

Obesity in Pregnancy and a Lifetime of Better Nutrition

By Joe Kotsch, Perinatal Consultant

Obesity in pregnancy has been linked to any variety of risks according to results from several recent studies. Obese women:

- Are at an increased risk of infertility and pregnancy-related complications such as hypertension, gestational diabetes and blood clots
- More often require cesarean sections
- Have prenatal care costs that are often much higher than for women of normal weight (one study measured 16 times higher costs)
- Should be encouraged to lose weight before pregnancy, but not during pregnancy due to potential nutritional risks for mothers and infants in utero
- Who use surgical weight loss methods should wait to become pregnant until weight loss related to the surgery has leveled off.

Obesity in pregnancy has been linked to an increased risk in neural tube defects (estimated at two in 1,000 live births for spina bifida) about two times greater than that of normal weight women. Although folic acid supplementation has been shown to decrease the risk for neural tube defects, the two-fold difference persists between obese women and normal weight women with adequate intake of folic acid.

Since greater health risks exist for both mothers and infants, it would seem advisable for health care providers to identify and discuss any weight issues with women before, during and after pregnancy. In June 2009, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) issued a practice bulletin for obstetricians and gynecologists on managing obesity in pregnancy.

More than 90 million Americans are affected by chronic diseases and conditions that compromise their quality of life and well-being. Since overweight and obesity, leading risk factors for diabetes and other chronic diseases, are now very commonplace it seems individuals should be encouraged by health care practitioners to make special efforts to achieve a normal weight. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has provided some recommendations for individuals to achieve a normal weight:

- Get enough nutrient-rich foods
- Limit nutrient-poor foods
- Achieve a proper balance between dietary intake and physical activity

Additional information on obesity in pregnancy can be found at www.marchofdimes.com/aboutus/10651_12183.asp.

Reducing the Risk of SIDS in Child Care

By Brenda Nickel, Child and School Nurse Consultant



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Healthy Child Care America is pleased to announce the release of a new online module on Reducing the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in Child Care. Based off of the AAP Reducing the Risk of SIDS in Child Care Speakers Kit, this FREE course is designed to educate everyone who cares for babies, including child care providers, health care professionals, parents, grandparents and relatives.

In one hour, participants will learn how to create a safe sleep environment to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related deaths. With an easy-to-use format, this course is available 24/7 from your home or office computer. Child care providers will receive a certificate of completion for 1.0 contact hour. Health care professionals can also receive credit.

For instructions on how to access this FREE course, visit www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDSmoduleflyer.pdf. Feel free to disseminate this flyer to anyone who cares for infants!

For more information and materials on how to reduce the risk of SIDS, visit www.healthychildcare.org/sids.html.

The Reducing the Risk of SIDS in Child Care online module is supported by Grant No. U46MC04436 from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Bureau and the Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, to the AAP.

Migraines and Pregnancy

By Ileen Meyer, Director, Children & Families Section

A migraine is a very painful type of headache. People who get migraines often describe the pain as pulsing or throbbing in one area of the head. During migraines, people are very sensitive to light and sound. They may also become nauseated and vomit. The occurrence of migraines is about three times greater for women than men.

Some people can tell when they are about to have a migraine because they see flashing lights or zigzag lines or they temporarily lose their vision. Some known migraine triggers are:

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Lack of food or sleep
- Exposure to light
- Hormonal changes (in women)

Some women may experience a migraine for the first time during pregnancy, whereas previous migraine sufferers may find that their migraines become better, worse or not change as a result from pregnancy.

The March of Dimes provides some specific suggestions for helping alleviate migraines during pregnancy. They recommend that women who suffer a migraine for the first time during pregnancy, as well as women with unusual migraine symptoms, contact their health care providers to rule out the possibility of more serious conditions such as preeclampsia, infection or perhaps an internal injury from a fall.

For more information visit www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/159_15289.asp.

Text4baby Campaign



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“Text4baby is a free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health. An educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), text4baby provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE in Spanish) will receive free SMS text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby’s date of birth.

Text4baby is made possible through a broad, public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Founding partners are HMHB, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation and WPP. Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor, and premier sponsors include Well-Point, Pfizer and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Department of Health and Human Services. The mobile health platform is provided by Voxiva and free messaging services are generously provided by participating wireless service providers. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems and The George Washington University.”

Information courtesy of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. For more information visit www.text4baby.org.