

OTIS/Emory Announce ‘MotherToBaby Georgia’ To Serve GA Moms-To-Be

ATLANTA, GA- A new free service, providing expert answers about medications and other exposures during pregnancy and breastfeeding, is giving expectant moms in Georgia another reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving.

Emory University School of Medicine announces *MotherToBaby Georgia*, a free statewide counseling service that connects experts in the field of birth defects research with expectant moms, health care providers, and the general public. All it takes is a simple phone call to a toll-free number, 866-626-6847. MotherToBaby GA is funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

MotherToBaby GA is an affiliate of the international non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), a prestigious professional society that supports and contributes to worldwide initiatives for education and birth defects research. MotherToBaby affiliates and OTIS are suggested resources by many agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dedicated to providing evidence-based information.

“Reliable information about the risks of medications, vaccines, alcohol, drugs of abuse, chemicals, and other exposures during pregnancy or while breastfeeding, is often difficult to find, especially online. We wanted to be sure that pregnant women and health care providers knew that experts on the most cutting edge research were readily available to them,” explained Claire Coles, PhD, director of MotherToBaby GA, which is housed at the Center for Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development Center in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Emory School of Medicine.

Dr. Coles further explains the need for this sort of counseling since approximately 50% of women report taking at least one medication during pregnancy. “The average woman doesn’t find out she’s pregnant until she’s five or six weeks along. That means a woman could have been consuming alcohol or taking medications during that time without knowing she’s pregnant. She then finds herself deeply concerned about what it might mean for her developing baby.”

Surveys indicate that while the majority of callers are pregnant women, most have been referred by physicians, nurses, midwives and pharmacists.

“What is passed from mother to baby is exactly what we educate the public about, which is why we strongly believe MotherToBaby GA will provide a beneficial service in our state,” said Patricia Olney, MS, board certified genetic counselor and pregnancy risk information specialist. Olney answers calls from around the state and provides counseling over the phone. “We offer an added layer of support by providing her with an individualized risk assessment so she may make informed health decisions along with her primary health care provider,” she added.

For more information about MotherToBaby GA please visit: www.MotherToBaby.org or www.emory.edu/msacd.

For counseling, call toll-FREE 866-626-6847 from throughout North America. In Georgia, you can also call 855-789-6222, or email: mothertobaby@emory.edu.

Media Contact: Patricia Olney, MS, CGC at 855-789-6222 or mothertobaby@emory.edu.

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

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