



# Perinatal e-News

**LA BEST BABIES NETWORK**  
Healthy Babies. Our Future.  
Presented by First 5 LA



In Issue #18

December 11, 2007

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## National Hand Washing Awareness Week, December 2-8

An estimated 2 million patients get an infection in U.S. hospitals each year, and approximately 90,000 die as a result of their infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Proper hand washing is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs.

In their effort to raise awareness on the importance of hand washing and to encourage proper hand washing, Henry the Hand Foundation observed the week of **December 2-8, as National Hand Washing Awareness Week.**

For more information on proper hand-washing techniques, visit [www.henrythehand.com/](http://www.henrythehand.com/)

For the CDC's guidelines on proper hand hygiene in a medical setting, visit [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5116.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5116.pdf)

## Web Site Provides Information on Dental Care for Pregnant Women

Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) has launched a new section on their Web site with resources on dental care for pregnant women. Research shows that periodontal disease is linked to low birthweight, preterm birth and preeclampsia (high blood pressure that is accompanied by protein in the urine) during pregnancy.

The MCHA Web site provides:

- comprehensive information about state dental benefits for pregnant women
- links to articles and abstracts about pregnancy and dental disease
- a poster promoting dental care for pregnant women (for a \$10.00 suggested donation)

Pregnant women who have periodontal disease may be seven times more likely to have a baby born too early or too small. LA Best Babies Network recommends that healthcare

providers assess pregnant women for periodontal disease and, if necessary, provide a referral for dental care.

Learn more

Visit MCHA's Web site on [Dental Care for Pregnant Women](#).

Download order form for the dental care for pregnant women poster at [www.mchaccess.org/pdfs/legislation/Dental%20Poster%20Order%20Form.pdf](http://www.mchaccess.org/pdfs/legislation/Dental%20Poster%20Order%20Form.pdf)

### U.S. Maternal Mortality Rates on the Rise

The U.S. maternal mortality rate rose to 13 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2004, according to a report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics. By comparison, in 2003, the maternal mortality rate was 12 deaths per 100,000.

The CDC reports a total of 540 pregnancy-related deaths in 2004, 45 more deaths than in 2003. Some factors affecting the maternal mortality rate include:

- Caesarean sections - Accounting for 29% of births, C-sections can cause excessive bleeding that may lead to death.
- Obesity - Overweight women experience complications such as diabetes that can affect pregnancy outcomes.
- Race - The maternal mortality rate among African-American women is three times greater than that of Caucasian women.
- Quality of care - Approximately 40% of maternal deaths could have been prevented with appropriate prenatal care.
- Age - Women that delay childbirth tend to experience pregnancy complications.

Learn more

View the CDC's report "[Deaths: Final Data for 2004](#)"

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Visit our Web [News & Events](#) section.

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**We invite you to contribute story ideas and event listings for our consideration in *Perinatal e-News*. To**

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