

Improving Infant Health

A Low Birthweight Prevention Initiative

April 2014



Volume 1

What is Low Birthweight?

Low birthweight (LBW) is defined as birth weight under 5.5 pounds. LBW babies are more likely to die in the first year of life and suffer from chronic health conditions, like asthma and high blood pressure, as well as compromised cognitive development. Delays often persist into adulthood, with lower birthweight individuals scoring lower on IQ tests at age 18, attaining less education, and earning less income than their peers.

In 2012, about 1 in every 12 children born in the U.S. was LBW. Slightly over half of LBW is attributable to preterm delivery. In 2012, 13.2 percent of Non-Hispanic Black babies were born with LBW compared to 7.0 percent of Non-Hispanic White babies and Hispanic babies.

What are the risk factors for Low Birthweight babies?



Cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption

History of infertility or a previous LBW baby

Lack of adequate prenatal care

Maternal education less than high school

Teen mother or mother over 35

Low family income / unmarried mother

Cocaine and other drug use during pregnancy

Multiple births

Low maternal pre-pregnancy weight (low BMI)

Maternal stress / physical harm or injury

Closely spaced pregnancies

Total pregnancy weight gain less than 22 pounds or poor nutrition

Sexually transmitted diseases or other infections

Maternal hypertension or diabetes

Physical abnormalities or anomalies

Occupational and environmental exposures

Important numbers to know

District 4 Public Health WIC Call Center

1-866-636-7942

Georgia Quitline 1-877-270-STOP

How do you prevent LBW?

- Have a fertility plan to reduce unwanted pregnancies
- Space pregnancies a minimum of 18 to 23 months apart
- Practice healthy preconception behaviors
- Identify pregnancies early and get early and regular prenatal care
- Stop smoking
- Reduce use of illicit or prescription drugs
- Eat healthy food and have appropriate weight gain during pregnancy
- Be screened during pregnancy for medical conditions such as infections or physical abnormalities

Upcoming Events

April 17th – Spalding County Healthy Children Conference

April 22nd – Healthy Child Care America Webinar; learn more at http://gafcp.org/communicate/news/healthy_child_care_america

For more information on the Low Birthweight Initiative in your community, please contact:

Heard County
P.O. Box 92
Franklin, GA 30217
heardcountylowbirthweight@gmail.com
www.heard.gafcp.org

(706) 302-9776

Lamar County
118 Academy Dr.
Barnesville, GA 30204
lamarlbwinitiative@yahoo.com
www.facebook.com/LamarCoSteps
www.lamar.gafcp.org
(770) 358-1483

Spalding County
P.O. Box 701
Griffin, GA 30224
spaldingcollaborative@gmail.com
www.spalding.gafcp.org

(678) 764-6297

For more information about Georgia's Low Birthweight Initiative, go to www.gafcp.org/count/LBW.