



## Taking care of baby starts with taking care of yourself before and during pregnancy

What a joy it is to be expecting a baby! Every parent hopes for a happy and healthy child, and most babies are born with no problems. But one in 33 babies in the U.S. is born with a birth defect, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Though you can't always control the health of your unborn child, there are some important ways to take care of yourself while you are expecting. The CDC recommends that every pregnant woman do the following to help ensure that she brings a healthy baby into the world:

- All women should consume between 400-800 mcg of folic acid every day (if of childbearing age, which is 15-45) because half of all pregnancies are unplanned.
- Don't drink alcohol, smoke or use "street" drugs.
- Talk to a health care provider about taking any medications, including prescription and over-the-counter medications and dietary or herbal supplements. Also talk to a doctor before stopping any medications that are needed to treat health conditions.
- Learn how to prevent infections during pregnancy. Washing your hands and staying away from those who you know have an infection are effective ways to do so.
- If possible, be sure any medical conditions are under control before becoming pregnant. Some conditions that increase the risk for birth defects include diabetes and obesity.
- See a health care provider before you get pregnant and get proper prenatal care.

If you are expecting a baby, congratulations! Coventry Health Care wishes you and your family the best of health. If you are having a high-risk pregnancy, extra support is available from Coventry Health Care. Just call the toll-free number on your ID card and ask to speak with a care guide.

## PROTECT YOUR eyesight WITH a glaucoma screening

**M**ore than 2.2 million Americans age 40 and older suffer from glaucoma. Because glaucoma has no symptoms, almost half of the people who have it do not know that they do. Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness. But it is easily treated if detected early. The National Eye Institute recommends that people over age 60 and those at high risk have a glaucoma screening once every two years.

The best screening is a comprehensive dilated eye exam. This exam includes tests to measure distance and field of vision. It also includes measurement of the thickness of your cornea and the pressure in your eyes. During this exam, your provider will put drops into the eyes to enlarge the pupils. Doing this lets him or her examine the inside of your eye for signs of glaucoma. He or she will also use other instruments to complete the exam.

Don't put your vision at risk. Get recommended glaucoma screenings and keep things in clear sight.

To learn more, visit [www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov).

