

Faith Communities Play an Important Role for Expectant Mothers

Participating in the life of a faith community can provide numerous benefits for expectant mothers.

- Praying, meditating, singing, reading sacred texts, and practicing other rituals can strengthen immunity, improve the body's response to stress and boost other measures of physical health, according to numerous studies.
- Faith communities offer a regular place to anchor and replenish – a spiritual home to which a mother-to-be can return any time.
- Faith communities can provide a network of support: friends expectant mothers can call on socially or in time of crisis.



Faith communities can foster support for pregnant women by offering:

- health ministries and activities such as support groups for pregnant women and new mothers
- education regarding newborn care, safe infant sleep and breastfeeding
- community baby showers to provide equipment and supplies mothers may not have access to.



Prayer: Thank you for bringing new life into the world every day. May our communities nurture and support all mothers-to-be and new moms. We ask your blessings upon all babies, especially in their early days, that they may thrive with the love and care provided to them.

Preventing Infant Mortality

Celebrating a baby's birth can be a joyous time for a family. But the celebration can end too soon when a baby doesn't live to see his first birthday. Help your baby thrive by following these recommendations:



Before pregnancy: Get a check-up for high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, seizures and thyroid disease. Take a vitamin with folic acid every day.

During pregnancy: Make and keep your prenatal care appointments. Take your prenatal vitamins.



After pregnancy: Get a six-week check-up after having your baby. Breastfeed your baby.



Always: Eat healthy with plenty of fruits and vegetables, be active, keep stress under control, don't smoke or use drugs.

Taking care of your baby: Put your baby to sleep on his back every time to prevent sudden infant death syndrome. Keep your baby's shots current. Keep your well-baby appointments.



Did You Know? Infant mortality rates among African Americans are more than double that of the United States as a whole. Racism hurts Black families. Learn more: National Institute for Children's Health Quality [nichq.org](https://www.nichq.org)