

# NEWS RELEASE



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## **National Birth Defects Prevention Month spotlights medication use during pregnancy**

(Mansfield, OH) – Richland Newhope Early Intervention is joining over 350 members of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network to share the message that women of childbearing age should talk with a doctor about which medications are safe to take while pregnant.

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month, and this year’s campaign focuses on medication use before, during, and after pregnancy. Medication use during pregnancy is common – two out of every three women take prescription medications during pregnancy.

“Women of childbearing age should discuss any medications they are using, whether prescription or over-the-counter, with a doctor,” says Julie Litt, Early Intervention Coordinator. “Though many women know that certain prescription medications can cause birth defects, they may not be aware that some dietary supplements and herbal remedies may also harm a developing baby.”

Not all medications should be discontinued during pregnancy; some may need to be changed or adjusted. Medical conditions such as diabetes, influenza, and asthma need to be managed during pregnancy and may harm both mother and baby if left untreated. In some cases, doctors may need to weigh the benefits of a medication against the potentially harmful effects.

A baby’s organs, such as the heart, brain, and spine, begin developing in the first few weeks, before a woman may realize she is pregnant. For that reason, it is important for women to have conversations with their health care providers about medications before pregnancy.

Every woman should take a multivitamin with 400 mcg of folic acid daily, starting before pregnancy, to improve the likelihood of delivering a healthy baby. Pregnant women should also eat a healthy diet, avoid alcohol, and get a flu shot.

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network has members from all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. The network collects and distributes information about birth defects and their prevention, encourages research, and provides technical support to state and local birth defects monitoring programs.

To learn more about the Network and Birth Defects Prevention Month, please visit [www.nbdpn.org](http://www.nbdpn.org). Richland Newhope’s Early Intervention Program is a member of the Network and works in collaboration with Help Me Grow to provide families supports needed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

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