

Expert Info During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Now Available Via Text

MotherToBaby Launches Unique ‘Text Counseling’ for Reliable Info About Exposure Risks to Baby

BRENTWOOD, TN - As the world prepares to recognize Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Day on September 9th, **MotherToBaby**, a service of the international non-profit Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS), launches a way for expectant moms to have free expert information about the risks of alcohol and other exposures to baby at their fingertips - **via text**.

“The risks to baby of being exposed to things like alcohol, drugs or medications during a woman’s pregnancy or breastfeeding can really vary depending on mom’s metabolism, timing of the exposure, and whole host of other factors,” said Lori Wolfe, MS, a certified genetic counselor and director of MotherToBaby’s North Texas affiliate. “Mom really needs the latest information tailored to her particular circumstance in order to make informed decisions, along with her health care provider, about her and baby’s health. We’re now offering that research-based info in the most convenient way possible,” she added.

Expecting moms will simply need to **text their questions** in English or Spanish to 855-999-3525 to be connected to a bilingual specialist in the field of teratology - the study of exposures that cause birth defects. Standard text messaging rates may apply depending on an individual’s phone plan. Those who do use the new texting service are encouraged to check with their carrier first.

“When someone goes searching the internet, it can be a scary place that often highlights worst-case scenarios only,” explained Al Romeo, RN, PhD and teratogen information specialist at MotherToBaby’s Utah affiliate. “We’re not the internet. We’re registered nurses, genetic counselors and teratogen information specialists on the other end of your cell phone answering texts with the most up-to-date evidence you often can’t find online.”

MotherToBaby, which consists of 14 services housed at universities, hospitals and government institutions across the country, provides free, evidence-based, personalized risk assessments, education and counseling regarding the effects of exposures like prescription and over-the-counter drugs, alcohol, smoking, illicit substances, vaccines, beauty products, herbal supplements, chemicals and more during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. In addition to the new text counseling component, the public can be connected with a bilingual MotherToBaby expert by calling toll-free 1-866-626-6847. The MotherToBaby **website** also houses a library of fact sheets located at www.MotherToBaby.org.

More than 100,000 women and their health care providers seek information about birth defects prevention from MotherToBaby every year. MotherToBaby has been able to launch new outreach efforts to reach underserved populations, including new communication technologies, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

About FASD Awareness Day

FASD Awareness Day has been recognized on the ninth day of the ninth month since 1999 as a reminder for women to abstain from drinking alcohol during the nine months of pregnancy. As many as 1 out of every 100 babies are estimated to be affected by prenatal alcohol exposure, which can result in a range of neurobehavioral disabilities. FASD awareness events also traditionally take place across the nation all month long each September.

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

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