

PURSUIT

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Florida Blue 
BetterYou 

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

5 Ways to Reduce the Risk of Birth Defects

Every expectant mother wants the best for her baby. In the United States, about 1 in 33 babies each year are born with a birth defect. January is National Birth Defect Prevention Month. If you or someone you know is expecting, read and share these 5 ways to reduce or prevent the risk of developing certain birth defects.

Take a prenatal vitamin with 600 micrograms of folic acid every day.

A type of B vitamin, folic acid reduces the risk of brain and spinal cord defects and other defects like cleft lip and palate. Get folic acid through your diet, too: eat foods like fortified cereals and breads, dried beans, legumes, oranges, orange juice and leafy green vegetables. Trying to get pregnant? Take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day.

Don't smoke or drink alcohol.

These habits can lead to premature birth along with physical and mental birth defects affecting the baby's heart and brain.



See your doctor for regular checkups.

It's important to have early and regular prenatal care. And ask your doctor if you need a rubella (German measles) or chicken pox vaccine. Both of these viruses can cause birth defects if you contract them while pregnant.

If you have a chronic condition like diabetes, take care of yourself.

Follow your doctor's treatment plan to prevent complications that can lead to birth defects.

Talk to your doctor about any medicine you were taking before you got pregnant.

This includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs plus all dietary or herbal supplements. Don't stop or start taking any type of medication without talking to your doctor first.

Florida Blue members who are pregnant can enroll in the **Healthy Addition® Prenatal Education Program** at no extra cost.



Email:
healthyaddition@floridablue.com

Call:
1-800-955-7635 option 6

Sources:

March of Dimes:
<https://www.marchofdimes.org/>;
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

IN THIS ISSUE

5 Ways to Reduce the Risk of Birth Defects

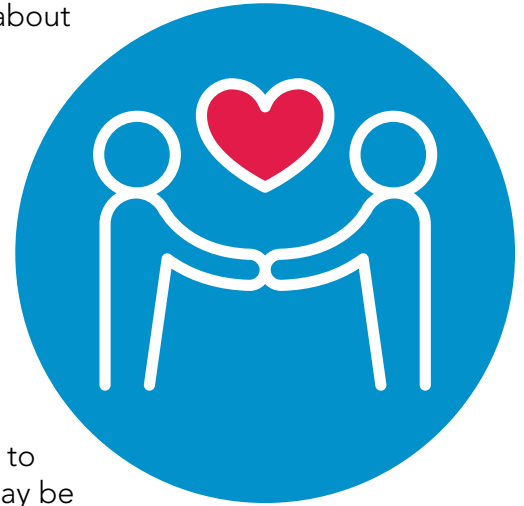
Are You a Primary Caregiver for a Loved One?

Recipe of the Month

Are You a Primary Caregiver for a Loved One?

Caring for someone can take a toll on your health. No matter how much you have to do or how much help your loved one needs, it's important to take care of yourself, too.

- **Manage your stress:** If you're feeling anxious or stressed, think about the reason and take a break from it if you can. Simple steps like taking a walk can help you feel more in control.
- **Ask for help:** Don't feel guilty for needing help and asking for it. Think of what you need help with, and break it into simple tasks. This will make it easier to ask others to chip in. Also, there may be community resources you can use, like respite care programs.
- **Exercise and eat well:** By staying active and eating well, you can lower your risk for heart disease and other health problems. If you don't have a workout routine, start with short walks.
- **Don't skip your own doctor's appointments:** Make sure to talk to your doctor about how caregiving is affecting you. Your doctor may be able to help you come up with solutions.



Source: DailyCaring.com



Apple Quinoa Bake

This recipe is vegan and gluten-free and has no added sugar. Enjoy it for breakfast or lunch with Greek yogurt or cottage cheese for extra protein or as a snack or dessert. Serves 4.

Ingredients:

- 3 medium-large Gala or Fuji apples, cored and sliced with peel on (approx. 15 to 18 slices per apple)
- 1/4 cup raisins, packed
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- 2 tablespoons uncooked quinoa
- 1/2 cup water

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray a 9 x 9-inch brownie pan with cooking spray.

2. Spread one-half the raisins on bottom of brownie pan.
3. Add apple slices and spread evenly over pan.
4. Sprinkle cinnamon over apples.
5. Add remainder of raisins and sunflower seeds.
6. Sprinkle on the quinoa.
7. Pour water into corner of pan so it coats the bottom; don't pour over apples.
8. Bake 50 to 60 minutes, taking care not to burn the raisins.

Recipe courtesy of TodaysDietitian.com. [Click here](#) for nutritional information.

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ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 1-800-352-2583 (TTY: 1-800-955-8770).

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