From Climate Change's Effects in Pregnancy to Gestational Marijuana Use, Top Scientists Present Latest Research

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 32nd 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."

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 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.

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. The society's official journal, ***Birth Defects Research,*** is published by John Wiley & Sons in partnership with the Teratology Society.

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Media Contact: Nicole Chavez, 619-368-3259, nchavez@MotherToBaby.org.

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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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The MotherToBaby Podcast Is A New 'Must-Have' Resource for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Moms

BRENTWOOD, TN – From herbal supplements in pregnancy to marijuana in breastfeeding, "no topic is off-limits," describes Chris Stallman, a certified genetic counselor and host of the new MotherToBaby Podcast launching May 8, just ahead of Mother's Day. The episode series will be available on iTunes and podcatcher services everywhere and promises to deliver evidence-based information about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding in a relatable format – from one mom to another.

Stallman, a mother of three including a toddler, takes calls on the show from the general public about exposures, like essential oils and medications for mental health disorders, during pregnancy, breastfeeding, pre-pregnancy and adoption. Stallman, as well as the various guest experts joining her on each episode, are teratogen information specialists – trained professionals in understanding and communicating environmental risks that may be associated with birth defects, adverse pregnancy outcomes and/or effects on the nursing infant. "I've been there with three pregnancies and tons of questions, so we want those who call in to our show to feel welcome," explained Stallman. "We provide a judgment-free zone where callers will not only feel comfortable asking anything about a particular exposure during pregnancy or breastfeeding, but they'll have the opportunity to get answers directly from experts actively involved in the research surrounding that particular topic," explained Stallman.

The MotherToBaby Podcast is the latest platform provided by the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), the scientific non-profit society behind MotherToBaby's no-cost services. MotherToBaby has been able to embark on new outreach efforts to reach underserved populations and launch new communication initiatives, such as The MotherToBaby Podcast through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, as well as through the generous donations made by the public. The four-episode launch beginning May 8th will focus on:

- Essential Oils and Herbal Supplements
- Beauty Products
- Marijuana
- Maternal Mental Health

The new podcast can easily be found on iTunes, Google Play, Spotify, Stitcher and podcatcher services everywhere by searching "MotherToBaby." Listeners can be alerted to new episodes by subscribing to the series.

The MotherToBaby Podcast has also been selected to be part of the Parents on Demand (POD) Network, which has a free app available on iOS and Android. The POD Network is a collection of podcasts with content specifically created for parents and families. "The shows on our network help guide families through the various stages of life," said Sunny Gault, Founder and Network Director. "The addition of The MotherToBaby Podcast is the perfect must-have resource for anyone looking for evidence-based information on exposures during pregnancy, while planning a pregnancy or while breastfeeding."

More about OTIS and MotherToBaby

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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 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.

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PLEASE NOTE: This webinar has already passed, but the recorded version can be seen at the following link: http://bit.ly/2Hfcr6z

OTIS, Teratology Society, SMFM, NSGC Team Up to Shed Light on Prenatal and Postnatal Marijuana Exposure Effects

BRENTWOOD, TN – From plant form to CBD oil, with increasing legalization of marijuana across U.S. states, there comes the need for more information on its impact should a consumer become pregnant. Birth defects experts from the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), the scientific non-profit society that provides the

MotherToBaby no-cost service, are offering the latest data surrounding marijuana exposure in pregnancy and lactation during a free webinar for healthcare providers on May 2, 2019 at 12p Pacific/3p Eastern.

"If I use edibles instead of smoke marijuana, that should be safer during pregnancy and breastfeeding, right?" – It's just one of the many questions the MotherToBaby service, which answers questions about exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding via phone, text, live chat and its MotherToBaby.org website, is now receiving on a regular basis according to Christina Chambers, PhD, MPH, MotherToBaby president and professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Chambers also heads up Mommy's Milk Human Milk Research Biorepository, the first-ever research database of human breast milk which produced a ground-breaking study last year suggesting that marijuana can linger in breast milk for far longer (up to six days) than previously thought. "As more states legalize marijuana for medicinal and recreational use, it's critical we look at how it's impacting the next generation," she said.

The webinar, "Sifting through the Smoke: The Latest Research Surrounding Marijuana Exposure in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding," is a collaboration with the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) and, in addition to OTIS/MotherToBaby, will include presenters representing the Teratology Society and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM). The webinar is free and aimed at healthcare providers and researchers; registration is required at the following link: http://bit.ly/MarijuanaWebinar2019.

"Older studies have suggested that if a mother uses marijuana during pregnancy, she might be at risk for having a smaller baby born early and/or having it experience developmental delays," said Sarah Obican, MD, a Maternal-Fetal Medicine subspecialist at the University of South Florida, director of MotherToBaby's Florida affiliate, and Dr. Chambers' co-presenter for the webinar. "However, marijuana is produced today at a higher potency level, so it's critical we stay vigilant in our research to better understand its impact," she added.

The webinar is expected to run approximately one hour and presenters will be available to answer questions from attendees.

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In case you missed it during January's Birth Defects Prevention Month, MotherToBaby, in coordination with the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) and the Teratology Society, offered a free two-part webinar series for healthcare providers on the importance of pregnancy exposure research, its challenges and the new Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant and Lactating Women (PRGLAC) report. The recorded webinar series can be viewed at the following links:

• Current and Future Trends in Research with Pregnant and Lactating Women (Part 1): http://bit.ly/PregResearch1
• Using Registries and Crowdsourcing to Conduct Research with Pregnant and Lactating Women (Part 2): http://bit.ly/PregResearch2

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