

Birth Defects Resources

Learning about your child's special health care needs can help you be sure they are getting the right care and interventions.

Visit these websites for more information on different types of birth defects, healthy outcomes for mothers and babies, and support programs in your area.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects

The March of Dimes

marchofdimes.org

The Partnership for Maternal & Child Health of Northern New Jersey

pmch.org

Central Jersey Family Health Consortium

cjfhc.org

Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative

snjpc.org



For More Information

New Jersey Department of Health Birth Defects Registry

Contact us with questions about your child's registration at 609-292-5676 or visit:

nj.gov/health/fhs/bdr.

Early Intervention Services

Available for children from birth up to three years old with developmental delays and disabilities. Contact the New Jersey Early Intervention System at 888-653-4463 or visit:

nj.gov/health/fhs/eis.

Case Management Services

Available for children from birth up to 22 years with special health care needs and chronic medical conditions. Call 609-777-7778 for the case management unit in your county of residence or visit:

nj.gov/health/fhs/specialneeds/case-management.

Follow the New Jersey Department of Health on social media using @NJDeptofHealth:



**New Jersey Department of Health
Family Health Services
Special Child Health Services
PO Box 364, Trenton, NJ
609-292-5676**



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Children with Special Health Care Needs

Information for Parents and Families about the New Jersey Birth Defects Registry



Introduction

Learning that a child has been diagnosed with a birth defect can fill families with various emotions and uncertainty about what to do next. Depending on the type of birth defect, the baby may need specialized care and services as they grow and develop.

The New Jersey Birth Defects Registry is one way to ensure your child is referred to services as soon as possible.

What are birth defects?

The term birth defect refers to a variety of conditions which are present at birth. They affect different parts of the body, such as the limbs, heart, or spine. Chromosomal disorders and hearing loss at birth are also considered birth defects. Signs and symptoms can range from mild to severe.

Birth defects are common. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every year, one in 33 babies is born with a birth defect in the United States.



Why have a Birth Defects Registry?

The registry links families to services and helps us understand how common different types of birth defects are New Jersey.

New Jersey state law requires birth facilities and other health care professionals to register any New Jersey child up to age six years who is diagnosed with a birth defect.



What causes birth defects?

Some birth defects have known causes, such as drinking alcohol or taking certain medications during pregnancy, but in most cases the cause is unknown.

Not all birth defects can be prevented, but there are things you can do to decrease the chances of your baby having a birth defect.

Getting enough folic acid in your diet, avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol, getting regular medical care, and maintaining a healthy weight can all help prevent birth defects.

What happens after my child is registered?

You will receive a letter informing you that your child has been registered with the Special Child Health Services Registry and that someone in your county's Case Management Unit will contact you to offer information and support. Both are confidential. The letter does not include specific details about your child's diagnosis to protect your family's privacy.

What services are available for my child?

We refer registered children to the New Jersey Department of Health's Special Child Health Services Case Management Unit. A case manager from your county can help you find resources and services specific to your child's needs. Participation is voluntary and available at any time until your child turns 22 years.

