

# Neural Tube Defects

## IN SOUTH CAROLINA

### What are neural tube defects?

**Neural tube defects** (NTDs) are severe birth defects of the central nervous system that originate in the early stages of pregnancy when the neural tube fails to close completely.

The two most common NTDs are **spina bifida** and **anencephaly**.



**Spina bifida** is when a baby's spine and spinal cord does not develop properly.



**Anencephaly** is when a baby is born without parts of the brain and skull.

*Images courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.*

### How common are NTDs in South Carolina?

NTDs occur in an average of 33 pregnancies each year in South Carolina.

Certain risk factors may increase the risk of NTDs:

- Maternal age over 40
- Family history of NTDs
  - Maternal obesity
- Taking certain medications, such as opioids and anti-seizure medications

For more information scan the QR code:



[scdhec.gov/birthdefects](https://scdhec.gov/birthdefects)

Some NTDs may be prevented. Following the recommendations below may lower the risk:

Consume at least **400mcg of folic acid** each day.

**Control chronic conditions**, such as diabetes.

**Avoid harmful substances** during pregnancy.