

Birth Defects



FACTS

- About 150,000 babies are born each year with birth defects.
- The parents of one out of every 28 babies receive the frightening news that their baby has a birth defect
- There are over 4,000 known birth defects
- Birth defects are the leading cause of death in the first year of life



What is a Birth Defect?

 An abnormality of structure, function or body metabolism (inborn error of body chemistry) present at birth that results in physical or mental disability or is fatal.



What causes birth defects?

- Both genetic and environmental factors can cause birth defect.
 However, the causes of about 60% of birth defects are currently unknown.
- A single abnormal gene can cause birth defects. Every human being has about 100,000 genes that determine traits like eye color, hair, etc.



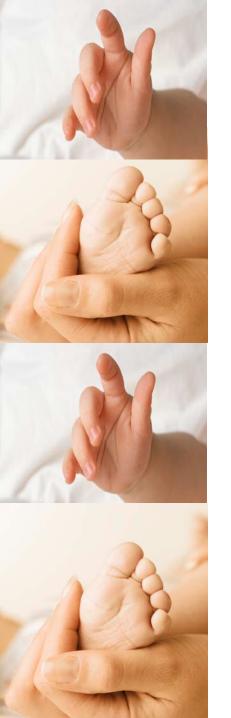
Can birth defects be prevented?

- Visit a health care provider for a prepregnancy check up. Especially if a woman has health problems
- When pregnant take daily multivitamin containing 400 mg of the B-vitamin folic Acid
- Avoid alcohol, drugs, smoking,
- Avoid prescription or over-the-counter medication without checking with a health care provider.



Factors that contribute to Birth Defects:

- Mother is Overweight
- Mother is Underweight
- Last birth was less than 12 month ago
- Has had a baby that weighed less than 3 ½ pounds
- Has had 3 or more miscarriages
- Has had more than 5 pregnancies



More Factors

- Has had a still born baby
- Drinks alcohol
- Uses prescription drugs
- Has used street drugs
- Drinks high amounts of caffeine
- Has had exposure to chemicals
- Constant exposure to cats
- Has had x-rays during pregnancy



Can birth defects be diagnosed before birth?

- Some prenatal tests that can be taken are:
 - -Ultrasound
 - -Amniocentesis
 - -Chronic villus sampling



Can birth defects be treated before birth?

- Advances in prenatal therapy now make it possible to treat some birth defects before birth.
- Prenatal surgery urinary-tract blockages, rare tumors in the lungs, spina bifida, ph disease,