

CDC-Recommended Non-Profit Launches “MotherToBaby CA” In Time for Mother’s Day

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Experts Provide Free Answers about Medications and More during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

As Mother's Day approaches, the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine announces MotherToBaby CA, the new name of its free, statewide counseling service that connects experts in the field of birth defects research with moms-to-be and the general public. MotherToBaby CA was formerly known as the California Teratogen Information Service (CTIS) Pregnancy Health Information Line and is housed at the Center for the Promotion of Maternal Health and Infant Development, a division of UC San Diego and Rady Children's Hospital.



MotherToBaby CA is an affiliate of the international non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), a prestigious professional society that supports and contributes to worldwide initiatives for teratology education and research. MotherToBaby affiliates and OTIS, which are suggested resources by many agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are dedicated to providing evidence-based information to mothers, health care professionals, and the general public about medications and other exposures during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

“In addition to my primary health care provider, MotherToBaby experts offered me an added layer of support by giving me an individualized risk assessment,” said Pamela Salgado, a San Diego

resident who called the service when she was thinking about getting pregnant. She had questions about the safety of a long-term medication she was taking and its potential risks during pregnancy. "Afterwards, I felt informed and empowered to make smart decisions about my health. Today, I have a healthy three-year-old boy."

All North Americans can be connected with MotherToBaby experts toll free through its phone counseling service at 866-626-6847.

"In a day and age where reliable information about the risks of medications, alcohol, chemicals, beauty products and other exposures during pregnancy or while breastfeeding is hard to find, especially online, we realized how important it was to make sure women and health care providers knew that experts up-to-date on the most cutting edge research were readily available to them," explained Kenneth Lyons Jones, MD, a professor at UC San Diego and the current MotherToBaby CA medical director. Jones was the first researcher to identify Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in 1973. "What is passed from mother to baby is exactly what we educate the public about, which is why we strongly believe MotherToBaby and the service it represents will resonate well with the general public."

Jones further explains the need for this sort of counseling since approximately 50 percent of women report taking at least one medication during pregnancy. "The average woman doesn't find out she's pregnant until she's five or six weeks along," said Jones. "That means a woman could have been consuming alcohol or taking medications during that time without knowing she's pregnant. She then finds herself deeply concerned about what it might mean for her developing baby."

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Interviews in Spanish can be arranged.

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