Why Spacing between Pregnancies is a Healthy Choice

Waiting until the youngest child is two years old before becoming pregnant again is healthy for moms, babies, and families. Research has shown that waiting this period of time between births is usually best for the following reasons:

**The current baby will develop well because**
- the parents can give lots of attention to the baby, taking care of basic needs, and assisting with development tasks as the child grows.
- the mom will be able to continue breastfeeding and provide important nutrients.
- parents will have time to bond with the child.

**The mom will benefit because**
- she will have more energy and less stress.
- she will be less likely to have postpartum depression.
- her body will have time to replenish its nutritional stores before the next pregnancy.
- she will have less risk of complications with the next pregnancy, such as bleeding, preterm labor, uterine rupture, and other complications.
- she will have time to resolve any health problems and follow good habits such as healthy eating, exercising, taking vitamins, staying away from chemicals and hazardous materials, and stopping smoking, before beginning the next pregnancy.

**The family will benefit because**
- parents will have more time to bond with each child.
- families will have time to be together and for activities other than infant care.
- parents will have more time for each other.
- families will have less pressure on finances.

**The next baby will benefit because**
- there is less risk of preterm birth (before 37 weeks) if pregnancies are spaced at least two years apart. Babies that are premature are at risk for breathing problems, mental disabilities, vision and hearing loss, and even death.
- the baby is more likely to be a healthy weight at birth. Problems associated with low birth weight include heart defects, breathing problems, bleeding in the brain and intestinal complications, as well as mental disabilities and vision loss.
- parents will have more time to devote to each child.

This document is available online at [http://www.wvperinatal.org/unplanned_preg.htm](http://www.wvperinatal.org/unplanned_preg.htm). For more information, please refer to the following sources:


West Virginia Perinatal Partnership 2009
Central Advisory Council

Chair
Michael Stitely, MD, Faculty and Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, WVU School of Medicine, Morgantown

Members
- Luis Bracero, MD, Professor and Director of Maternal/Fetal Medicine, Women and Children’s Hospital, Charleston
- David Butler, DO, West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, Lewisburg
- Martha Carter, CNM, CEO, FamilyCare Health Center, Scott Depot
- Sonia Chambers, Chairwoman, WV Health Care Authority, Charleston
- Ted Cheatham, Director, Public Employees Insurance Agency, Charleston
- Brenda Dawley, MD, Vice-Chair, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, WV Chapter, Huntington
- Renee Domanico, MD, Department of Pediatrics, Marshall University, Huntington
- Kimberly Farry, MD, OB/GYN, Buckhannon
- Janet Graeber, MD, Department of Pediatrics, West Virginia University, Morgantown
- Lyn Haley, CNM, Chair, West Virginia Section, American College of Nurse-Midwives, Fayetteville
- Fernando Indacochea, MD, Chair, American Academy of Pediatrics – West Virginia Chapter, Petersburg
- C.H. Mitch Jacques, MD, PhD Dean, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences, WVU Eastern Division, Martinsburg
- Stefan Maxwell, MD, MFM, CAMC, Women and Children’s Hospital, Charleston
- Marsha Morris, RN, Esq., Commissioner, WVDHHR, Office of Medical Services, Charleston
- Pat Moore Moss, MSW, Office Director, Maternal, Child, and Family Health, WV DHHR, Charleston
- Robert C. Nerhood, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Marshall University, Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, Huntington
- Angelita Nixon, CNM, Chair: American College of Nurse Midwives - West Virginia Section, Scott Depot
- Mark Polak MD, Associate Professor and Director of Neonatology, Department of Pediatrics, WVU Dept of Pediatrics, Morgantown
- Shauna Popson, RN, PhD, School of Nursing, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon
- Sam Roberts, MD, Board Member and representing the West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians (WV AAFP), Rural Family Practice, Elkins
- Bassam Shamma, MD, OB/GYN, Thomas Hospital, South Charleston
- Susan Tomblin, RN, NICU, Cabell Huntington Hospital, Huntington
- Nancy J. Tolliver, RN, MSIR, Director, WV Perinatal Partnership
- Ann Dacey, RN, Nurse Coordinator, WV Perinatal Partnership

See http://www.wyperinatal.org for more information about the WV Perinatal Partnership