

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant and Lactating Women

Agency Activities: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH)

Research

OASH sponsors research related to therapies for pregnant and lactating women mostly through the National Vaccine Office Program (see separate document).

Clinical Practice Information and Recommendations

OASH's Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion supports guidelines on diet and physical activity for all Americans. This includes specific information related to physical activity for women during pregnancy (<https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/chapter7.aspx>). The dietary guidelines also incorporate specific guidelines for women during pregnancy (<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/tools-resources/evidence-based-resource/2015%E2%80%932020-dietary-guidelines-for-americans>). OASH plans to incorporate more pregnancy-specific information in the 2020 edition of the dietary guidelines (<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>).

OASH's Regional Offices have incorporated USPSTF recommendations into provider training and resources, in collaboration with AHRQ. For example, the Healthier Pregnancy provider training initiative informs providers about successful efforts to implement USPSTF recommendations.

OASH's Region 5 held an education and training event in August 2016 to engage health and social services professionals who serve pregnant women and young mothers, to help promote breastfeeding. In the same region, provider training has focused on the impact of traumatic exposure on pregnancy health and breastfeeding. OASH's Region 7 supports a regional breastfeeding outreach effort.

Research Policies and Regulation

The Office for Human Research Protections provides regulations for the protection of human research subjects, including information specifically tailored to research involving pregnant and lactating women (<https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>).

Communications

The Office of Women's Health (OWH) includes a wide array of pregnancy-related information on its website, <https://www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy>. Examples of specific items include:

- Information on medications in pregnancy is available in multiple forms and levels of detail: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/pregnancy-and-medicines>; <https://www.womenshealth.gov/files/assets/docs/fact-sheets/pregnancy-medicines.pdf>
- Resources on Zika and pregnancy, updated for the summer of 2017: <https://www.hhs.gov/blog/2017/05/15/zika-and-pregnancy-protecting-babies-protecting-yourself.html>

- Information on tobacco and pregnancy: <https://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/gallery/pregnant.html>
- Supporting nursing moms at work: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions/?from=breastfeeding>
- Other information about breastfeeding and lactation:
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/printables-and-shareables/resource/guides?from=breastfeeding> ;
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/itsonlynatural/?from=breastfeeding>

OWH also supports a National Breastfeeding Helpline at 1-800-994-9662, which provides telephone access to trained breastfeeding peer counselors, in English and Spanish.

The Office of Minority Health supports the "A Healthy Baby Begins with You" campaign to inform women about preconception and pregnancy care.

(<https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/content.aspx?ID=6953&lvl=3&lvlID=8>)

Other Collaborative Efforts

OWH supported a conference and subsequent publication on opioid use which incorporates information on use by pregnant women: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/files/documents/final-report-opioid-508.pdf>. OWH also supports the United States Breastfeeding Committee, an independent nonprofit collaboration of over 50 organizations that support breastfeeding initiatives across the United States.