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Program helps pregnant smokers in Gratiot County kick the habit

Ithaca- Quitting smoking can be incredibly difficult, but we know that with the right support, one can be successful and improve their health. When a pregnant woman quits, she improves not only her health, but the health of her unborn baby as well.

Women who smoke cigarettes during pregnancy place themselves and their babies at risk for a variety of health problems, like miscarriage, placenta complications, pre-eclampsia and premature delivery. Babies born to women who smoke are at risk for birth defects like cleft palate, low birth weight, respiratory problems, learning disabilities, and sudden infant death syndrome.

In Gratiot County, 20% of pregnant women smoke, a rate that exceeds the State of Michigan rate of 14%. Women may want to quit but not sure where to go for help. Fortunately, Mid-Michigan District Health Department now offers a smoking cessation program available to pregnant women in Gratiot County. The SCRIPT (Smoking Cessation and Reduction in Pregnancy Treatment) program is an evidence-based smoking cessation program, made available through the Society of Public Health Educators. It is supported by the Region 5 Perinatal Quality Collaborative and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which support initiatives that promote maternal and infant health.

Smoking Cessation and Reduction in Pregnancy Treatment counseling includes a breath test that produces a carbon monoxide score, helping the client to recognize the impact of smoking on her health. The client also receives an informational guidebook and video instruction on how she can gain the skills and confidence to quit. A follow-up appointment with a cessation specialist provides support in staying tobacco free.

For those women who seek other options in quitting, there are resources available by phone, online and through social media. The Michigan Tobacco Quitline, at 1-800-QUIT-NOW, offers quit coach counseling specifically for pregnant women, including incentives for those who complete the program. A variety of online, chat, and text programs are also available by visiting www.women.smokefree.gov.

Quitting smoking is difficult, but it is one of the best ways a woman can protect herself and her baby. For more information, or to make a referral, contact Cheryl Thelen, Health Educator for the Mid-Michigan District Health Department, at 989-831-3634 or cthelen@mmdhd.org.

Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes

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