

PREVENTION COUNTS

NEW JERSEY COALITION FOR PREVENTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

www.coalitionforprevention.org

Aug./Sept. 2011

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Special Pregnant Pause Issue

Take a Pregnant Pause on FAS Awareness Day



September 9th is *International FAS Awareness Day*, help spread the message about the effects that Fetal Alcohol Syndrome has on the lives of individuals with this condition and how it is 100% preventable.

What you should know...

- "FASD occurs in about 10 per 1,000 live births, or about 40,000 babies per year. FAS, the most recognized condition in the spectrum, is estimated to occur in 0.5 to 2 per 1,000 live births. It now outranks Down syndrome and autism in prevalence." (*The Language of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*, samsha.gov)
- If you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or sexually active and not on birth control DO NOT drink alcohol.
- If you drank alcohol and are pregnant STOP NOW.
- If you drank during your pregnancy and/or your child is experiencing developmental delays and you suspect they may have fetal alcohol syndrome, talk to your doctor about having your child evaluated. Early intervention is one of the best ways to give a child the best head start and prevent some of the devastating effects that FAS can cause.

What you should do...

- **Speak up.** Many women are ill-informed on the effects that alcohol can have on pregnancy. Encourage local businesses that serve alcohol to clearly display signs about alcohol and pregnancy. Remind women you know not to drink while pregnant.
- **Show your support.** Tweet or post your support on Facebook and Twitter.
- **Learn more,** by visiting beintheknownj.org and fasday.com.

A Day in the Life of a Child with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Children born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome face a variety of challenges in their life. Although every child with FAS is affected differently some of the many difficulties include: learning disabilities, behavioral issues, trouble with the law, inability to live independently, difficulty keeping a job, drug/alcohol abuse, and inappropriate sexual behavior.

Other challenges include:

- **Sensory Integration Issues**
 - Are overly sensitive to sensory input such as bright lights or certain textures in their clothing
- **Memory problems**
 - Difficulty learning how to do math problems
- **Information Processing Problems**
 - Do not complete tasks/difficulty following directions and may appear to be oppositional
 - Have difficulty adapting to a situation
 - Do not ask questions because they want to fit in.

- Have verbal expressive skills that often exceed their level of understanding
- Misinterpret others' words, actions, or body movements
- **Self-Esteem and Personal Issues**
 - Function unevenly in school, work, and development
 - Are seen as lazy, uncooperative, and unmotivated
 - Have hygiene problems

FASD can be extremely problematic for both the person afflicted with this disability and their family. Astonishingly, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are 100% preventable if the mother chooses not to drink alcohol during her pregnancy. The message is clear: **NO Safe Time, NO Safe Amount, NO Safe Alcohol**

Source: [http://nofascolorado.org/fasfaq.htm#Typical Difficulties for persons with an FASD](http://nofascolorado.org/fasfaq.htm#Typical%20Difficulties%20for%20persons%20with%20an%20FASD)

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PREVENTION COUNTS is funded by the Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities.

Upcoming Research: Exercise May Reverse Effects of FASD

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders or FASD encompasses all of the damaging effects that alcohol has on babies born to mothers who consumed alcohol while pregnant. FASD may cause effects such as physical characteristics, behavioral problems, developmental and intellectual disabilities. A new study which will commence in September 2011 will look at the effect exercise may have on the reversal some of the symptoms of FASD.



Lead scientist Professor Brian Christie at the University of Victoria explains, “‘There’s good anecdotal evidence from both basic research and from human studies that exercise is good for cognition and it can work in selected biochemical pathways,’ Christie said. ‘This is probably the most straightforward project I’ve ever come across. It was just a no-brainer.’ The team is interested in a special protein called brain derived neurotrophic factor that Christie described as a ‘super fertilizer of the brain.’ In his previous work involving FASD rats, animals that exercised had higher levels of this growth protein, more neurons, and were better able to remember and learn new things. Christie’s study will explore whether children with FASD will experience similar benefits. As part of his project, young adults with FASD will boost their heart rates by playing interactive video games that involve continuous pedalling. Each gamer will be expected to complete an hour-long workout, three times a week. Before and after this 12-week exercise program, scientists will assess each gamer’s physical-fitness levels, learning and memory skills. The team will also take blood samples to measure the levels of this brain-growth protein circulating in the body.”

Choosing not to drink during pregnancy is the only 100% effective way to prevent this condition. However, this new research on reversing some of the difficult symptoms of FASD may give those with the condition a better life-quality.

Source: <http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Study+examine+whether+breaking+sweat+boost+brain+power/5105059/story.html#ixzz1Sh9gp6XK>

FASD Diagnostic Centers

Many times FASD may go undiagnosed in children and may be attributed to another condition such as ADHD or another disorder. Since each child with the condition may display a variety of different symptoms a team of medical professionals is required to properly diagnose a child. NJ has special FAS diagnostic centers throughout the state that are able to properly identify children with the disorder and provide them with the resources they need to improve.

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Thrifty Items May Have Hidden Costs



It is well known that lead can be found in old paint, pipes, some toys, household products, jewelry and other items. Newer products are made with regulations that help limit the amount of lead used, which may make lead poisoning less of a concern. However, if you like to be thrifty and buy second-hand to save money, new research finds a hidden danger in thrift store items. Antique shops, thrift stores, and garage sales may sell items that were made before lead-paint standards and other regulations were put into place.

According to an article published by ConsumerAffairs.com, "Researchers purchased a collection of used items from second-hand stores, junk shops and antiques stores in Virginia, New York and Oregon and found many of them contained surface lead concentrations more than 700 times higher than the federal limit. The items included salvaged construction pieces, antique toys, common dishware, jewelry and other collectibles. The researchers tested the items for lead while in the stores, using a qualitative swab test. Those that tested positive were purchased. They were able to find items that tested positive in every store they visited. Using X-ray fluorescence at the Geoarcheological Laboratory at UC Berkeley, the items were quantitatively tested for lead content. Nineteen of the 28 items violated the federal standard for lead, which is 600 parts per million. Among the items that contained high levels of lead were a salt shaker lid, small red toy teapot, a Garfield cup, a red casserole dish, a potato ricer, an ice cream scoop, a Japanese wine cup, a Pewter bowl, and a turtle necklace. The amount of lead ranged from twice the federal limit in the ice cream scoop to 714 times the limit in the salt shaker lid."

Giving old items a second chance may save the environment and money and it would be expensive and time consuming to lead test every second-hand item you want to purchase. However, be cautious about what you are purchasing. Keep in mind that prior to 1978 paint was lead-based. Old appliances, toys, jewelry, and ceramics are likely to contain lead and should be avoided, especially if you have young children in the household. If you have old pottery or utensils (plates, cups, bowls) never eat or drink out of them. Additionally, if you own any older items (that may not be of much value) you may want to consider throwing them away, rather than risk an unsuspecting buyer from being exposed to this hidden danger.

Source: <http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2010/12/toxic-levels-of-lead-in-many-thrift-antique-and-resale-items.html>

Get Back to School Safely

The summer is coming to a close and September is drawing near and so is back to school time. Prepare your children (especially the younger ones) from potential problems that may arise around the school year.

1. **Safety in numbers.** Whether your children walk to school or ride the bus make sure they walk with a buddy or under the supervision of a trusted adult. Also, teach them to never talk to strangers, know their home phone number and to where to go for help, if needed.
2. **Obey traffic signals,** especially if your children have to walk several blocks. Teach them all of the basic rules, especially where to stop and when to cross the street.
3. **Wear your helmet.** If your children ride their bike, this is an essential.
4. **Bus safely.** Advise your children to make sure they listen to the bus driver, wear their seat-belt, sit in their seat, and talk amongst their friends quietly, as to not disturb the driver.
5. **Teach your children proper etiquette,** especially when they are with other schoolmates. Yelling, shoving, and horseplay, are all dangerous behaviors in school and on the playground.
6. **Know your child's personality.** Observe your child's interaction with yourself and their friends before they go back to school. If your child begins to act differently (becomes withdrawn, resists going to school, upset when they come home, etc.) once the school year begins, it may be the sign of a potential problem.
7. **Communicate.** Many parents are too busy to keep regular correspondence with their child's teacher. If your child is showing signs of difficulties (bullying, developmental or learning delays, behavior problems, etc.) their teacher may be the first one to observe a situation. Acting early and getting your child the proper help and support can help assure success in the future.



Is Your Teen at Risk for a Brain Injury?

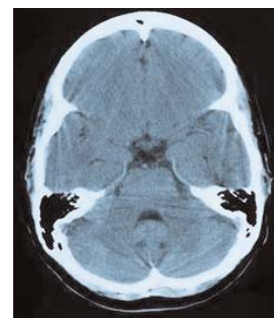


Teenage years may be the most liberating for your children but they can also be the most worrisome for parents. While teenagers may have more freedom but they are also the most at risk for making poor decisions which can lead to consequences such as accidents, injuries, alcohol/drug abuse, etc., with the brain being the most vulnerable to damage. According to [ugotbrains.com](http://www.ugotbrains.com), approximately 5.3 million Americans are living with disabilities as a result of a traumatic brain injury. Examine some of the most serious risks below so you can help prepare your children while they are young to make better decisions for the future.

What could happen after a serious brain injury?

A brain injury can occur after a direct blow to the head, if the head was shaken violently, drug or alcohol use, or oxygen deprivation. Many accidents have varying levels of seriousness but the aftermath can be equally devastating to the victim and their families. From [ugotbrains.com](http://www.ugotbrains.com), after a brain injury a person may suffer from:

- Seizures (loss of driver's license)
- Loss of intellectual ability (depending on damage to certain areas of brain)
- Loss of friendships and relationships
- Long and short term memory problems
- Physical changes (ability to walk, talk, hear, see; impairment to motor skills)
- Feeding tubes and catheter (some victims may need these for the rest of their lives)
- Emotional issues (anxiety, depression, frustration)
- The inability to live and function independently



Helmets & Sports Safety

You may make sure you make your young children wear a helmet everytime they skateboard or ride their bicycle, but once they get older it is harder for parents to keep track if they are wearing helmets or not, especially when they start to travel further from home. Starting good habits young is one way to increase the likelihood that your teen will wear a helmet, but this is not always the case. Remind your teenager the risks involved in not wearing a helmet by sharing current statistics and accidents that have happened to other people. If your child plays any sports, especially contact sports like football or lacrosse, be sure they are always wearing the proper safety equipment. If your child takes a rough tumble or you believe they may have a concussion, be sure to take them to see a doctor right away. Many videos and testimonials on the site <http://www.ugotbrains.com> can show what consequences result from a brain injury. Also, visit sportsconcussion.com for information about how to prevent brain injuries in sports.



Distracted Driving

Distracted driving can be defined as anything that takes a driver cognitively, visually, or manually away from the safe operation of a vehicle. Many adults and teenagers are guilty of using a cellphone to text or talk or the use of another driving distraction such as a GPS, eating, drinking, falling asleep or reaching for an object. According to the University of Utah, using a cell phone while driving, whether it's handheld or hands-free, delays a

driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of 8%. And 20% of injury crashes in 2009 were the result of distracted driving (National Highway Traffic Safety Association). Young adults are the most vulnerable to driving distracted. Keeping a driving contract with your new driver is one way to open communication and lay down expectations you have for your teenager, visit countdown2drive.org for tips on how to prepare your teenager for the road. Also, you can view true stories of tragedy and what can happen by driving distracted with your teen at <http://www.distraction.gov/faces/>. See how dangerous it is to multitask while driving by checking out distracted driving games at http://dropitanddrive.com/?page_id=307.

Alcohol and Drug Use

It is likely that many adolescents and teenagers have the opportunity to be exposed to drugs and alcohol at some point during their school years. Many of the consequences of drug and alcohol use include driving impaired, dependency, brain damage, unplanned pregnancy and death from overdosing. Talk about the consequences of drug and alcohol use with your children so they are armed with knowledge before they are exposed. Set limits with your teen such as curfews and clearly define consequences if they break your rules. Visit www.drugfree.org for information and support on how to prevent drug use.



Prevent Household Poisoning

As safe as you may want to consider your household, there are always lurking dangers that even the most overprotective parents may not be aware of. Household poisoning is a common danger and an accident waiting to happen in an instant. Whether you are home or your child is with a babysitter, take extra precautions now to prevent any accidents from happening.

- Keep the National Poison Control Number (1-800-222-1222) and emergency contacts near every phone.
- Never leave household cleaners or other toxic substances in low unlocked cabinets, especially if you have young children or pets. Keep them in higher places, preferably in a locked and secure location such as a garage or shed.
- Use child-proof locks on cabinets and doors to rooms your child should not have access to.
- Keep medications in labeled child-proof containers out of reach and out of site. Even curious teenagers may try to steal a few pills.
- Store alcohol out of reach in a locked cabinet.
- Be aware of pesticides such as roach or ant traps you may have around your home. Young children like to put anything they find in their mouths.
- Smaller items like cosmetics, toiletries, batteries, etc. also contain toxic chemicals (and a choking hazard) that may go unnoticed.
- Watch out for toxic plants in the house and around your yard.
- If you live in an older home, be aware of old paint chips that young children may put in their mouths. Prior to 1978, paint was lead-based.



Developmental Disability Awareness: Spina Bifida

What it is: Spina bifida occurs during the first month of development in the womb. During this time the neural tube of the embryo fails to close or develop properly. This causes complications with the formation of the spinal cord and backbone. According to MayoClinic.com, three forms are present:



“1. **Spina bifida occulta.** This mildest form results in a small separation or gap in one or more of the bones (vertebrae) of the spine. Because the spinal nerves usually aren't involved, most children with this form of spina bifida have no signs or symptoms and experience no neurological problems.

2. **Meningocele.** In this rare form, the protective membranes around the spinal cord (meninges) push out through the opening in the vertebrae. Because the spinal cord develops normally, these membranes can be removed by surgery with little or no damage to nerve pathways.

3. **In myelomeningocele,** the baby's spinal canal remains open along several vertebrae in the lower or middle back. Because of this opening, both the membranes and the spinal cord protrude at birth, forming a sac on the baby's back.”

Causes: A combination of genetic and environmental factors may contribute to this condition. A family history of neural tube defects and *a lack of folic acid during or before pregnancy* may contribute. Spina bifida is usually detected from screenings and tests during pregnancy.

Complications: Depending on the severity of the condition neurological problems such as paralysis, urinary and bowel control may be present. Learning disabilities and other health effects such as meningitis, hydrocephalus, depression, urinary tract infections, and

gastrointestinal problems may also result.

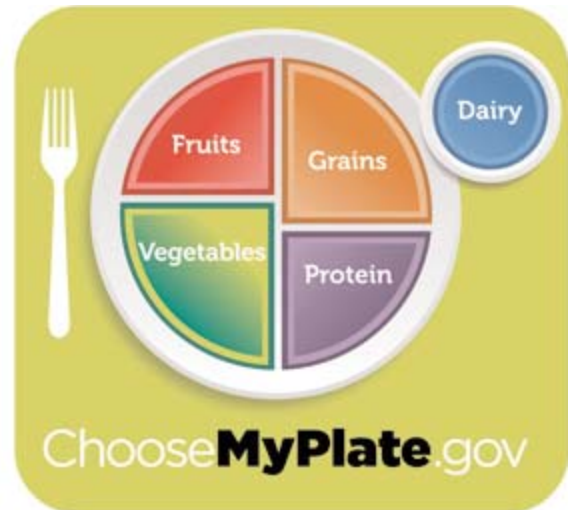
Treatment: Based on the severity of the condition surgery may be required to help repair the spine. Ongoing multidisciplinary care may be required for babies affected with neurological problems and other complications.

Prevention: While there is no 100% guarantee Spina Bifida can be prevented, early prenatal care can help reduce the likelihood your infant will develop this condition. **All women of childbearing age should take folic acid supplements and fortified food such as spinach, whole wheat foods, lentils and beans.** Taking prenatal vitamins, eating healthy and talking to your doctor are all ways that you can provide your baby with the best possible outcome.

How Much Do You Know About Nutrition?

A growing problem

According to the *Center for Disease Control and Prevention* (cdc.gov) as of 2008, 1/3 of adults in the United States were classified as overweight or obese and 20% of children ranked in that category. In a new study that came out July 2011, the *Trust for America's Health* ranked the obesity rates of US states, fortunately NJ in the lower middle of obesity rates with 23.9% of adults and 15.4% of children ranking as obese or overweight. In addition to weight issues, many children and adults also suffer from poor nutrition, especially in lower income areas where nutritious food many not be readily available, this consitutes a trend known as "food deserts" where residents that may not own cars or rely on public transportation have trouble reaching markets with available essential food like fresh fruits and vegetables. Also, many families may be extremely busy or do not know how to prepare a healthy meal for their family and their children may go to school without breakfast. A combination of these problems throughout our country consitute a growing trend of poor nutrition with serious consequences to childhood growth and development and the overall health of the US population. Young children, infants, and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to poor nutrition.



The new logo replaces the food pyramid in an attempt to make food groups and portions easier to understand.

What is being done

The *United States Department of Agriculture* (USDA) recently revised the food pyramid and created a new logo and campaign for better nutrition. The new logo has been modified to help show consumers the proper amount of each food group they should eat during a meal and how they should fill their plate. This new campaign is an attempt to make understanding food groups and portions much easier than the previous food pyramid. The USDA's nutrition website choosemyplate.gov also provides fitness tips to consumers and guidance for expecting mothers and parents on how to prepare food, proper portions, and how to choose healthy food wisely. In New Jersey, SNAP-ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) was introduced by Rutgers University in 2008 to help families with limited resources make better choices with nutrition and expand the funds they are eligible to receive.

What you can do

You too can save money and provide better nutrition for your family whether you have a tightly-packed schedule or simply want to switch to a healthier lifestyle. Consider the following tips:



- **Check the BMI** (body mass index) of each member of your family, this estimates the amount of body fat your body has based on your age, gender, height, and current weight and determines if you are underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese by comparing your height and weight to the ideal standard. You can do this on the choosemyplate.gov and other health websites.
- **Start a nutrition plan.** Discuss a weight-loss or nutrition plan with your doctor if you feel like you or your family are not eating healthy enough.
- **Skip fastfood, takeout and going out to restaurants** to help save money and calories. Instead, prepare meals at home. Make these options a once-in-a-while treat for your family.
- **Prepare ahead.** Help save time, money, and the environment by preparing school lunches the night before with your children. Buy a reusable seperated plastic food container to hold prepared food like sandwiches, veggies, and fruit.
- **Share a meal with your family.** Make time for sit-down meals with your family by learning quick and easy new recipes or having each member of your household choose a night to cook

once a week.

- **Shop local.** Many local farmer's markets and farm stands sell healthy fresh food and may use less pesticides and better farming practices than store-bought fruits and vegetables. These items are also generally cheaper. Also, consider buying a community farm share where you can get an assortment of seasonal items weekly at a lower cost. Visit: <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/> to find one near you.
- **If you are pregnant,** take prenatal vitamins and discuss a nutrition plan with your doctor to give your baby the best possible start during their development. Also consider the benefits of breastfeeding.
- **Support charities.** Help stop the trend of hunger and poor nutrition by donating your time or items to a local soup kitchen or food charity such as www.cityharvest.org and feedingamerica.org.

August is Immunization Awareness Month: Are You Up-to-Date?

Your infants and toddlers are not the only ones that need to stay updated on their vaccines. Adolescents and teenagers also require certain vaccinations or followups to ones they received when they were young. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends certain vaccines such as

- **Tdap vaccine**

The Tdap vaccine protects against 3 diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (also called "whooping cough"). Even though infants and toddlers receive this, the protection eventually begins to wear off and children should be updated with this vaccine when they reach 11-12 years old.

- **Meningococcal conjugate vaccine**

The MCV4 helps prevent certain strains of meningitis which can cause serious brain damage if it is not treated early. Teens should be vaccinated by the time they are 11-12 years old. Most colleges also require this vaccine for students that will be living in dorms.

- **HPV vaccine**

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines protect girls and young women against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancer. One HPV vaccine also prevents anal cancer and genital warts in both females and males.

Doctors recommend HPV vaccine for 11 and 12 year old girls, but can be given up to age 27. New research shows that males may even benefit from receiving this vaccine.

- **Flu vaccine**

New flu vaccines are available each season. This vaccine can help prevent complications associated with the flu such as pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections, etc. Those with asthma or diabetes and with weak immune systems should talk with their doctor about the receiving this vaccine.

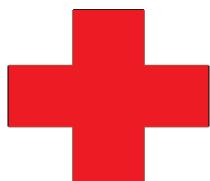
Vaccines can help prevent many serious illnesses from spreading and also keep your family healthy. Please don't hesitate to keep up on your vaccinations. Find out what vaccines your older children should receive by age on a 2011 recommended immunization chart that can be downloaded from the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/downloads/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs.pdf>

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/PreTeenVaccines/>



An Accident Can Happen Anywhere: Are You Prepared?

No matter how safe you may think you or your family are, an emergency can happen anywhere. Be extra prepared with the following tips:



- Keep a first aid kit in your home and in your car. You can buy a basic first aid kit at the store but learn what other essentials you should have at <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/firstaidkit.html>
- If your child or family member has a serious health condition (like diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, allergies) that can lead to unconsciousness make sure they wear a medical ID bracelet.
- Learn CPR, First Aid and the Heimlich maneuver. You can save a life, learn about classes in your area at <http://www.redcross.org>
- Teach your young children how and when it is appropriate to dial 911.
- Keep an emergency plan with your family. Prepare your family on what to do for incidents such as fires, natural disasters (depending on where you live), if your child gets lost or separated, etc.

Extra preparation is one of the top ways you can be ready for an emergency. Knowing where to go and what to do can help protect your family and save a life.

Information Spotlight

Valproate and Cognitive Development

If you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant consider the medications you may currently be taking and the impact it could have on your future baby. As of "June 30 ,2011 the Food and Drug Administration issued a Drug Safety Communication informing the public that children born to mothers who take the anti-seizure medication valproate sodium or related products, such as valproic acid and divalproex sodium, during pregnancy have an increased risk of lower cognitive test scores than children exposed to other anti-seizure medications during pregnancy." If you are concerned about any medications you may be taking or the impact they could have during pregnancy check with your doctor and visit the FDA website at www.fda.gov



Source: <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafetyPodcasts/ucm261653.htm>

Uninhabitable Vacant Properties Must Be Registered and Secured with the City of Newark

Beginning August 1st a new ordinance will go into effect which will require owners of vacant residential properties to register these properties with the City of Newark, to maintain and secure them from unlawful entry, and display property management contact information. This is in an effort to reduce vandalism, minimize health concerns, increase public safety and the aesthetic value of neighborhoods as Newark attempts to rebuild its communities. Registration fees will range from \$500 to \$5000 and any failure to comply will result in a fine of up to \$1000 for each violation. The goal of this new ordinance is to hold property owners responsible for the condition of their properties and let others know who is responsible for its condition.

Safer Products Require Close Monitoring

Even with stricter guidelines and close monitoring many new products can still pose a danger to consumers, especially young children. Dangers such as fire hazards, lacerations, burns, lead poisoning, falls, head injuries, etc. can still be to blame in many toys and other products. While many of these recalls may be featured on the news, many of these sold items are still in the hands of unsuspecting consumers. Stay updated on recalls reported by the Consumer Product Safety Commission by visiting SaferProducts.gov where you can sign-up to receive alerts, connect through social media, and even report a product you suspect may be unsafe. The NJ Coalition for Prevention also has product recall notices available in PDF format. E-mail us at prevention@arcnj.org for more information.

Join Our Network

Become a member of our network. E-mail your contact information to prevention@arcnj.org. You will receive our bimonthly e-newsletter and other exciting information from the NJ Coalition for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities.

Upcoming Prevention Events!

Event: Walk for Thought

Date: October 1, 2011 at 9am

Location: Mercer County Park in West Windsor, NJ & Saddle River County Park in Paramus, NJ

Description: This event will help to raise awareness and support brain injury victims. Event to include games, prizes, picnic lunch and a 10am walk.

Registration: Online at www.bianj.org

Event: Health Fair at Newark Extended Care Facility

Date: September, 18, 2011 from 11am-4pm

Location: 65 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

Description: Free Health Screenings, Food, Raffles

Event: Using Best Practice to Improve Obstetrical Outcomes

Date: October 26, 2011 from 7:30am-2:45pm

Location: Somerset Medical Center Fuld Auditorium, 110 Rehill Avenue, Somerville, NJ

Description: The purpose of this continuing education program is to increase participants' knowledge of best practice as it relates to complex obstetric issues. This workshop is intended for practicing nurses and can provide 5.25 contact hours.

Registration: Submit registration form, can be printed out at <http://www.cnjmchc.org/images/stories/PDFs/somerset102611.pdf>

Social Media Highlight

Join us on the web and help to continue to spread the prevention message.

Follow us on Twitter at [ThinkPrevention](https://twitter.com/ThinkPrevention)

Like us on Facebook at [NJ Coalition for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities](https://www.facebook.com/NJCoalitionforPreventionofDevelopmentalDisabilities)