Ep. 87: Understanding REMS & Medication Safety in Pregnancy: What Patients & Providers Need to Know

Concerned about medication use during pregnancy? You're not alone.
In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, MS, CGC (genetic counselor, mom of four, teratogen information specialist) sits down with Dr. Judy C. Morrow of Harvard Medical School to break down how FDA REMS (Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy) programs help reduce the risk of birth defects and protect pregnant patients.

Together, they discuss:
✔ What REMS programs are and why they exist
✔ How REMS programs support safe medication use
✔ The role of manufacturers, prescribers, and pharmacists
✔ Common medications with REMS programs (including isotretinoin/Accutane)
✔ Pregnancy testing requirements & pharmacy restrictions
✔ Why some drugs don't have REMS (even if risks exist)
✔ What patients should ask if they're prescribed a REMS-covered medication

Dr. Morrow shares how researchers use real-world data to identify medication-related adverse events in pregnancy, how REMS programs try to prevent exposed pregnancies, and why communication between patients, providers, and pharmacists is essential.

If you're pregnant, planning a pregnancy, breastfeeding, or support patients in these settings, this episode offers clear, practical insights to help guide informed decision-making.

 Key topics: pregnancy, REMS, FDA, teratogens, isotretinoin, Accutane, birth defects, pharmacy programs, medication safety, pregnancy data, registries

 Listen now to learn how REMS programs help protect pregnant women and their babies.

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at MotherToBaby.org.

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In this episode, Jenn Wisdahl, Chief Operating Officer at the non-profit FASD United, and Laura Bousquet, a mother to a young adult son diagnosed with FASD in his teens, join host Chris Stallman, CGC to discuss challenges many families with lived FASD experience face. Wisdahl leads FASD United's legislative and policy agenda and trains members of the FASD community to serve as advocates. She was also an executive producer on the award-winning short film "The FASD Project," and is a proud parent to 3 young adults with FASD. Bousquet is a passionate FASD advocate and active FASD United Board member whose own FASD diagnosis at age 57 deepened her dedication to inspiring positive change in the FASD community.

Resources Mentioned in This Episode:

- FASD Family Navigator – FASD United https://fasdunited.org/family-navigator/
- Resource Directory – FASD United https://fasdunited.org/resource-directory/
- Glimpses of FASD – FASD United https://fasdunited.org/glimpses-of-fasd/
- Give FASD a Seat at the Table – FASD United https://fasdunited.org/give-fasd-a-seat-at-the-table/
- FASD State Data Sheets – FASD United https://fasdunited.org/fasd-state-data-sheets/
- Video Series: Lived Experiences with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders – CDC https://www.cdc.gov/fasd/stories/video-series.html

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In the second episode of the fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) special series, we explore the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's work addressing FASD and how scientific findings are helping shape prevention efforts.

Resources Mentioned in This Episode:

- About CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
- About Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- What CDC Is Doing: FASDs
- Online Trainings and Resources
- FASD National Partner Network Toolkit
- Video Series: Lived Experiences with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- "Let's Talk" Materials Toolkit

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In this episode, Dr. Kenneth Lyons Jones, one of the pioneers who first identified Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in the United States in 1973, and Dr. Christina Chambers, a renowned epidemiologist who has conducted groundbreaking research on the prevalence of FASD, join host Chris Stallman, CGC, to discuss the discovery of FASD, its common physical and cognitive traits, and its prevalence today.

Resources Mentioned in This Episode:

- Dr. Kenneth Lyons Jones on the History of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome – FASD
- Prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders in 4 US Communities | Antenatal Exposures and Child Outcomes | JAMA | JAMA Network
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders – American Academy of Pediatrics
- Types of Treatment for FASDs | Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders | CDC
- Choline supplements in young children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder have lasting cognitive benefits | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

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Host Chris Stallman, CGC, welcomes back Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist and social media health educator, Dr. Shannon Clark of @babiesafter35.

Dr. Clark debunks myths about the risks associated with having children later in life. She also gives the audience insight into her own personal journey having children after age 35.

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