



Genesee County Health Department

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<http://www.gchd.us>

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Date: September 14, 2009
Release Date: September 14, 2009 **End Date:** September 30, 2009
Contact Person: Marcia Franks,
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RE: Infant Mortality Awareness Month

Between 2000 and 2008, 583 babies in Genesee County died before their first birthday. A disproportionately large number of these infants were African American. September is National Infant Mortality Awareness Month. The Genesee County Health Department is promoting this month to increase awareness of the high rate of infant deaths in our community and promote healthy behaviors that can prevent infant death.

In Genesee County more than half of the infant deaths are due to prematurity (born more than 3 weeks before due date). The second and third most common causes of infant deaths are congenital anomalies (birth defects) and sudden infant death, mostly from unsafe sleep situations. Despite several years of infant safe sleep education campaigns, deaths from unsafe sleep have increased since 2007.

In an effort to increase awareness about unsafe sleep and other factors that can lead to infant deaths, the Baby's First Consortium is continuing "Your Body is Your Baby's First Crib" campaign. The Consortium and WJRT-TV ABC 12 have collaborated to produce five television PSA's that are currently showing.

Everyone can help Genesee County's babies be born healthy by sharing these important tips with the mothers-to-be in their lives:

Before getting pregnant...

- See your doctor regularly and address any health issues like diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity
- Protect yourself from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) and other infections
- Don't use drugs or alcohol if there's a chance you could become pregnant
- See your doctor as soon as you become pregnant and take a multi-vitamin with folic acid

During pregnancy...

- Don't use drugs or alcohol - NO AMOUNT of alcohol is safe during pregnancy
- Preventing STD's and other infections is important to your baby's health and will help reduce chances of premature birth
- Eat a healthy diet and take prenatal vitamins
- Don't smoke cigarettes or marijuana
- Know the signs of preterm labor (lower back pain, cramping, bleeding, contractions that occur more than 3 weeks before your due date)
- Consider breastfeeding as the healthiest food for your baby

After pregnancy...

- Space pregnancies at least 18 months apart to allow your body to heal and give you time to bond with your new baby
- Take care of your own health – see your doctor and continue to address any chronic health conditions
- Take your infant to his/her well baby check-ups
- Always place your infant to sleep on his/her back, alone, in a crib or bassinette
- Seek help with any breastfeeding questions or problems

To find out more, contact the Genesee County Health Department at (810) 341-5239 or visit www.gchd.us .

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