



Perinatal e-News

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



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- **First 5 California Kit Proves to be Effective**
- **California Diabetes Epidemic Growing**
- **Gestational Diabetes Associated with Childhood Obesity**

First 5 California 'Kit for New Parents' Proves to be Effective

A health and parenting education kit distributed by First 5 California proves to be an effective tool for parents, according to a three-year study published in the October 2007 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

The comprehensive parenting resource, known as the "Kit for New Parents," includes a DVD, a parents guide to their baby's developmental milestones and other materials.

In the study, the researchers compared 462 mothers who received the kit with 1,011 mothers from other prenatal and postnatal programs. Within 2 months of receiving the kit:

- 87% of mothers reported using the kit
- 95% of Spanish-speaking mothers used the kit, compared to 82% among English-speaking mothers.
- 53% of the mothers reported that their partners used the kit
- 94% of mothers said the kit was helpful
- 48% of mothers reported having changed their thinking or having done something different because of the kit.

Overall, the knowledge gains were significant especially among Spanish-speaking mothers who received the kit.

The kit provides parents with useful information on prenatal care; child safety, nutrition and health care; early childhood learning and development; childcare; and access to services. The kit, which is distributed by healthcare providers and via a toll-free phone number, is free of charge and available in English, Spanish and Asian languages.

Research shows that investing in interventions during the prenatal and infancy period promotes a child's long-term health and development. As part of its vision to optimize early development of children in L.A. County, LA Best Babies Network will coordinate the implementation of a pilot family-engagement strategy that will build on the Healthy Births Initiative. The pilot program, which is a component of First 5 LA's "Prenatal through Three" Focus Area, will provide outreach and education to families, beginning during the prenatal period and extending into the first year of life.

To order a First 5 California "Kit for New Parents:"
Expectant parents, as well as perinatal caregivers and
advocates residing in California can order a free kit* by calling:
1-800-543-7025 (English)
1-800-506-4667 (Spanish)
*One kit per address

To download a flyer for families about the kit, visit,
<http://simplesend.com/clientimages/first5la/KitFactSheet07b.pdf>

California Diabetes Epidemic Growing

In 2005, 1.8 million adults in California were diagnosed with diabetes, up from 1.5 million in 2001, according to a study by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. The report found that diabetes is rising among most racial and ethnic groups. The risk of developing type 2 diabetes continues to rise due to the obesity epidemic.

To prevent diabetes, the authors of the study recommend promoting environments that encourage a healthy diet and regular physical activity. To reduce complications of diabetes, the authors recommend promoting adequate access to care and promoting management of diabetes.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle and diabetes management is crucial for the estimated 1.85 million U.S. women of childbearing age who have diabetes. A woman who manages her diabetes before pregnancy will reduce the risk of birth defects, miscarriage, premature birth and other newborn complications. "A mom with uncontrolled diabetes has a 25% risk or more of having a baby with a major congenital abnormality, just in those very first weeks of pregnancy," says Carolina Reyes, MD, executive director of LA Best Babies Network. "But if her blood sugar can be well controlled, those risks can be lowered almost to the baseline."

For women diagnosed with gestational diabetes, LA Best Babies Network recommends that healthcare providers screen for type 2 diabetes in the postpartum period and repeat the test annually. In the postpartum period and beyond, the Network recommends that healthcare providers work with women to develop an appropriate exercise plan, control blood sugar levels and maintain a healthy weight.

Weight gain patterns before, during and after pregnancy are strongly correlated with reproductive risks, as well as risks for the development of chronic diseases, such as diabetes. In our effort to promote a healthy weight among women of reproductive age, the Network's Healthy Births Care Quality Collaborative is addressing obesity and diabetes through interventions before, during and beyond pregnancy.

Learn more

For more information on diabetes during pregnancy, view LA Best Babies Network's brief on "[Gestational Diabetes](#)."

View the report on California's diabetes epidemic, "[Diabetes: The Growing Epidemic](#)."

Gestational Diabetes Associated with Increased Risk of Childhood Obesity

Women with untreated gestational diabetes may increase the risk of their children becoming overweight or obese at the age of 5 to 7, according to a report in the September 2007 issue of *Diabetes Care*.

Researchers measured the blood sugar levels of 9,439 pregnant women and examined their children at the age of 5 to 7. The report compared children whose mothers had gestational diabetes with children whose mothers had normal blood sugar levels during pregnancy. The report found that:

- Children born to women who had untreated gestational diabetes were 89% more likely to be overweight and 82% more likely to be obese by the age of 5 to 7.
- Children born to women who were treated for gestational diabetes had the same risk for childhood obesity.

Gestational diabetes, which usually develops after the first trimester, affects about 8% of women in the U.S. each year. LA Best Babies Network recommends that healthcare providers follow the international guidelines on GDM (gestational diabetes mellitus) and Sweet Success guidelines which states that women at high risk for diabetes should be tested at the first prenatal visit. Women who are not considered high risk should be screened for diabetes between 24-26 weeks gestation. Postpartum consultation should include counseling patients about their risks of adult onset diabetes and testing with a 75 gram glucose tolerance test (a blood test used to diagnose blood sugar levels).

Learn more

View the Network's brief "[Gestational Diabetes](#)."

[See our Web News & Events](#) section for additional

events

We invite you to contribute story ideas and event listings for our consideration in *Perinatal e-News*. To submit items please e-mail contact@labestbabies.org.

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