

Preventing Birth Injuries: A Practical Guide for Adolescents

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Your Health Today Protects Your Baby Tomorrow



Many adolescents dream of having healthy families in the future. One of the best gifts you can give your future child is to prepare yourself long before pregnancy. Birth injuries are injuries that occur to a baby or mother during pregnancy, labor, or delivery. While not all birth injuries can be prevented, many can be avoided through healthy choices, proper medical care, and informed decision-making.

Whether you are planning to become a parent someday or simply learning about reproductive health, understanding how to prevent birth injuries is an important life skill.

What Are Birth Injuries?

Birth injuries are physical injuries that happen to a baby during labor or delivery. They may include broken bones, nerve damage, lack of oxygen to the brain, or injuries caused by difficult childbirth. Mothers can also suffer serious injuries such as heavy bleeding, tears, or infections. Many of these problems can be reduced through proper healthcare and healthy habits.

Practical Ways Adolescents Can Help Prevent Birth Injuries

Delay Pregnancy Until Your Body Is Fully Mature

Teenage pregnancy increases the risk of complications because a young mother's body may not be fully developed for childbirth. Waiting until adulthood allows the body to mature, reducing the chances of difficult labor and birth injuries.

What you can do:

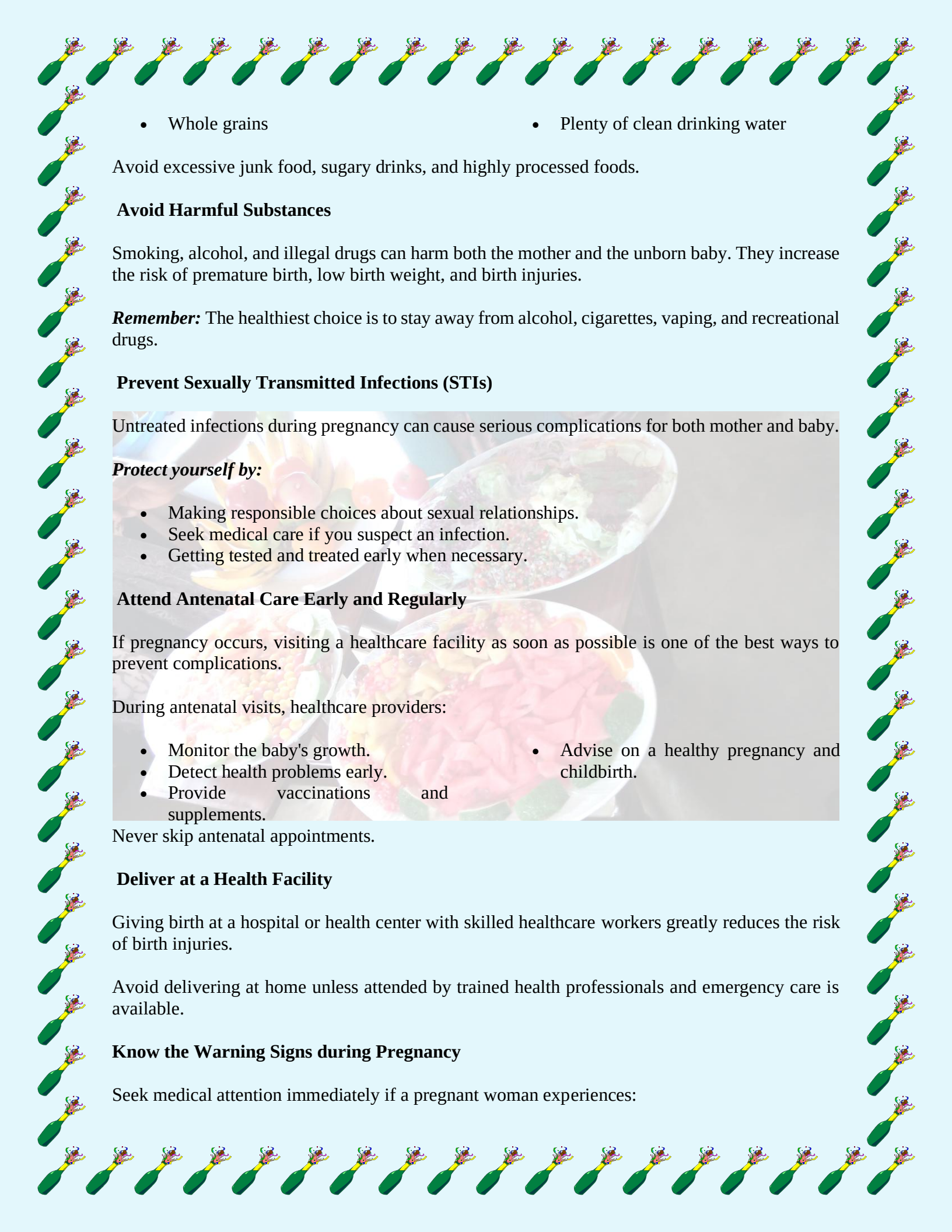
- Focus on your education and personal goals.
- Avoid peer pressure to engage in early sexual activity.
- Learn about responsible relationships and reproductive health.

Eat a Healthy Diet

Good nutrition helps the body grow properly and prepares future mothers for healthy pregnancies.

Choose foods such as:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Beans, peas, and lentils
- Eggs, fish, and lean meat
- Milk and other dairy products

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- Whole grains

- Plenty of clean drinking water

Avoid excessive junk food, sugary drinks, and highly processed foods.

Avoid Harmful Substances

Smoking, alcohol, and illegal drugs can harm both the mother and the unborn baby. They increase the risk of premature birth, low birth weight, and birth injuries.

Remember: The healthiest choice is to stay away from alcohol, cigarettes, vaping, and recreational drugs.

Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Untreated infections during pregnancy can cause serious complications for both mother and baby.

Protect yourself by:

- Making responsible choices about sexual relationships.
- Seek medical care if you suspect an infection.
- Getting tested and treated early when necessary.

Attend Antenatal Care Early and Regularly

If pregnancy occurs, visiting a healthcare facility as soon as possible is one of the best ways to prevent complications.

During antenatal visits, healthcare providers:

- Monitor the baby's growth.
- Detect health problems early.
- Provide vaccinations and supplements.
- Advise on a healthy pregnancy and childbirth.

Never skip antenatal appointments.

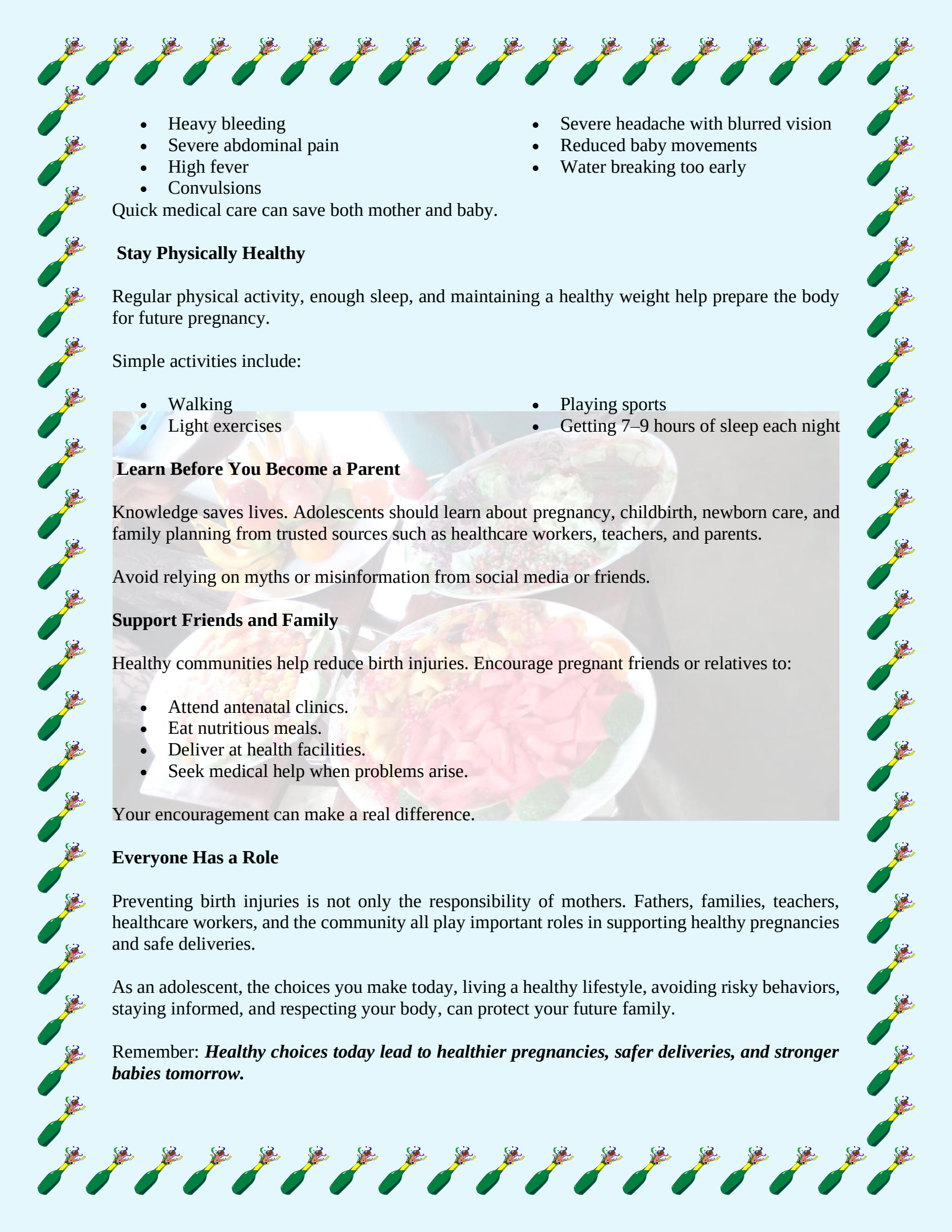
Deliver at a Health Facility

Giving birth at a hospital or health center with skilled healthcare workers greatly reduces the risk of birth injuries.

Avoid delivering at home unless attended by trained health professionals and emergency care is available.

Know the Warning Signs during Pregnancy

Seek medical attention immediately if a pregnant woman experiences:

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- Heavy bleeding
 - Severe abdominal pain
 - High fever
 - Convulsions

- Severe headache with blurred vision
- Reduced baby movements
- Water breaking too early

Quick medical care can save both mother and baby.

Stay Physically Healthy

Regular physical activity, enough sleep, and maintaining a healthy weight help prepare the body for future pregnancy.

Simple activities include:

- Walking
- Light exercises
- Playing sports
- Getting 7–9 hours of sleep each night

Learn Before You Become a Parent

Knowledge saves lives. Adolescents should learn about pregnancy, childbirth, newborn care, and family planning from trusted sources such as healthcare workers, teachers, and parents.

Avoid relying on myths or misinformation from social media or friends.

Support Friends and Family

Healthy communities help reduce birth injuries. Encourage pregnant friends or relatives to:

- Attend antenatal clinics.
- Eat nutritious meals.
- Deliver at health facilities.
- Seek medical help when problems arise.

Your encouragement can make a real difference.

Everyone Has a Role

Preventing birth injuries is not only the responsibility of mothers. Fathers, families, teachers, healthcare workers, and the community all play important roles in supporting healthy pregnancies and safe deliveries.

As an adolescent, the choices you make today, living a healthy lifestyle, avoiding risky behaviors, staying informed, and respecting your body, can protect your future family.

Remember: ***Healthy choices today lead to healthier pregnancies, safer deliveries, and stronger babies tomorrow.***

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