Keeping the Circle Healthy

The survival of each new face ensures the survival of our people.

V. Jeffries (Occaneechi Saponi)

We can work together to help American Indian babies in our families, in our tribes, in our communities be born healthy and live strong.

Did you know...

American Indian babies are almost two times more likely to die before their first birthday than white babies.*

The main causes of death for American Indian babies are:
• being born too early (before 37 weeks)
• being born too small (less than 5½ pounds)
• lung or breathing problems
• birth defects

Premature and low birthweight babies often have health problems for the rest of their lives.

Many of these deaths can be prevented.

*It is important to answer questions about race and ethnicity on health records. This helps give a truer record of American Indian births and infant deaths.

By working together, we can change these things and help each American Indian child be born strong and survive.

There is still much to learn

1-800-367-2229
NC Family Health Resource Line
English and Spanish

1-800-FOR-BABY
TTY: 1-800-976-1922
for hearing impaired

Call for information and referral about:
• Health before pregnancy
• Family planning
• Pregnancy and prenatal care
• Substance use or smoking in pregnancy
• Breastfeeding, nutrition and WIC
• Infant, child and teen health
• Children’s health insurance

Contact your health agency, Tribal Council or urban organization for resources and to take action for keeping the circle healthy.

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Wise Sayings

given to us by American Indian leaders

May every American Indian child be born strong and healthy, and grow with wisdom and compassion.

We teach from the heart so each new child may know truth.

We nurture and love so each new child may grow strong and live long.

Together we seek blessings so each new child may show kindness.

We celebrate our past and hold fast to our ancestors’ words so each new child may grow wise.

Together we share responsibility that our Native sons and daughters have the best chance in life.

Being a mother is very special

To help our sons and daughters enter this world healthy, women should:

- Get medical care early in pregnancy. Go to all health check-ups.
- Talk to a doctor if already taking medicine and thinking about getting pregnant.
- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables including corn, beans, squash and leafy greens. Steam or bake meats instead of frying, and cook well.
- Take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day. This can prevent some birth defects even before a woman knows she is pregnant.
- Drink extra fluids: 6-8 glasses of water, juice or milk a day. Limit caffeine from coffee, tea or sodas.
- Choose not to drink beer or alcohol. Drinking any alcohol during pregnancy may cause birth defects and damage the baby’s brain and nerves. This can result in learning and behavior problems in children. It also increases the baby’s chances of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Avoid drugs or any substances used to get high. Drugs can cause miscarriage (loss of the baby), birth defects and nerve damage in the baby.
- Choose not to smoke or chew tobacco because they can cause a baby to be born too early or too small. Smoking causes lung problems and learning disabilities in babies. It puts babies at a greater risk of dying from SIDS.

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