

Pointers For Moms-to-Be

Reducing The Risk Of Premature Birth, Newborn Death

(NAPSA)—Quitting smoking before becoming pregnant, or at any time during pregnancy, can give a baby a healthier start in life.

It is estimated that between 12 and 20 percent of pregnant women in the U.S. smoke, causing seven to 10 percent of preterm deliveries and 10 percent of all infant deaths. Smoking during pregnancy is the number one preventable cause of complications such as miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, premature delivery, still birth and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

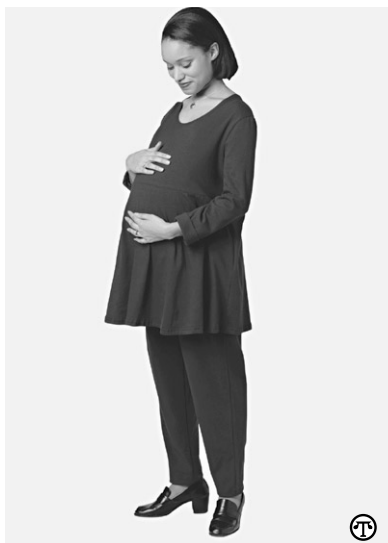
Sadly, for nearly half of all premature births, the cause is unknown. But, what experts know for sure is that smoking is a leading cause of prematurity.

Premature birth is on the rise, taking a devastating toll on thousands of families and also the U.S. health care system. Each day, 1,300 babies are born prematurely in the U.S.—that's one in eight births. In 2000 alone, the national hospital bill for premature babies was estimated at \$11.9 billion.

Premature birth is the leading cause of newborn death and babies who survive can face serious health and developmental disabilities for the rest of their lives.

One organization that's committed to fighting premature births is The National Partnership to Help Pregnant Smokers Quit.

The National Partnership wants to provide all pregnant smokers and new mothers with the help and support they need to quit smoking and stay tobacco free. One of the services available to pregnant smokers is the Great Start Quitline. The Quitline is



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sponsored by the American Legacy Foundation and managed by the American Cancer Society, both National Partnership members. By dialing 1-866-66-START, pregnant smokers can receive free one-on-one counseling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Also leading the fight against prematurity is the March of Dimes, an active member of the National Partnership. The March of Dimes recently launched a five-year, \$75 million research, awareness and education campaign to find the causes of prematurity. For more information on prematurity, visit the March of Dimes Web site at www.marchofdimes.com.

For more information on quitting smoking before or during pregnancy, visit the National Partnership to Help Pregnant Smokers Quit Web site at www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.