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.

**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.

**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](http://nichq.org)