

# MotherToBaby Hosts First-Ever World Birth Defects Day Facebook and Instagram Live Event March 3

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Join MotherToBaby and partner organizations around the world for a special World Birth Defects Day Facebook and Instagram Live Chat March 3 at 10a PT/1p ET.

How to participate: Follow @MotherToBaby on **Facebook** or @mothertobabyotis on **Instagram** (or both). You might get a notification from Facebook or Instagram that the MotherToBaby page you follow is going live at the live broadcast start time. Alternatively, just go to MotherToBaby's profile on either Facebook or Instagram at the broadcast start time (10a PT/1p ET). You can also get a reminder for the live event by clicking "going" on the Facebook event created for it: <https://www.facebook.com/events/213655426471361/>

On Facebook, the live video should just be playing at the top of MotherToBaby's page. On Instagram, you will see a small badge around the story circles at the top of the screen that says "live." Tap to enter the live stream. The person streaming will know that you are tuning in.

With either platform, once you are watching the live stream, you can comment or ask questions, the same way you'd engage with a non-live post. MotherToBaby's president, Christina Chambers, PhD will be joined by Drs. Kenneth Lyons Jones, MD and Miguel Del Campo, MD to answer questions in English and Spanish about birth defects.

**Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.mothertobaby.org).**

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We know pregnant women are concerned about the newly described coronavirus. MotherToBaby and the CDC are monitoring the situation and will educate people if there is new evidence about a danger from a coronavirus infection that would be specific to the unborn baby. You can find more information on your common questions about the coronavirus through our fact sheet at: <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/covid-19/>. In the meantime, common strategies to avoid getting sick include thoroughly washing your hands and avoiding obviously ill people. Contact your healthcare provider if you feel ill and are concerned. If you develop a serious respiratory infection, it is much more likely to be Influenza (the flu) than coronavirus. We know that pregnant women have a harder time fighting off infections, like the flu, which can lead to complications for pregnant women and for babies. If you haven't gotten your flu shot, do it now, for your own health and for the wellbeing of your baby. MotherToBaby has a fact sheet on the flu vaccine at: <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/seasonal-influenza-the-flu-pregnancy/>. To keep up with travel notifications and other news on the new coronavirus, go the CDC Coronavirus page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html> [cdc.gov].

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## ***602 Pregnancies Examined by the Non-Profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists***

LA JOLLA, CA –A new study conducted by birth defects experts from the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) suggests adalimumab use in pregnancy was not associated with an increased risk for adverse outcomes examined, such as major structural birth defects, spontaneous abortion and preterm delivery. The findings were published today in the Public Library of Science (PLOS) One Journal.

The prospective research study conducted by OTIS examined 602 pregnancies that occurred between 2004 – 2016 in women across the U.S. and Canada. Researchers enrolled pregnant women into the observational cohort study who had or had not taken adalimumab for their autoimmune disease, as well as generally healthy pregnant women for comparison. OTIS is the scientific non-profit society that provides the no-cost MotherToBaby information service and enrolls women through the MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies Research Center at the University of California San Diego. Financial support for the adalimumab study was provided by AbbVie.

“Many women hoping to start a family rely on adalimumab to control symptoms related to crippling autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis or Crohn’s Disease,” said lead study author Christina Chambers, PhD, MPH, OTIS/MotherToBaby president and professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego. “The fact that this study showed no increased risk in adverse birth outcomes with the use of adalimumab in pregnancy is important since not a lot of research was previously available on this particular medication.”

The study also found that regardless of whether they took adalimumab or not, pregnant women with rheumatoid arthritis or Crohn’s Disease were at an increased risk of preterm birth (delivery before 37 weeks of pregnancy).

“Studies on medication use in general are lacking when it comes to understanding their effects on pregnancy, making it difficult for pregnant women and their healthcare providers to make informed decisions,” said Dr. Chambers. “We are proud to add valuable information to the literature and encourage more pregnant women to consider volunteering for critical observational studies.”

For more information on all of the current MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies, please visit <https://mothertobaby.org/pregnancy-studies/>.

## **More about OTIS and MotherToBaby**

The Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) is a professional scientific society made up of individuals engaged in assessing and evaluating risks to pregnancy and breastfeeding from environmental exposures. Members include, but are not limited to, specialists in the fields of: obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, genetics, dysmorphology, perinatal epidemiology, teratology, behavioral teratology, pharmacy, genetic counseling, nursing,

midwifery, maternal and child health, public health, and includes experts that provide MotherToBaby services and researchers that conduct MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies. MotherToBaby is a suggested resource by many federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). To learn more about ongoing MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies, call (877) 311-8972, email [MotherToBaby@ucsd.edu](mailto:MotherToBaby@ucsd.edu) or visit [www.MotherToBaby.org](http://www.MotherToBaby.org).

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## **MotherToBaby, Teratology Society, DNTS Come Together June 22 - 25 in San Diego and Host Facebook Live Event for the Public**

SAN DIEGO, CA – “It’s an incomparable gathering of experts,” said Christina Chambers, PhD, MPH, MotherToBaby President, Teratology Society Past President and Professor of Pediatrics at UC San Diego in reference to the **32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS)**, the non-profit behind the no-cost MotherToBaby service. MotherToBaby provides evidence-based information about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding. The OTIS Annual Meeting will take place at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina June 22 – 25 and be held jointly with other leading organizations in the field of birth defects research.

Dr. Chambers, who recently made headlines with her **groundbreaking study** showing that certain marijuana compounds linger much longer in breast milk than previously thought, described the Annual Meeting as “critical to future generations.” “New information will be shared at this meeting on hot topics, such as cigarette smoking and marijuana in pregnancy, as well as advancements in understanding birth defects, like congenital heart defects,” she said. “It’s this kind of information that can lead to better treatment for expectant and nursing moms.”

The OTIS Annual Meeting will be held simultaneously and on-location with the **Teratology Society (TS)** and the **Developmental Neurotoxicology Society (DNTS)**, whose meetings extend until June 26. Other hot topics to be discussed at the various meetings include:

- **Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO): A National Research Program** (joint with OTIS-TS-DNTS)
- **Congenital Heart Defects Research: Finding the Hidden Crossroads between Genetics and Environment** (joint with OTIS-TS)
- **A Smoking Gun that Faced Opposition: The Causal Agent of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders** (joint with OTIS-TS)
- **Cigarette Smoking and Development** (OTIS)
- **The Scientific Evidence for Short and Long-term Risks of Gestational Marijuana Use and Marijuana Use during Breastfeeding** (OTIS)
- **Ocean-Borne Risks to Pregnant Women and Their Babies** (joint with TS-DNTS)
- **Maternal Morbidity and Mortality: Causes, Disparities and Solutions** (TS)
- **What Do We Need to Know about Climate Change and Effects on Maternal-Fetal Health?** (TS)

Scientists and healthcare providers in Southern California are encouraged to attend as day passes are still available for all meetings. To register, visit **OTIS’** and the **Teratology Society’s** registration pages.

In addition, a Facebook Live event will be held Saturday, June 22 at 5p during which **MotherToBaby’s** Facebook followers can ask questions about “what’s ok” during pregnancy and breastfeeding. The event is aimed at the pregnant or breastfeeding mother as well as healthcare providers. To be alerted of the event, follow **@MotherToBaby on Facebook**. “Our Facebook followers will be able to get the latest research-based answers directly from world-renowned experts attending the Annual Meeting about everything from marijuana to medications and their known effects on a pregnancy or while breastfeeding,” described Chris Stallman, a certified genetic counselor and host of the Facebook Live event. Stallman is also host of **The MotherToBaby Podcast**, available on **iTunes, Google Play, Spotify, Stitcher** and podcatcher services everywhere. “No topic will be off-limits and we hope the public will take advantage of this rare opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at the scientists providing the MotherToBaby service.”

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researchers that conduct MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies. MotherToBaby is a suggested resource by many federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). To be connected with a MotherToBaby expert, please call (866) 626-6847, text questions to (855) 999-3525 (standard messaging rates might apply, check with your carrier) or visit [www.MotherToBaby.org](http://www.MotherToBaby.org).

### **About the Teratology Society**

The Teratology Society is an international and multidisciplinary group of scientists including researchers, clinicians, epidemiologists, and public health professionals from academia, government and industry who study birth defects, reproduction, and disorders of developmental origin. The Teratology Society is made up of nearly 700 members worldwide specializing in a variety of disciplines, including developmental biology and toxicology, reproduction and endocrinology, epidemiology, cell and molecular biology, nutritional biochemistry, and genetics as well as the clinical disciplines of prenatal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, neonatology, medical genetics, and teratogen risk counseling. Scientists interested in membership in the Teratology Society are encouraged to visit [www.teratology.org](http://www.teratology.org). The society's official journal, ***Birth Defects Research***, is published by John Wiley & Sons in partnership with the Teratology Society.

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In the last few weeks, MotherToBaby, a service of the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), has received a very large number of requests for our services from Canadian residents following the recent closing of the Motherisk service in Toronto. At the present time, we do not have sufficient numbers of MotherToBaby Specialists on staff to handle this extraordinary increase in requests for information. We hope that service to Canadians will be offered again in the near future. In the meantime, if you are pregnant, planning pregnancy, or breastfeeding, please reach out to your healthcare provider with any questions you might have or refer to our fact sheets located at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/>.

En las últimas semanas, MotherToBaby, un servicio de la Organización de Especialistas en Información de Teratología, ha recibido un gran número de solicitudes de residentes canadienses luego del cierre del servicio Motherisk en Toronto. En la actualidad, no tenemos suficiente especialistas de MotherToBaby para contestar este aumento extraordinario en las solicitudes de información. Esperamos que el servicio a los canadienses se ofrezca nuevamente en el futuro cercano. Mientras tanto, si está embarazada, planea un embarazo o está amamantando, comuníquese con su proveedor de salud si tiene alguna pregunta o consulte nuestras hojas informativas que se encuentran en <https://mothertobaby.org/es/hojas-informativas/>.

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