

ISSUE
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Empowerment

NEWSLETTER

community spotlight

We are honored to collaborate with the March of Dimes and hope you will take full advantage of the resources they offer. Let us know who you'd like to hear from next! *continued on page 2*

ask the practitioner

What should I know?" This is probably one of the most important questions you should ask yourself before the birth of your child. Many women go from conception to... *continued on page 2*

resources for you

Join us for our inaugural kickoff of the South Texas Resource Guide. We will provide this directory free to the public in June 2008 via a pdf download from the www.texasbirth.org web site. *continued on page 4*



South Texas Birth and Women's Health Collaborative

Welcome to the Collaborative!

Welcome to the very first edition of our quarterly newsletter. Inside, we hope to provide you with informative articles on health and wellness, as well as our progress towards the development of an independent, freestanding birth center and wellness campus in the San Antonio area.



We've been doing our best to keep up with the enormous number of volunteers that have stepped forward since our *Business of Being Born* movie screenings in late January. However, if we've missed your call or e-mail, please speak up. We'd love to hear from you and have your help.

Due to an overwhelming need in the community, we have decided to launch a pregnancy and women's health resource guide for the South Texas area. Practitioners and organizations that would like to be included should go to www.texasbirth.org for more information and to sign up. The deadline for registering is May 31, 2008, so we can have the guide available online FREE of charge in late June.

Finally, the Collaborative is making great strides in building our online learning library and community advisory panels. If you would like to learn more about ways in which you can support these efforts, e-mail us at info@texasbirth.org. You can also help shape the vision of the birth center and campus, by joining us at one of our upcoming Collaborate-Innovate luncheons. It's your chance to meet the board, share your vision and help shape the future of our community.



Ask the Practitioner | what should I know?

“What should I know?” This is probably one of the most important questions you should ask yourself before the birth of your child. Many women go from conception to birth without ever having the benefit of information that could significantly impact their decisions on how to maximize their opportunity for having a healthy baby. Birth is, and should be, a wonderful and happy experience, but making it a beautiful event starts well before the actual birth.

This may sound simplistic, but you have to work to have a healthy baby. You have to invest the time and the effort to know what to expect, what to ask, and when to ask it. Many women ride through their pregnancy on a wave of other people’s advice, and experiences, doctors’ assurances, and even speculations and old wives’ tales. Some of that information is helpful, and some not. Some of it can be useful and some can be harmful. There should be some place you can go for knowledgeable sources and for unbiased information you can trust about your birth decisions and birthing options.

That place is coming. The San Antonio South Texas Birth and Women’s Health Collaborative (the Collaborative) will help you become informed about the decisions that affect the birth of your child. We know that birth is stressful and confusing, its even more so when you have doubts about whether you are personally doing the right things for your baby’s health. This starts with choosing a healthcare provider. Do you know your medical history? Do you know pertinent information about your doctor, midwife, hospital or birth

center? Have you thought about interventions and what you will allow and what you won’t?

Our goal at the Collaborative is to help you have a healthy birth on your terms. Its your baby and your body. Read. Ask. Learn. Invest yourself in the health of your baby, and count on the Collaborative to help.

community spotlight

Each quarter we will feature a special organization in the community that is helping to better the lives of mothers and babies. We are honored to collaborate with the March of Dimes and hope you will take full advantage of the resources they offer. Let us know who you’d like to hear from next!

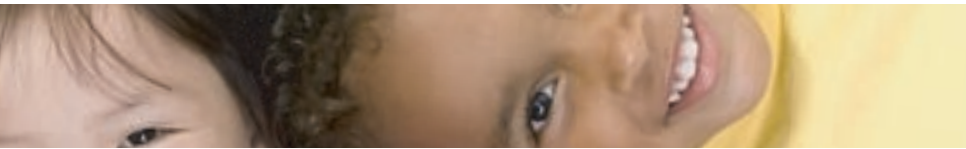
Welcome to the New March of Dimes!

By Angela Wentink, Communications Coordinator, March of Dimes



Most everyone has heard of the March of Dimes and knows that we work to improve the health of all babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. What you may not know is that our new Web site, <http://marchofdimes.com/baby> offers a ton of resources for savvy moms-to-be, including:

- **Text messaging:** The March of Dimes connects with expectant moms at their convenience by sending out daily text messages in English and Spanish with a healthy pregnancy tip.
- **Answers to YOUR questions by e-mail:** Trained health information specialists in the March of Dimes Pregnancy and Newborn Health Education Center answer questions in both English and Spanish via e-mail on pregnancy health and nutrition, newborn screening, complications and risks, and many other topics.
- **Podcasts:** Pregnancy and baby health information are available “on demand” thanks to the March of Dimes Podcast series hosted by award-winning journalist and March of Dimes volunteer Jane Clayson.
- **Online scrapbooking:** “Every Baby Has a Story” is an integrated media project celebrating babies. Visitors can create a virtual scrapbook containing photos and videos about their baby that can be shared via e-mail or on social networking sites.



Event Calendar

- **Pre-conception resources:** *9 Questions To Help You Get Your 9 Months:* What questions should every woman who is thinking about having a baby ask her health care provider before she gets pregnant? The March of Dimes provides moms with a preconception checklist and other valuable resources.
- **Newborn screening information:** The March of Dimes Web site is one of the only places that moms can find up-to-date information about which newborn screening tests are routinely provided by their state. This is potentially life-saving information for a baby.

Folic Acid – Look for the New Healthy Pregnancy Seal

The March of Dimes has partnered with the Grains Food Foundation to create the Folic Acid for a Healthy Pregnancy Seal on foods, which will help women quickly identify foods that are rich in folic acid. Folic acid is a critical nutrient in preventing birth defects, and women of childbearing age are urged to consume 400 mcgs daily. This is not just another nutrient being hyped by the media. Since the FDA issued the mandate ten years ago for folic acid to be added to enriched flour, neural tube defects, including spina bifida, have declined by a whopping twenty-six percent.

San Antonio's Time to Shine

May 17, 2008, is your day to help support lifesaving research and educational programs aimed at helping moms have healthy babies. We have changed the name of our annual fundraiser, WalkAmerica, to "Walk for Babies" to make it clear to the public that our mission is about all babies, not just preemies. In San Antonio, March for Babies will take place on May 17, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. at Brackenridge Park.

In 2007, our city raised \$750,000, and we're sure 2008 will be no exception. Locally, funds raised by March for Babies support educational and community programs like Comenzando Bien – a culturally and linguistically appropriate prenatal curriculum geared to Hispanic women; and Centering Pregnancy – a group prenatal care model at Willford Hall Medical Center. Please register today at www.marchforbabies.org to help make these programs possible in 2009 and beyond.

For more information on the March of Dimes, please visit our Web sites at www.marchofdimes.org, nacersano.org (Spanish), or contact Angela Wentink at (210) 696-1030.

Special thanks to March of Dimes for contributing this story!

May

Pregnancy Awareness Month

17 - (Austin) Free parenting class

17 - (San Antonio) March for Babies 2008

31 - Resource Guide Submittals Due

June

4 - (San Antonio) Cloth Diapering Class

30 - Estimated delivery of Resource Guide

Visit www.texasbirth.org/events for additional details. The online calendar is a free service for the community - post your event today!

Your Nutrition

Food is a wonderful thing; and like so many other things about having a baby it's a wonderful thing that you need to know lots and lots about. Our nutrition article will be a regular staple (pardon the pun) of our newsletter. The Collaborative intends to provide the most accurate information we can on diets, nutrition, and food in general as it affects you and your baby. We'll try to answer questions like: *Should I take calcium? Yes. How much? About 1,000 mg/day. Do spicy foods induce labor? Maybe, but it hasn't been proven. What does folic acid actually do for my baby? Strong evidence suggests that taken properly it may reduce the chance of birth defects.*

Of course we'll answer in much more detail in the future and we'll generally provide references, but you get the idea. We'll also answer questions from readers that are submitted to our newsletter. Remember, the Collaborative is here for you, and we'd like you to make it your personal source of information for your healthy birth.



Intervention Explained

There are many legitimate reasons why some type of intervention may be necessary to ensure a healthy baby. Unfortunately, interventions are becoming an almost routine part of the birthing process. From electronic fetal monitoring to epidurals to caesarian births, the interventions are sometimes readily used while some impacts may not be fully understood. What affects the mother, necessarily affects the baby.

You do have options in how your birth progresses, and the best way to manage your birth is to understand the full impacts of what might be offered or recommended during the birthing process. Whether for pain relief or other medical concerns, you should know as much as possible about the courses of treatment recommended for you and your child. You may already be familiar with terms such as "augmentation," or "cascade of intervention" or "normal birth," but do you know what they mean and how they may affect both you and your baby? Are the decisions being made or recommended evidence-based?

The Collaborative strongly believes that regardless of whether you have a hospital, private medical office, home, or birth center delivery, evidence-based interventions are almost always the healthiest and safest option for your birth. The intervention section of our newsletter will try to explain the many sources of birth interventions. When and why they happen, and what you should know if intervention becomes necessary for the safety of you and your baby. As with everything else about our Collaborative, we're here for you and we will welcome your questions and do our best to use these pages to inform and educate, and help you achieve a safe, wonderful birth.

Reference Library

Websites

The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS)
<http://motherfriendly.org/>

Childbirth Connection
www.childbirthconnection.org/

National Women's Health Information Center (HHS)
www.4woman.gov/breastfeeding/

Books

Born in the USA

by Marsden Wagner, MD, MS

Birth as an American Rite of Passage

by Robbie Davis-Floyd, PhD



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special delivery
from the
**South Texas Birth
and Womens Health
Collaborative**

www.texasbirth.org

Resource Guide for South Texas

It's not too late, but time is running out...

We are in the midst of completing our first annual resource guide for South Texas. This directory will include practitioners and organizations that support healthy pregnancy, childbirth and women's wellness initiatives, and agree to support the principles of CIMS Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative www.motherfriendly.org/MFCI/.

List your organization or business today!

Go to www.texasbirth.org and reserve your listing today. Space is limited.

