# Help Prevent Birth Defects During Pregnancy

**RHODE ISLAND BIRTH DEFECTS PROGRAM**

1. See your healthcare professional: Maintain regularly scheduled visits
2. Take 400-800 mcg of folic acid daily: vitamins and 100% fortified cereals
3. Maintain a healthy weight: Talk to your healthcare provider
4. Control Chronic Conditions: Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Obesity, Epilepsy
5. Stop Smoking and Drinking:
   - Smoking cigarettes or e-cigarettes can cause birth defects, low birth weights and infant death
   - There is no safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy. Drinking during pregnancy can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
6. Taking Medications: Talk to your healthcare provider about medications you are taking including over the counter, dietary, prescription and herbal medicines
7. Protect against Flu Virus: Get a flu shot anytime during pregnancy
8. Protect against animal viruses:
   - Do not clean litter boxes. Dirty cat litter can carry parasites. If you must clean it, wear gloves and wash hands afterward.
   - If you have a pet rodent (hamster, guinea pig, etc.), have someone else take care of it until the baby arrives. Some rodents might carry viruses.
9. Wash hands often to protect against infections especially after:
   - Using the bathroom; Changing Diapers; Being around people who are sick;
   - Before and after touching and preparing food; Gardening or touching dirt or soil;
   - Caring for or playing with children.

www.health.ri.gov/programs/birthdefects/