TELEMUNDO PREVIEW

Expert Gives Tips on Sleep for Pregnant and Parenting Women

At a time when women are most in need of sleep, it can be frustratingly elusive. What's a pregnant or newly-parenting woman to do?

First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles will show viewers this Wednesday some practical strategies for maximizing z's. The segment, part of a weekly series on pregnancy and infant development, "Primeros Pasos," will air on the 6 p.m. news on KVEA-Channel 52.

Featured will be Dr. Harvey Karp, a Los Angeles pediatrician and author of The Happiest Baby on the Block, a primer for calming fussy babies and helping them sleep longer.

During pregnancy, physical and emotional changes can result in increased urination, sinus congestion, leg cramps, and difficulty finding a comfortable sleeping position, experts say.

"Start with a set bedtime routine so that you have time to get your mind to wind down and prepare for sleep," said Dr. Karp. "This applies to both you and your baby. Keeping daytime naps short and darkening your bedroom completely can also help."

New mom Dorena Rodriguez of Altadena is finding it's even more challenging to get enough sleep in the first few weeks after baby arrives. "I think the trouble I had sleeping during the last trimester of my pregnancy was mother nature's way of preparing me for sleep deprivation postpartum," she said.

Rodriguez has successfully used some of Dr. Karp's strategies, such as tightly swaddling her baby, Alina, and playing a CD of soothing "white noise" sounds.

For information, visit www.thehappiestbaby.com.

Undocumented No More Likely to Use Emergency Room than U.S.-Born

Children of undocumented immigrants and their children in Los Angeles County are no more likely than children of U.S.-born residents to obtain care at emergency rooms, according to a recent report by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Feb. 23, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: Controversies in Breastfeeding Support and Management with Jack Newman, MD, FRCP presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Van Dyke Auditorium, 2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

March 2, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.: Infant/Toddler Development and Care Symposium at the Center for Healthy Communities, The California Endowment, 1000 N Alameda St., LA 90012. Visit www.WestEd.org.


The study found that children with a foreign-born non-citizen parent are as likely as children with a U.S.-born parent to use an emergency room. Children with a naturalized parent are less likely to do so.

In recent years, anti-immigration groups have seized upon the perception that illegal immigrants consume scarce healthcare resources, clogging emergency rooms and costing taxpayers millions of dollars. Under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act of 1986, all emergency rooms that accept federal Medicare money are required to offer care to everyone, regardless of their immigration status or ability to pay.

"I expected to find - given the rhetoric on the issue - that undocumented immigrants were using the emergency departments much more intensely than other groups but this is not what we found," said Marianne Bitler, co-author of the study.

Bitler said the study also shows that Latinos are more likely than any other group to be uninsured, but when immigrant status is taken into account, the disparity with whites is no longer significant for adults and shrinks in half for children, from approximately 20 percent to less than 10 percent.

To view the report, click here.

Doubling of Folic Acid Intake Recommended for Young Women

The March of Dimes is petitioning the Food and Drug Administration to double its requirement of folic acid for foods labeled "enriched," following a new government report that shows American women of child-bearing age have lower folate levels now than their counterparts measured four years earlier - a deficiency that is linked to birth defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published results of a study measuring the level of folate in the blood of about 4,500 nonpregnant women ages 15-44 from 1999-2000 through 2003-2004. Researchers found that the levels declined significantly in women across three major ethnic groups in the United States.

"The findings are very disturbing," said Jennifer Howse, president of the March of Dimes. "Folic acid is the most important vitamin that women can take to prevent serious birth defects of the brain and spine, and it's important that they start consuming it before they get pregnant and continuing into early pregnancy."

The U.S. Public Health Service says that if all women of childbearing age consumed 400 micrograms of folic acid daily-before and after pregnancy-up to 70 percent of neural tube birth defects could be prevented. Although most women are aware of folic acid, only one in three actually consume a multivitamin containing folic acid, a form of vitamin B found naturally in foods and added to foods such as cereals and breads.

For more information, click here.
New Prison Nursery to Serve Inmates Who Are Expecting or Have Infants

A California prison nursery where babies live with their inmate mothers is currently under construction after years of effort by the Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, a First 5 LA grantee.

An unused wing of the California Institution for Women in Corona, 50 miles east of Los Angeles, will be transformed into a 20-bed unit for expectant and new mothers and their babies. Qualifying inmates - those set to go on parole in 12 to 18 months and deemed no risk to children - will share a private room with their newborns and participate in parenting classes and rehabilitation before both leave together. The first group of mothers and babies are expected to move into the nursery in April.

“We want to encourage that natural, protective bond that happens after birth,” said Denise Johnston, executive director of the center, who helped plan the nursery alongside warden Dawn Davison and other supporters.

The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, based in Eagle Rock, was funded by First 5 LA in 2001 to write curriculum for pregnant inmates. Johnston said that curriculum will be used as part of the nursery program to teach the women how to have a healthy pregnancy and care for their child.

An inmate giving birth is almost an everyday occurrence in California. This year more than 300 babies are expected to be born to women incarcerated by the state, and at any given time, about 1 in 10 of the state’s female inmates is pregnant.

Although most babies born to inmates end up living with grandparents or other relatives, 1 in 10 goes into the foster care system. Studies show children of prisoners are at significantly higher risk for involvement in drugs and crime later in life.

For information, visit www.e-ccip.org.

Maria Peacock Connects Low-Income Parents with Health Services

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline, “Champions for Our Children.”

Maria Peacock is a grant administrator for Healthy Babies/Happy Moms, a First 5 LA-funded maternal/child health program at Citrus Valley Health Partners, a four-facility acute care health system in the San Gabriel Valley.
Since 1995, Peacock has been involved with designing and implementing programs to improve the health and quality of life of the low-income communities served by the organization. She has worked on more than 100 community projects, including participating in community-wide assessments.

She earned a degree in business administration from Colegio Mercedes in Mexico, and is now studying at Mt. San Antonio College in preparation to pursue a BA in business and marketing.

**Which historical figure do you most admire?**
Cesar Chavez for his courage to not accept the "unacceptable."

**What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child or children in your life?**
Playing games, having ice cream, taking a walk.

**What is your idea of a perfect world?**
A world where all levels of society truly care for each other.

**What is the greatest challenge faced by children and families in LA County?**
Keeping families together in an ever-challenging economic environment.

**Who was your favorite teacher?**
Political science teacher Allan Teri, who taught me that there is more than one truth.

**Which living person do you most admire?**
Tom McGuiness, my former boss at Citrus Valley Health Partners, who has given all of himself in the service of others.

**What is your motto?**
"Your thoughts are the fabric of your reality."