Ep. 99 – Caring for Indigenous Families During Pregnancy and Postpartum

Indigenous communities have long held rich traditions surrounding pregnancy, birth, and family. Yet many Indigenous women continue to experience significant barriers to healthcare, including limited access to culturally responsive care and persistent maternal health disparities.

In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, CGC, speaks with Chelsea Bellon, MPH, Program Manager at the National Indian Health Board, certified Indigenous Postpartum Birthworker, and advocate for Tribal maternal and behavioral health.

Chelsea shares both her professional expertise and personal journey, discussing how culturally grounded care, community support, and evidence-based health information can help improve pregnancy and postpartum outcomes for Indigenous families.

Topics discussed include:

- Common pregnancy exposure questions from Indigenous communities
- Historical and systemic factors affecting maternal and infant health
- Environmental and occupational exposures that may affect some Tribal communities
- The importance of culturally responsive prenatal and postpartum care
- Perinatal mental health, including Chelsea’s lived experience with postpartum depression
- The role of Indigenous traditions, family support, and community in pregnancy and postpartum
- Resources for Indigenous families seeking trusted information about pregnancy and breastfeeding

Whether you’re expecting a baby, supporting a loved one, or caring for patients, this episode offers valuable insights into improving maternal health through respect, partnership, and culturally informed care.

Resources:

Learn more about the National Indian Health Board here.

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Hantavirus has recently been making headlines, leaving many pregnant women wondering what it is, how people become infected, and whether it can affect pregnancy and/or breastfeeding.

In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, genetic counselor, teratogen information specialist, and mom of four, sits down with maternal-fetal medicine specialist Dr. Sarah Dotters-Katz to discuss what we currently know about hantavirus infection during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Dr. Dotters-Katz explains how hantavirus is spread, common symptoms to watch for, and steps families can take to reduce exposure risks. She also shares what healthcare providers know, and don't yet know, about hantavirus during pregnancy, emphasizing the importance of prevention, early medical care, and relying on trusted sources of information.

Whether you're pregnant, planning a pregnancy, or simply looking for reliable information, this episode offers practical,

evidence-based guidance to help you stay informed.

In This Episode, We Discuss:

- What hantavirus is and where it is found
- How people become infected with hantavirus
- Common signs and symptoms of infection
- What is known about hantavirus during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Potential concerns for pregnant women and developing babies
- Prevention tips to reduce exposure risk
- When to contact a healthcare provider

About Our Guest

Dr. Sarah Dotters-Katz is a maternal-fetal medicine specialist at Duke Health who cares for women with high-risk pregnancies. She is passionate about infectious diseases in pregnancy and has extensive experience helping patients navigate complex medical conditions during pregnancy. Dr. Dotters-Katz is also a medical educator and researcher dedicated to improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

Resources

Browse our free evidence-based fact sheets.
Listen to more episodes of The MotherToBaby Podcast:

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Ep. 99 – Caring for Indigenous Families During Pregnancy and Postpartum

Diapers are something many families need every single day, yet diaper need remains a hidden struggle affecting millions of parents and babies across the United States. In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, MS, CGC, speaks with Dr. Megan V. Smith from the National Diaper Bank Network about the growing body of research connecting diaper need to infant health, maternal mental health, and overall family wellbeing.

Dr. Smith discusses how limited access to clean diapers can contribute to increased stress, anxiety, feelings of shame, and depressive symptoms among parents, while also affecting infant health through increased diaper rash and related infections. The conversation also explores how financial hardship and unmet basic needs can impact both parents and babies during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Listeners will also learn about available resources and the important work being done to support families experiencing diaper need.

About Our Guest:
Dr. Megan V. Smith is Chief of Innovation and Impact at the National Diaper Bank Network and a nationally recognized leader in maternal and child health, public health, and mental health equity. She published one of the first peer-reviewed studies on diaper need and its impact on child and maternal health.

Learn more about the National Diaper Bank Network:
https://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/

For evidence-based information about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, visit MotherToBaby:
https://mothertobaby.org/

Questions about exposures during pregnancy or breastfeeding? Contact a MotherToBaby specialist by phone, text, live chat, or email:
https://mothertobaby.org/contact-expert/.

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

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Ep. 99 – Caring for Indigenous Families During Pregnancy and Postpartum

High blood pressure disorders during pregnancy, including preeclampsia, can raise a lot of questions and anxiety for expectant parents. In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, genetic counselor, mom of four, and teratogen information specialist, sits down with maternal-fetal medicine specialist and member of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) Dr. Karen Florio to discuss what pregnant women should know about hypertensive disorders in pregnancy and the role low dose aspirin can play in reducing certain risks.

Dr. Florio shares both her professional expertise caring for high-risk pregnancies and her personal experience navigating a high-risk pregnancy herself. Together, Chris and Dr. Florio break down the warning signs of preeclampsia, when to contact a healthcare provider, and why low dose aspirin may be recommended in some pregnancies, even though regular aspirin is typically avoided during pregnancy.

The conversation also explores how common hypertensive disorders are, what patients can do to advocate for themselves, and reassuring, evidence-based guidance for anyone currently pregnant and feeling worried about blood pressure concerns.

In this episode, we discuss:

- What “high blood pressure in pregnancy” and hypertensive disorders actually mean
- Signs and symptoms of preeclampsia to watch for
- Why low dose aspirin may be recommended during pregnancy
- Who may benefit from low dose aspirin therapy

- When to reach out to a healthcare provider
- How patients can feel informed and empowered during pregnancy

About Our Guest:
Dr. Karen Florio is a maternal-fetal medicine specialist at the University of Missouri and currently serves as Vice Chair of Patient Safety and Quality for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, as well as Director of Labor and Delivery. Her work focuses on hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and heart disease in pregnancy, and she has held leadership roles with Missouri's Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Board and the Missouri Perinatal Quality Collaborative.

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Ep. 99 – Caring for Indigenous Families During Pregnancy and Postpartum

What happens when a researcher studying pregnancy becomes a patient navigating her own autoimmune diagnosis? In this powerful episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, genetic counselor Chris Stallman, CGC, sits down with Dr. Christina Longo, Assistant Professor at the University of Montreal and perinatal epidemiologist, to discuss her lived experience managing rheumatoid arthritis during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Dr. Longo shares how her first diagnosis during pregnancy reshaped her research focus—from child outcomes to the importance of maternal health, mental wellbeing, and self-advocacy. She opens up about the difficult decisions she

faced around medication safety, breastfeeding, and treatment during pregnancy, and how patient-led communities and research studies helped her find strength and clarity.

Listeners will learn:

- How autoimmune diseases can change during pregnancy and postpartum
- Why controlled treatment plans matter before conception
- The emotional and physical toll of navigating chronic illness while pregnant
- The importance of participating in pregnancy studies to improve care for future parents

Whether you're living with a chronic condition, supporting someone who is, or counseling patients through pregnancy, this episode sheds light on the urgent need for research, empathy, and balanced care for both parent and baby.

 Learn more or join a pregnancy study.

 Have questions about exposures during pregnancy or breastfeeding?
You can contact MotherToBaby for free, confidential, evidence-based information:
 Call: 866-626-6847
 Text: 855-999-3525
 Visit: https://mothertobaby.org/

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