

Ep. 96 - Preeclampsia + Low Dose Aspirin with Dr. Karen Florio

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.

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

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, May 20, 2026.

Ep. 96 - Preeclampsia + Low Dose Aspirin with Dr. Karen Florio

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/>](#)

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

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, May 20, 2026.

Ep. 96 - Preeclampsia + Low Dose Aspirin with Dr. Karen Florio

How do public health experts detect emerging risks to pregnancies before they become widespread crises? In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, genetic counselor, mom of four, and teratogen information specialist, sits down with Dr. Amanda Elmore, Assistant Professor of Maternal & Child Health at the University of South Florida, to explore the powerful role of birth defect surveillance.

Dr. Elmore shares how her career in public health began during the Zika virus epidemic—reviewing medical records of exposed infants to help the CDC understand the real-world impact of in-utero exposure. She explains how surveillance systems track structural and functional birth anomalies, serve as early warning systems for new and emerging exposures, and shape everything from clinical care and referral services to national public health policy.

The conversation also dives into:

- How surveillance led to rapid public health responses during the Zika crisis
- What neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) reveals about opioid exposure during pregnancy
- The push for real-time data using electronic medical records and health information exchanges
- How machine learning and natural language processing may transform how cases are identified
- Why a life-course perspective matters for children born with birth defects
- How surveillance data supports funding, prevention efforts, and long-term family services

Dr. Elmore also shares her vision for the future: a more standardized, timely, and integrated national system that can better support prevention, research, and lifelong care for affected children and families.

This episode offers a behind-the-scenes look at how data quietly powers some of the most important protections for moms and babies.

- 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/>

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

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, May 20, 2026.

Ep. 96 - Preeclampsia + Low Dose Aspirin with Dr. Karen Florio

The weeks after delivery (often called the fourth trimester) can raise just as many questions as pregnancy itself. From pain management and supplements to beauty treatments and mental health medications, many parents are unsure how different exposures may affect breastfeeding.

In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, MS, CGC, is joined by Kirstie Perrotta, MPH, and Angela Messer, MS, Teratogen Information Specialists from MotherToBaby California, to discuss some of the most common postpartum questions they receive from parents and healthcare providers.

Together, they explain how exposure information is evaluated during breastfeeding and how factors like dose, timing, and route of exposure influence what may reach breast milk.

In This Episode, You'll Learn:

- What the fourth trimester is and why exposure questions continue after delivery
- Common postpartum concerns, including pain medications, stool softeners, and laxatives
- How prescription pain medications, including opioids, are evaluated during breastfeeding
- Why route of exposure matters when considering topical products
- What to know about hair dye, Botox, manicures, facials, and salon treatments
- Why supplements, herbal products, and proprietary blends raise additional questions
- Which over-the-counter medications are often discussed in the breastfeeding period
- How medication guidance can differ between pregnancy and lactation
- Why addressing postpartum mental health conditions is essential
- Common breastfeeding myths and misconceptions
- Practical tips to reduce direct infant contact with topical products

Key Takeaways:

- Many medications have data available for use during breastfeeding
- Topical products are typically evaluated based on how they are applied and absorbed
- High-dose supplements and proprietary blends often lack breastfeeding data
- Postpartum pain, mental health, and chronic conditions deserve appropriate treatment
- Feeding decisions are personal, and there is no single approach that works for everyone

Resources Mentioned:

- **MotherToBaby.org** – evidence-based fact sheets, Baby Blogs, podcasts, and educational resources
- Over **300 fact sheets** in English and Spanish on medications, exposures, and health conditions
- One-on-one support via **phone, chat, text, or email**
- **MotherToBaby Pregnancy Studies** – helping expand knowledge about medications, conditions, and exposures in pregnancy and lactation

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

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, May 20, 2026.

Ep. 96 – Preeclampsia + Low Dose Aspirin with Dr. Karen Florio

Expecting a baby often comes with a long list of questions—and a lot of conflicting information. Can you really drink coffee? What about sushi or soft cheese? Which cold medications are ok in pregnancy? And how should you handle everyday exposures like cleaning products?

In this episode of The MotherToBaby Podcast, host Chris Stallman, Certified Genetic Counselor and mom of four, is joined by returning guests Angela Messer and Kirstie Perrotta, both experienced teratogen information specialists (and moms themselves). Together, they sort through some of the most common pregnancy “do’s and don’ts,” offering clarity with evidence-based insights.

In this episode you’ll learn:

- ☞ How much caffeine experts suggest during pregnancy
- ☐ The truth about soft cheeses and why pasteurization matters
- ☐ Sushi and mercury exposure—what to consider and what to limit
- ☐ Tips for managing allergies and colds while pregnant or breastfeeding
- ☐ Guidance on handling cleaning products and reducing exposures
- ☐ Why supplements and “natural” remedies aren’t always the best option
- ☐ The importance of folic acid in prenatal vitamins
- ☐ Real stories from Angela, Kirstie, and Chris about what worried them during their own pregnancies

Whether you’re pregnant, breastfeeding, or supporting someone who is, this conversation offers reassurance, practical advice, and a reminder: you’re doing your best, and you’re not alone.

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

Disclaimer: MotherToBaby Fact Sheets are meant for general information purposes and should not replace the advice of your health care provider. MotherToBaby is a service of the non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS). Copyright by OTIS, May 20, 2026.