to support you financially and emotionally? Will he be active in your baby's life? Will he be a good role model?

“Great Dads” make “Great Kids”. Think about the following.

1. Will both parents respect each other's parenting roles?
2. Will both parents show an investment in the child?
3. Will both parents have ongoing communication with each other?
4. Will both parents share child caring responsibilities?
5. Will both parents represent a team approach to parenting?

MIGHT BE PREGNANT

Pregnancy Test

If you have “missed” a period or are late, it is important that you get a pregnancy test as soon as possible. The earlier you find out you are pregnant and get health care, the better it is for you and your baby.

Free pregnancy tests are available at:

Alpha Women's Center – 459.9955

Help Pregnancy Crisis Aid – 459.9139

Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan – 459.3101

Pregnancy Resource Center – 456.6873

I'm Pregnant

Go to the next section to find out what to do to help make sure your baby is as healthy as can be. If you are not sure how you feel about this pregnancy, talk to someone you trust. Think about your options.

I'm Not Pregnant

Think about if you want to be pregnant or not. If now is not the time you want to have a baby, contact your health care provider or Planned Parenthood for birth control. The next time you take a pregnancy test should be a time of happiness. Think about your goals in life and what you want to do.

If you **do** want a baby now, you need to be as healthy as possible, both physically and emotionally, to make sure your baby is healthy. Read the **Before Pregnancy** section of the book for ways to prepare for a healthy pregnancy.

PREGNANT

Health Care

Seek care immediately. Early prenatal care is vital for a healthy baby.

If you have no insurance, apply for Medicaid as soon as possible. You can, however, get prenatal care before you apply for Medicaid.

WHAT TO DO:

Already have a doctor:

Call for an appointment as soon as possible.

Have insurance but don't have a doctor:

Call the number on the back of your insurance card to get a list of health care providers.

Have Medicaid and don't have a doctor:

- If you don't know if you are on straight Medicaid or have a Medicaid HMO call Michigan Enrolls at 800.642.3195
- If you are on a Medicaid HMO call your HMO and ask for a referral to a doctor for Prenatal Care.
 - Care Source – 800.390.7102
 - Health Plan of Michigan – 888.437.0606
 - Molina – 888.898.7969
 - Priority Health – 888.975.8102
 - Great Lakes – 800.903.5253
- If you are on straight Medicaid or MOMS (Emergency Medicaid) you can make an appointment with any doctor that takes Medicaid.



- The local hospital clinics and those clinics listed below under “Have No Insurance” will accept Medicaid

Metro Health - Breton Health Center – 252.4100

Spectrum Health OB/GYN Clinic – 391.2160

St. Mary's Peter Wege Center – 685.6922

(Also see list of Clinics under “no Insurance”)

Have no insurance:

The following clinics offer a sliding fee scale based on your income and also will take Medicaid:

Booth Family Services – 459.9468

Browning Claytor Health Center – 685.8300

Cherry Street Health Services – 235.7272

Clinica Santa Maria – 685.8400

Health Intervention Services – 475.8446

Westside Health Center – 235.1480

Need to apply for Medicaid:

The income guidelines are different when you are pregnant so you might qualify for Medicaid even if you didn't before. If you are an undocumented immigrant you may be eligible for Medicaid while you are pregnant.

If you:

- Only need Medicaid and no other assistance, you can apply at the Kent County Health Department at 700 Fuller NE – 632.7058 (appointment needed)
- Need cash assistance, food stamps or childcare in addition to Medicaid you must apply at Kent County Department of Human Services – 248.1000 (Walk-in hours are 7 – 10 a.m. Monday through Friday)



Dental

Dental problems with cavities and gums can cause infections that cause miscarriage and your baby being born too early. Brush your teeth twice a day, floss daily, and see a dentist or dental hygienist at least once during your pregnancy. *See page 5 for resources.*

Nutrition/WIC

Eating healthy foods can keep you and your growing baby strong. While you are pregnant you need to eat foods from all the food groups each day:

- Milk and other Dairy-3 servings
- Meats, Fish, Beans, and Eggs-2 to 3 servings
- Vegetables-4 servings; Fruit-3 servings
- Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta-9 to 11 servings.



Make sure that your snacks are healthy, too. What you eat, your baby eats! Drinking plenty of water a day is also important—at least 8 glasses per day. If you have questions about nutrition talk to your health care provider about a referral to a registered dietitian or call Michigan State University Extension at 336.3265.

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) is a supplemental food program for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children to age 5.

This program provides nutrition education, supplemental foods, breast feeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care and social services. Call 616.632.7200 to see if you qualify and set up an appointment at a WIC clinic near you.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

Don't forget ... avoid alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs during pregnancy. Drinking any alcohol, smoking cigarettes and using other drugs during pregnancy can harm your baby. They can affect how your baby looks, grows, learns, and acts. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs can also cause a miscarriage or your baby to be born too early or too small.

Smoking:

If you cut down or quit smoking cigarettes while you are pregnant the growth and development of your baby will greatly improve. It is never too late to quit smoking. *See page 7 for more information and agencies to help you stop.*

Alcohol and other drugs:

Remember, there is no known safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. *Refer back to page 8 for more information on alcohol and other drugs.*

For help to quit contact:

Women's Project Access (Arbor Circle)
(pregnant and/or women with children 0-5 years) – 459.7215

Family Engagement Therapy [FET]
(Women with children 5 and older)

@Arbor Circle – 459.7215

@Family Outreach – 247.3815

Early Childhood (Arbor Circle) – 456.6571

network180 (evaluation and referral) – 336.3909

Living Waters (support group) – 452.9097

Turning Point (detox) – 742.0351

Stress and Depression

When you are pregnant and coping with mood changes, the world may appear more challenging. Stress can lower your resistance to infectious diseases and create other health problems such as increased blood pressure. **Stress and other related problems can cause pre-term labor leading to delivery of a premature baby or a baby with low birth weight.** If you are pregnant and struggling with stress or depression help is just a phone call away:

- Talk with your health care provider
- Contact your HMO on your insurance card or
- Call network180 at 336.3909 for a referral to an agency that can help.

Social Support:

Having a social support network can help reduce your stress and help you have a happier, healthier pregnancy and baby. Your family and friends can help you a lot. You can also get support from your community through the following programs:

D.A.Blodgett Sisters in Support – 451.2021
 Kent County Health Department Maternal Infant Health Program – 632.7058
 Kent County Healthy Start – 632.7021
 MOM's Program of Spectrum Health – 391.6135
 Nurse Family Partnership – 632.7035
 Strong Beginnings – 331.5838
 Traveling Grannies – 456.6135

Note: The Maternal Infant Health Program is also available at the following clinics if you are one of their patients: Booth Family Services, Breton Health Center, Browning Claytor Health Center, Cherry Street Health Services, Clinica Santa Maria, and Westside Health Center.

When Someone Hurts You and Tries to Control You (Domestic Violence)

No one ever has the right to hit, kick, slap, push or try to force you to do things you don't want to do. No one should threaten to hurt you or people or things that you love. No one should call you names, make you feel that you don't count or keep you from seeing or talking to family or friends. This kind of physical, sexual or emotional violence can cause your baby to be born too early and too small. You deserve better and so does your baby. Break your silence. Tell someone what is happening to you. Find someone to support you. Confidential help is available.

Hotlines:

YWCA Domestic Violence 24 hour Crisis Hotline – 451.2744
 National Domestic Violence Hotline – 800.799.7233
 National Sexual Assault Hotline – 800.656.4673
 Sexual Abuse Crisis Line (24 hours) – 776.RAPE (776.7273)

Reporting Violence and Legal Assistance:

17th Circuit Court (for PPO – Personal Protection Order) – 632.5067
 Kent County Prosecutors Office – 632.5400
 Legal Aid of West Michigan – 774.0672

Shelters:

YWCA Domestic Crisis Center – 451.2744
 Safe Haven Ministries – 452.6664

Counseling:

Safe Haven Ministries – 452-6664
 YWCA Counseling Center – 459.4652
 Private Insurance – Call the number on the back of your card.

Basic Needs – Food

Call **211** (459.2255) for the nearest food pantry.

Food Stamps: Apply at DHS (See page 3 of booklet).

On Site Meals are served daily at:

- Capitol Lunch (God's Kitchen)
454.4110 – 303 S. Division 2:30 – 4 p.m.
- Guiding Light Mission
451.0236 – 255 S. Division



Basic Needs – Housing

Call **211** (459.2255) for individualized instructions for your specific situation.

Behind in Rent/Being Evicted/Homeless:

Housing Assessment Program (HAP)

Salvation Army Booth Services

1215 E Fulton

454.5840

Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Walk-ins accepted

Note: If you have an eviction judgement from court, apply at DHS immediately for State Emergency Relief (SER). If help is denied, keep the denial document and call HAP if you have not already done this.

Foreclosure:

- Renter: Legal Aid – 774.0672 or 800.442.2777
- Owner: Home Repair Services – 241.2601



Basic Needs – Utility Shut Off

Call **211** (459.2255) for individualized instructions.

Follow these steps if you get a shut off notice that you can't pay:

- Contact your utility provider for payment arrangement/ budget if possible.
- Apply for emergency assistance at Department of Human Services (DHS)
- If denied or the partial payment they offer does not meet your needs—call any of the following agencies for help.
Salvation Army Booth – 459.9468
ACSET – Cedar Rock – 698.2150
ACSET – Sheldon Complex – 336.4000
ACSET – Westside Complex – 336.4180
- Contact your church/faith community for assistance.
- Call 211 (459.2255) for additional information and assistance.

For heat bills you can also apply for the THAW Program at 366.8021 or contact the Heat Bank at 454.4511.

Basic Needs – Medical Transportation

If you are on a Medicaid HMO they can provide you with a ride to your medical appointments. You must call 5 days in advance and be prepared to give them:

- Your Medicaid number
- Your address and the address of your doctor
- Your doctors first and last name and phone number

Care Source – 866.712.1057

Health Plan of Michigan – 800.821.9369

Molina Health – 888.229.2295

Priority Health – 888.975.8102

Great Lakes – 877.892.3995

Public Transportation

The Rapid – 776.1100

Trip Planning – 776.1100 Call to find out how to get to a specific place using the bus.

Pass – 459.7701 If you live off the main bus routes you may qualify for this curb to bus line shuttle.

Travel Training – 456.7514 Personal training on how to take the bus.

You may also qualify to ride free with:

American Red Cross – 454.7433 (An application must be completed and mailed back before rides can be scheduled.)

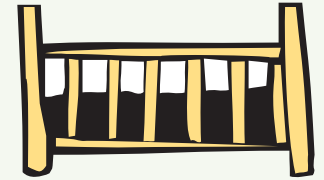
Fish for My People – 774.2045 Call the day before and leave a message. This is a limited service. Rides are not guaranteed until you get a call back from them.



Getting Ready for Baby

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Safe Sleep:

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), formerly called “Crib Death”, does not happen because the baby is sleeping in a crib. We are learning more about why some babies die of SIDS. Some of the risk factors are exposure to cigarette smoke (either during pregnancy or after birth), prematurity, overheating, and drug use by the mother while pregnant. Some of the babies who were thought to have died of SIDS actually were accidentally suffocated by people or things they were sleeping with. Babies need a bed of their own.



The safest way for babies to sleep is on their backs, by themselves, with nothing extra in the sleep area including toys, bumper pads, quilts, and pillows.

For more information call:

Tomorrow’s Child – 800.331.7437

Kent County Health Department – 632.7058

Strong Beginnings – 331.5830

Child Safety Seats:

Children are required by law to be in a safety seat until they are 4 years old. It is safer if they use car safety seats until they are 8 years old or 4’9”. Infants need to be rear facing in the back seat until they are one year **and** 20 pounds. It is important to make sure your child is safely in the car seat. At safety check sites they find that 90% of all child safety seats are not installed correctly.

For more information or to have your car seat checked call:
Safe Kids of Greater Grand Rapids – 391.7233

Family Planning:

Research has shown that spacing pregnancies between 18 months to 5 years apart will result in a healthier pregnancy and, quite possibly, a healthier baby. Now is the time to start thinking about spacing your children and your birth control options.

For more information call your health care provider or Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan at 459.3101.



Breastfeeding

It is not too early to be thinking about how you plan to feed your new baby. As you are making this decision it may be helpful to know:

- Doctors recognize breastfeeding as the best way to feed newborns and infants and they recommend it as the only method through the first 6 months of your baby's life. Breastfeeding for even a few weeks is better for your baby than not breastfeeding at all.
- Mothers who breastfeed may lose weight faster, experience less stress during the postpartum period, build strong bonds with their babies, and have a decreased risk of breast cancer.
- Breastfeeding can save you several hundred dollars over the cost of buying formula. Formula can cost up to \$200 per month!
- Breastfeeding can help protect babies against a number of childhood illnesses, including diarrhea, respiratory infections and ear infections. Fewer illnesses mean fewer doctors visits, which give you savings on healthcare costs.
- Breastfeeding can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Your ability to successfully breastfeed your baby depends on the support you receive from those around you. Be sure to tell your partner, family and friends that you want to breastfeed and ask for their support. When you deliver, if you need some help with breastfeeding, ask to see a lactation consultant. They are there to support you and help you to succeed in breastfeeding.

If you are planning to go back to work, there are a few things to consider

- You may need to use a breast pump to maintain your milk supply. Pumps are available for purchase or rental. See the resources below.
- Check into your employer's policy on breastfeeding. Will they allow you to bring the baby on site? Will they give you a flexible work schedule and a comfortable place to pump? Find out now. Ask for what you need to keep feeding your baby breast milk.

Breastfeeding is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your baby. Will you give breastfeeding a try?

Breast Pump Rentals

Kent County WIC Program – 632.7200
baby beloved, inc. – 977.5683

Breastfeeding Information

baby beloved, inc. – 977.5683
Kent County Health Department – 632.7058
Kent/MSU Extension – 336.3279
La Leche League – 752.8300 www.lalecheleague.org
Metro Health – 252.7894
St. Mary's Health Care – 685.5602
Spectrum Health (Outpatient) – 391.9437



Pre-Term Labor

Pre-term labor means you go into labor before the 37th week of your pregnancy. Pre-term labor is not the same thing as “false labor”.

If you go into labor and give birth too soon, your baby could be seriously ill and may not live.



Pre-term babies...

- May have to stay in the hospital a long time because they are fragile.
- Can have problems breathing, eating and staying warm.
- May have problems with their health or development for years after they are born.
- May not live, even after having special care in the hospital.

These are the warning signs of pre-term labor. Call your doctor right away if...

- Blood or fluid leaks from your vagina.
- You feel cramps like your period is starting.
- You have low, dull backache.
- You have diarrhea.
- You have 4 contractions in 1 hour.
- You think or feel like something is wrong.



DANGER SIGNS in Pregnancy

These signs are your body's way of telling you something is wrong. If you experience any of the following, call your health care provider immediately:

- **Persistent or severe headache**
- **Dizziness or fainting**
- **Double or blurred vision; spots before your eyes**
- **Sudden swelling of face, hands, or feet**
- **Sudden weight gain**
- **Vaginal bleeding**
- **Fever and/or chills**
- **Severe or constant vomiting**
- **Sudden gush or steady trickle of water from the vagina**
- **Steady abdominal pain that is not relieved by a bowel movement**
- **Frequent and/or burning urination**
- **Decreased fetal movement after the fifth month**

And another thing...

There are some other things to be careful of when you are pregnant.

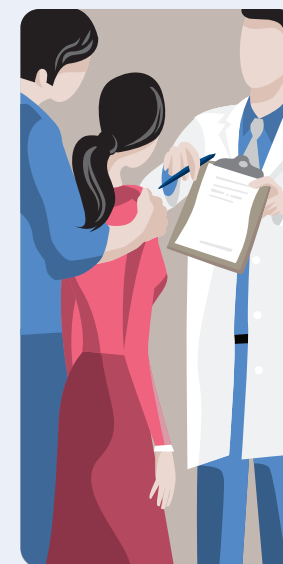
- Don't get X-rays unless your health care provider tells you that you need them. When you go for an X-ray, make sure the X-ray technician knows that you are pregnant.
- Avoid hot tubs, saunas, and steam rooms.
- Don't change the cat litter box. Contact with cat feces can cause an infection, toxoplasmosis, that could hurt your baby.
- Don't eat fish high in mercury (shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish). Eat no more than 12 ounces of fish a week that are lower in mercury such as canned light tuna, catfish, pollack, salmon, and shrimp. This includes those caught in Lake Michigan and its rivers. Limit your intake of albacore ("white") tuna to 6 ounces per week.
- Finally, be sure to cook meat well. That's the best way to make sure there are no bacteria that can get into your body and make you sick.



BABY IS HERE

Health Care

Your baby needs a medical home, a health care provider or clinic that knows what your baby is like when he/she is well so they can better understand when your baby is sick.



You can find a doctor for your baby the same way as described under **Health Care** in the "During Pregnancy" section of this book. (See page 11)

The following clinics offer a sliding scale fee based on your income and also will take Medicaid:

Baxter Community Center – 456.5310
 Belknap Clinic – 742.9945
 Booth Family Services – 459.9468
 Browning Claytor Health Center – 685.8300
 Cherry Street Health Services – 235.7272
 Clinica Santa Maria – 685.8400
 Health Intervention Services – 475.8446
 Westside Health Center – 235.1480

You must report the birth of your baby to your insurance provider as soon as possible. If you qualified for Medicaid while pregnant your baby will automatically qualify for Medicaid for the first year of her life. You must report the birth to your Department of Human Services worker to activate Medicaid. You will have to choose a Medicaid HMO for your baby within 2 months of birth.

If you do not have Medicaid for your child you can apply for MIChild/Healthy Kids (0-19 years of age) by:

- Calling 888.988.6300 (English and Spanish)
- Calling Kent County Health Department- 632.7058
- Going online at www.michigan.gov/documents/MIChildApplication_11847_7.pdf

If you have no insurance and do not qualify for Medicaid or MIChild *see page 26 of this book for a list of clinics that adjust their fees based on income.*

Well Child Check-ups and Immunizations

Your baby should see a health care provider for well child check-ups at 4 days, 2 weeks, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months 1 year and 15 and/or 18 months to be sure that your baby is growing and developing well. If you keep all of these appointments you should not miss any of the immunizations (baby shots) that are needed. Your baby will need to get these shots starting at birth. These shots prevent some very dangerous diseases like polio, tetanus, whooping cough, mumps, measles, chicken pox, meningitis, hepatitis B, and more.

Feeding/Nutrition/Breastfeeding

Breast milk is best for your baby. It contains all the nutrition your baby needs. It helps in the prevention of illnesses. *See page 22 for a list of breastfeeding resources.*

Breast milk or formula is the primary source of nutrition for your baby for the first year of her life. It is important not to introduce solids into a baby's diet until close to 6 months of age. This will reduce the chances of developing food allergies or becoming obese. If you have questions about feeding your baby, talk to your health care provider about a referral to a registered dietitian. You may qualify for WIC, which will support you in breastfeeding or help you with formula. *See page 13 for more information.*

Safety

Your baby is completely defenseless. There are many things all around him that could hurt him or even cause his death. It is your responsibility to protect him. To do that, you need to be watchful and alert and able to make good decisions.

Sometimes you can be the biggest threat to your baby's safety:

- **Never shake your baby.** All parents get frantic and feel out of control at times. Put your baby down and walk away if you feel out of control. Everyone needs help. Ask for it.
- If you are using drugs or alcohol you cannot depend on your judgment and alertness. You need to find someone you trust to watch your baby when you are under the influence.
- In order to keep your baby safe you must be able to keep yourself safe. If you are in a violent relationship get help. *See page 16.*

Burns:

- Check bath water temperature before putting your baby in the water.
- Do not smoke, drink hot beverages, or cook while holding your baby
- Do not heat your baby's bottle in a microwave oven. The bottle may not be hot but areas of formula inside the bottle might burn his mouth. Always shake and test formula temperature before feeding.
- Make sure that there is a working smoke detector in your home. If you don't have one, contact your landlord or your local fire station.

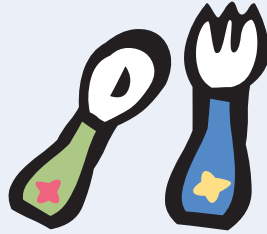
Falls/Injuries/Drowning

- Do not leave your baby alone on a couch or a changing table. Even a newborn could roll off.
- Never hold your baby in your arms while riding in a car even if they are fussy or being fed. Always use a car seat. *See page 20 for more information.*
- Never put anything around your baby's neck (small toy, pacifier, necklace). It could choke her.
- Use the safety straps that come with a stroller or bouncy seat.
- Keep your baby's infant seat on the floor.

- Closely watch your baby when a young child or an animal is around.
- Get down on the floor to see what your baby could get into such as small objects or hanging cords. Move them or keep your baby away from them.
- Put safety plugs in electrical outlets.
- Never leave your baby alone in a bath or near water. She could drown quickly in just a few inches of water.

Choking

- Do not prop the bottle for a feeding.
- Do not give a baby nuts, popcorn, chunks of meat, hot dogs, peanut butter, whole grapes, raw vegetables or hard candy.
- Be careful of what you let your baby play with. Make sure there are no small parts that could fall off and that there are no sharp edges. Objects are too small if they can fall through the center of a toilet paper roll.



Poisoning:

- Always read the label when buying a new toy. Safe toys have labels like “non toxic”, “nonflammable”, and “lead free”.
- Cleaning supplies, medicines and poisons should be kept in a high place or a locked cabinet.
- Carbon monoxide is an odorless poison that can cause death. It can leak from furnaces, gas lines, and gas appliances. Carbon monoxide detectors can be purchased at many local stores.

Safe Sleep:

- Babies need a bed of their own. Do not sleep with your baby or lay him down to sleep on a waterbed, cushion, or sofa.
- The crib, bassinet, or Pack n’ Play should have a firm mattress and a tightly fitted bottom sheet
- The safest way for them to sleep is on their backs, by themselves, with nothing extra in the sleep area. No pillows, quilts, toys, or wedges—just your baby.
- Make sure your baby’s bed does not tip over easily.

- Use cribs with slats less than 2-3/8 inches apart so the baby cannot get stuck in between them. If you can push the top of a pop can between the slats, the crib is not safe.
- Do not over-dress your baby or keep the room too hot.

For help or more information on any of these issues about safety for your baby, contact:

Children’s Protective Services – 248.9600
 Poison Control – 800.222.1222
 Police/EMS/Fire – 911
 Safe Kids – 391.7233
 Tomorrow’s Child (Safe Sleep) – 800.331.7437

Smoking

Remember, secondhand smoke can be harmful to your baby. It can increase their chances of getting colds, ear infections, asthma, and allergies. Exposure to secondhand smoke is also a risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Tips to Avoid Secondhand Smoke:

- Have guests and family smoke outside.
- Don’t allow smoking in your bedroom or child’s bedroom.
- Sit in non-smoking areas when you go to restaurants or other public places.
- If family members smoke, ask them to think about quitting.

If you smoke, it is not too late to quit. *Resources are on page 7.*

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Using alcohol and other drugs is not a healthy way of dealing with the added stress of having an infant. Be responsible. Alcohol and other drugs can affect your decision making, resulting in bad choices for yourself and your baby. Being in an environment surrounded by drugs can be dangerous and unhealthy for you and your baby. If you need help quitting, *see page 14 for resources.*



Postpartum Depression (PPD)

PPD is one of the most common complications of childbirth. PPD is **not** the “Baby Blues”. Postpartum Depression interferes with your ability to enjoy your newborn. Symptoms do not go away within a few weeks of birth. Some of the symptoms are:

- tearfulness
- extreme sadness
- guilt
- anxiety
- sleep problems
- feelings of inadequacy
- inability to enjoy fun activities
- unable to concentrate
- having negative thought about your baby or harming your baby
- having thoughts of harming yourself

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, please seek help. Even if you are only feeling sad, getting help early is important.

- Talk with your doctor
- Contact your HMO on your insurance card
- Call network180 at 336.3909 for a referral to an agency that can help.

Parenting

Children’s emotional growth is dependent on a secure and nurturing relationship with a caregiver. Getting help while your child is young will help you better enjoy your baby, help you better enjoy parenting and help you avoid problems as your children get older. **If you are struggling with the stresses of parenting contact:**



Arbor Circle Infant Toddler Development Services – 456.6571

Remember, no matter how stressed or overwhelmed you are feeling **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, SHAKE YOUR BABY.** Shaking a baby can cause permanent brain damage. If you are feeling overwhelmed try these strategies:

- Leave your baby in a safe place (her crib) and walk to another room to get a break for a few minutes
- Call a friend or family member so you can leave the house and get a break
- Call Children’s Protective Services (CPS) for immediate help at 248.9600

Parenting is a tough job. Supportive services can help answer your questions and support you in your role as a parent.

D.A.Blodget Sisters in Support – 451.2021
Healthy Start of Kent County – 632.7035
Kent County Maternal Infant Health Program – 632.7058
MOM’s program of Spectrum Health – 391.6135
MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) – 888.910.6677 or www.mops.org
Strong Beginnings – 331.5838
Traveling Grannies – 456.6135

Spending quality time with your child is one of the best gifts you can give. Reading to them is one way to spend time and helps your child learn and grow in many ways. Children also need to hear praise

everyday. For parenting groups and classes call:

Child and Family Resource Council – 454.4673
Family Outreach – 245.3815
Metro Health – 252.7200
Kent/MSU Extension – 336.3265
Spectrum Health - Healthier Communities – 391.5000

Child Development

Growth occurs more quickly in the first few years of life than any other time. Children also grow at different rates. If you have concerns about your child's development, talk to your pediatrician or contact one of the programs below. Early identification can help your child in the future.

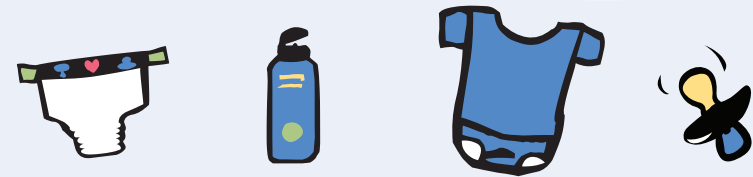
Bright Beginnings or Parents as Teachers through Kent Intermediate School District – 364.1333
Connections through the Child and Family Resource Council – 454.4673
Early On – 336.2310
Easter Seals (Infants and Children with a developmental delay) – 942.2081
Healthy Start of Kent County – 632.7035

Child Care

Every parent deserves access to high quality childcare. A checklist for choosing a childcare provider is available from 4 C's (Community Coordinated Child Care).

Some resources for Child Care information are:

4 C's of Kent County – 451.8291 or www.4cchildcare.org
Early Head Start with Michigan Family Resources – 453.4145
KEEP of Arbor Circle (child care consultation to help prevent child expulsion) – 456.6571
Neighborhood Drop-in Center of Arbor Circle (respite care only/must be enrolled in Arbor Circle program) – 456.6571
Other community-based centers include: Baxter Community Center, United Methodist Community House, GRCC, YMCA, and Grand Rapids Reach



Basic Needs – Clothing/ Baby Supplies/Diapers

Baby supplies are costly. If you need help contact these agencies for assistance.

Call **211** (459.2255) for individualized instructions.

In the Image – 1823 S. Division 456.6150
Tuesday and Thursday: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.
Saturday: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Alpha Women's Center

Grand Rapids: 1055 E Fulton – 459.9955
Cedar Springs: 90 N Main – 616.696.2616
Wayland: 117 S. Main – 616.792.0333

Help Pregnancy Crisis Aid – 705 Bridge NW 459.9139

Pregnancy Resource Center

425 Cherry SE – 456.6873
2438 28th SW – 261.0014

Some Community Centers and Food Pantries also give away free clothes and have a limited supply of diapers.

Family Planning – 6 Week Check-up

You can get pregnant again within the first month after giving birth, even before you have a chance to have your period. For your own health, during the first six weeks after delivery, it is not safe to have sex until you completely stop bleeding. To avoid getting pregnant use condoms until you are able to start whatever method of birth control you choose. Studies show that if you wait to get pregnant again for at least 18 months after your baby is born your next baby will have a much better chance of being strong and healthy. For more information on birth control and family planning *see page 4.*

Keep your 6-week check up appointment. It is important to make sure you have recovered from your pregnancy and to talk about family planning.

In Closing

Babies deserve to be born strong and healthy. While you cannot control everything in your life, the actions you take before you get pregnant, during your pregnancy, and after your baby is born will have a major effect on him, not just during the first year of his life, but beyond. It is important to make the best choices possible. Please take advantage of the information in this resource guide. As your community we want to help you and your baby be healthy and happy. As the old African proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child”.



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Healthy Kent 2010

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