

Promoting Healthy Beginnings

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A newsletter for health and human service providers published by:

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If you would like to contribute to our newsletter as a writer or with suggestions for future articles, please call, fax or e-mail the office.

Pregnancy and Domestic Violence

Women in abusive relationships often find it extremely difficult, and possibly dangerous, to leave their partner. When a pregnancy is involved, it can be even more dangerous. No longer is one person being hurt, now there are two. According to the March of Dimes, nearly 1 in 6 pregnant women have been abused. Domestic violence is described as a series of abusive behaviors – hitting, kicking, shoving, grabbing, even attempting to harm an unborn child. Domestic violence is not only physical - it can be emotional and verbal as well. When a partner doesn't allow the other to see family members or friends, or keeps checking in with them every five minutes, it could be a good indicator that the person is being abused. Coupled with physical symptoms such as bruises, burns, scratches, and bite marks, there could be a serious problem at hand. These kinds of behaviors could lead to miscarriage or vaginal bleeding. Premature birth, low birth weight, and physical injuries could also occur as a result of domestic violence.

Pregnancy can be a very stressful time, but reacting to this stress with violence is never okay. Some partners get upset about pregnancy and may try to end it, they could be stressed about the financial responsibilities a child brings, or they could be jealous that the baby is now getting mom's attention instead of them. It is important to keep in mind when working with women in these relationships that they are not obligated to stay now that a child is involved.

The only way to be sure abuse is occurring is to ask. Some people may not want to bring it up and are waiting for someone to say something. If you notice things (such as bruises, burn marks) that concern you, tell that person.

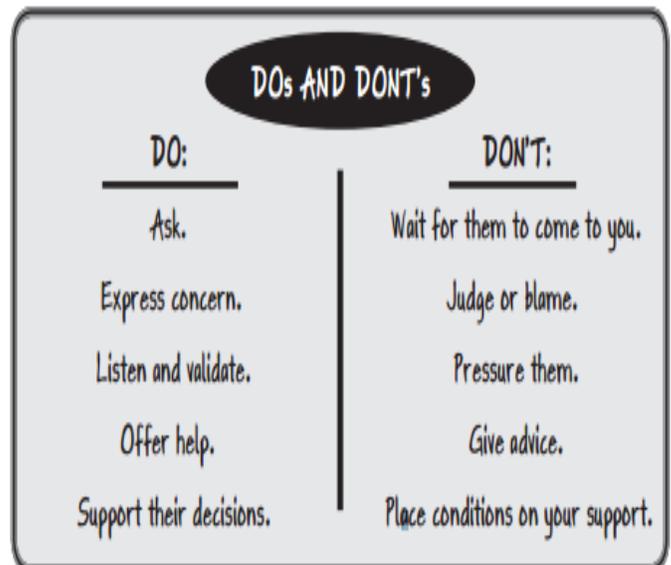
If you decide to have this conversation, be prepared to respond appropriately and supportively. Learning about domestic violence, initiating private conversations, and letting go of expectations you may

have will aid you in this discussion. Challenge and change any false attitudes and beliefs that you may have about domestic violence. The NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence outlines some more ways in which you can help a person who is suffering:

- **Believe them and let them know that you do.**
- **Listen to what they tell you.**
- **Build on their strengths.**
- **Validate feelings.**
- **Avoid victim blaming.**
- **Take it seriously.**
- **Offer help.**
- **Be a partner in their safety planning efforts.**
- **Support and respect their decisions.**

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, call the YWCA for help and support at 732-2159 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.

Source: March of Dimes, NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence



Hair-Thread Tourniquet Syndrome (HTTS) is a rare, but painful condition that occurs when a loose piece of hair or thread gets wrapped around an infant's toes, fingers, and on some occasions, genitals. This creates swelling around the affected area, lacerations, and sometimes, ischemia. In the case of ischemia, surgery to remove the affected finger or toe is needed.

An infant with HTTS is often irritable due to the pain and irritation of the area. Infants will often wiggle the affected area, presumably to either remove the painful item or to draw attention to the area. This wiggling, however, only makes things worse. It creates a cycle of irritation, then movement, then swelling, which causes the constricting item to tighten even more. This cycle causes infants to become very fussy with uncontrollable crying. The affected area may be swollen and tender to the touch. It may also be difficult to stand the child up.

HTTS is most common when a hair is wrapped around the infant's toe. This occurs because, naturally, hair falls out a little each day. Mom's hair may be long, and a strand could fall out during bath time, getting wrapped around the toe or finger. Stray hairs can also get stuck in baby's diaper during changing, which could lead to hair wrapping around the infant's genitals, causing genital HTTS.

Professionals should do a head to toe check at each visit to be sure the infant is free from any unintentional tourniquets, especially if the infant is fussy with no obvious signs of illness or pain. A magnifying glass may be needed to see any lighter strands of thread or hair.

There are many ways to treat this depending on the severity of the tourniquet, however it is best to bring the infant to a pediatrician if you are unable to remove the thread yourself by unwrapping it.

Even though this is a rare occurrence, it is a painful one, and can be prevented. It is suggested to teach parents to check their children's hands and feet at bath time. It is also suggested to separate mom's and baby's clothing and to wash them inside out so no stray hairs accidentally get stuck inside.

Providing this information to moms and dads of infants and newborns can prevent HTTS from occurring. The more moms and dads know, the better they can prepare for these kinds of situations.

Templet, T. A. & Rholdon, R.D. (2016) Assessment, Treatment and Prevention Strategies for Hair-Thread Tourniquet Syndrome in Infants. *Nursing for Women's Health*, 20(4), 421-425

The Zika Virus is a virus that has affected many people in Brazil, and increasingly, some people in the US. Currently, Florida is the only US state affected by locally acquired cases of the virus. The Zika virus is a member of other similar virus families such as yellow fever and West Nile. The virus was first discovered in the Zika forest of Uganda in the 1940s.

Non-pregnant people that are infected are usually asymptomatic, however, if symptoms do appear, they include rash, conjunctivitis, and fever. The symptoms will usually go away within 2-7 days. Symptoms in pregnant women are much more severe. When pregnant women become infected, there may be intrauterine growth restriction, microcephaly, cerebral calcifications, and decreased or absent amniotic fluid in early pregnancy. Microcephaly is the most common symptom of affected infants in which the head is smaller than babies of the same sex and age. Central nervous system abnormalities were also found as late as 27 weeks.

There is no cure for Zika, currently, however it can be prevented. Women who are pregnant should avoid traveling to areas where the virus is spreading. Women who are diagnosed with Zika should wait at least 2 months after the beginning of symptoms to conceive, and men who are diagnosed should wait 6 months after symptoms appear to attempt conception.

Zika virus can be detected in urine for at least two weeks after the onset of symptoms, so if someone is concerned about possible transmission, they will have some time to get tested. Healthcare professionals should check moms for potential exposure at all visits. This means asking about her and her partner's recent travel destinations. It is suggested that all health care providers report suspected cases of Zika to their local health department.

Zika affected infants often grow up with severe medical issues. Seizures, developmental delay, intellectual disabilities, hearing loss and vision problems are all associated with the Zika virus. Some infants that are born with no symptoms may develop these symptoms later on in life, so it is important to be sure each child potentially affected by the virus be checked for these symptoms at each visit.

As more people become affected, more research is being done. Stay tuned for updates as more data becomes available.

Fiorentino, D. G. & Montero, F. J. (2016) The Zika Virus and Pregnancy. *Current Obstetrics and Gynecology Reports*, 5, 234-238, Center for Disease Control

Acetaminophen Use in Pregnancy

Acetaminophen (also known by its brand name Tylenol) is a common over the counter medication to treat everything from headaches to muscle aches and fevers. Many women trust its healing properties to relieve many symptoms of pregnancy. However, some data suggests that acetaminophen may not be as useful and safe as once thought for pregnant women.

A study done by Stergiakouli, Thapar, and Smith (2016), sought to determine the effects of maternal acetaminophen use during pregnancy. Previous data suggests acetaminophen use in pregnancy can be linked to increased risk for ADHD and behavior issues. The researchers studied 7,796 mothers.

The results of this research determined that just about half of all mothers took acetaminophen at 18 weeks and 42% of mothers had taken acetaminophen at 32 weeks. 5% of these children had behavioral problems. Taking acetaminophen at 18 weeks of pregnancy showed higher odds of conduct issues in children along with hyperactivity. Mothers that took acetaminophen at 32 weeks were associated with higher odds of their children having emotional problems, conduct problems, and symptoms of hyperactivity. Results also suggest that using acetaminophen in the third trimester is not recommended as there is a lot of active brain growth during this time. Taking acetaminophen postnatally has shown no negative effects to the fetus.

Despite these findings, there is still work to be done. These researchers did not take into account how much acetaminophen the mothers were taking or how often. They also did not take into consideration behavior issues in mothers that could lead to behavioral problems in children. Although more research does need to be done in this area, it is always a good idea to re-evaluate just how much people depend on these pain and fever reducers for every ache and pain.

Even though this research is supported by many professionals, there is still not enough evidence to

conclude that acetaminophen use during pregnancy does increase the risk of hyperkinetic disorders or ADHD.

However, if mothers do want to be more conscious of the things they are putting into their body during pregnancy, there are things that mothers can do that will reduce the need for reaching for a pain reliever such as acetaminophen.

- **Massage:** Gently massaging the temples of the head for just a few minutes can give relief when a headache strikes.
- **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is a great way to target problem areas and provide relief. Acupuncture can help with morning sickness, back pain, fatigue, and heartburn.
- **Pet Therapy:** Pets can work wonders when it comes to pain relief. Petting a dog or cat during an intense period of pain for just five or ten minutes can distract you from the pain and provide all the love and happiness only pets can.
- **Ice/Heat:** For some injuries, switching between ice and heat can do a world of good. Heat is very effective at releasing muscle tension, so if a woman has a lot of back pain, she can lie on her back with a heating pad underneath to help reduce the pain.
- **Gel packs:** Gel packs can be great for headaches. Similar to a cold washcloth, a gel pack can be used on the forehead to provide some relief.

Stergiakouli, E., Thapar, A. & Smith, G. D. (2016) Association of Acetaminophen Use During Pregnancy with Behavioral Problems in Childhood, *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Web.



Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network's

Healthy Beginnings Newsletter is **Going Green!**

If we don't already have your email address, please share it by contacting Megan at mcapuana@newfamily.org or 732-4657 x228. If email is not an option, please let us know, so we can continue sending paper newsletters. Thank you!

Breastfeeding Café

A new breastfeeding café location has opened in downtown Utica! Feel free to stop in on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at the Utica Public Library in their Children’s Room.

Breastfeeding cafes provide a welcoming and comfortable space to support and assist nursing mothers and their families. The cafes provide a fun atmosphere to make friends and share experiences. Breastfeeding cafes provide certified breastfeeding specialists who can offer technical support, a baby weigh station, and a place to check your baby’s milk intake.

A light lunch is provided, including meals from Bagel Grove and Massoud’s Café in Utica, and Brenda’s Natural Foods in Rome.

Locations and Times:

Utica (2 locations):

1st, 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 12:00-2:00pm
4th Wednesday with LLL, 5:30-7:30 pm
Lady of Lourdes Church
2222 Genesee Street, Utica

2nd and 4th Fridays of the month, 12:00-2:00pm
Utica Public Library in the Children’s Room
303 Genesee Street, Utica

Rome:

4th Wednesday of the month, 12:00-2:00pm
Trinity Church
214 W Court Street, Rome

Oneida:

1st and 3rd Fridays of the month, 1:00-3:00pm
607 Seneca Street, Oneida

Cazenovia:

Mondays, 5:30-7:00pm
St Joseph’s Physicians Heritage Family Medicine
132 1/2 Albany Street, Cazenovia

Our Mission

To improve birth outcomes and maternal, child and family health, facilitate collaboration among providers and community organizations and advocate for change

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mvbreastfeedingnetwork.com*