



MAY 2026 — NATIONAL MATERNAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Maternal Health: Protecting Mothers, Building Healthier Families



Every mother deserves a safe pregnancy, a supported birth, and a healthy recovery. This month we focus on what every family in our community needs to know — and the resources available right here in New Jersey.

32.9

U.S. maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (2021 peak)

3x

Higher maternal mortality risk for Black women vs. White women

84%

Of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. are preventable (CDC)

From our team — May is recognized nationally as Maternal Health Awareness Month and as Maternal Mental Health Month. The United States continues to face one of the highest maternal mortality rates among high-income countries, and the burden falls hardest on Black, immigrant, and uninsured mothers.

The good news: most pregnancy-related complications are preventable when families know the warning signs, attend prenatal visits, and have a clear plan for postpartum recovery. This issue is built to give you that foundation — in plain language, with action steps, and with resources you can call today.

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What Is Maternal Health?

Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period — the year following delivery. It is not only about surviving childbirth; it is about thriving physically and emotionally through every stage of motherhood. Maternal health is shaped by access to care, nutrition, mental health support, safe housing, and trusted relationships with providers who listen.

Three critical windows define maternal care:

PRENATAL

From conception through birth. Regular checkups, screenings, nutrition, and education on warning signs.

LABOR & DELIVERY

The hours and days surrounding birth. Skilled support, informed consent, and culturally respectful care matter most here.

POSTPARTUM

The 12 months after birth. Most maternal deaths happen in this window. Mental health, recovery, and follow-up are essential.