

Towards Improved Prenatal Environmental Health Awareness in Canada

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Children's Environmental Health

- Strong and growing body of evidence
- More exposed and more vulnerable
- Lifelong health impacts
- Some children more at risk than others
- Numerous challenges to improving CEH
 - Example: Prenatal environmental health awareness



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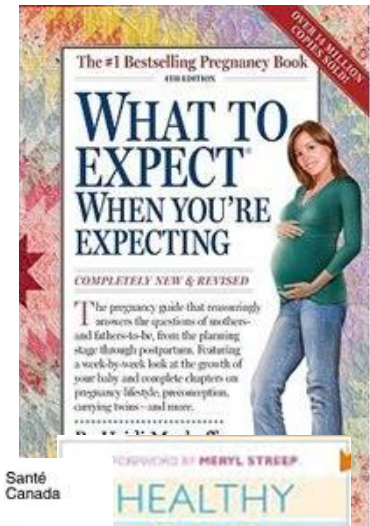


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Evidence of a problem

Information is there but you need to look for it

- Websites
 - Government, NGOs, research groups
 - Information and actionable ideas
 - Volume! Source?
- Pregnancy guide books
 - Specialized books
 - Most 'general' books say nothing!



Evidence of a problem

- Limited awareness or concern
 - Almost 1/2 had not heard or read about any EH issues during their pregnancy
 - General concern but few specifics
- Sources of EH information:
 - HC provider = least common but preferred source



Evidence of a problem

- Too much ‘noise’
 - *I think you can easily, for a new parent, become overloaded with some of the information out there especially if you start to use the internet [...]. It's easy to access, but then it's, trying to weed out and figure out what is reliable information and what might not be. (Dianna)*
- Time to receive information
 - *[...]when they're pregnant, that's when you start doing all the planning and the reading and the information-gathering. And then when they're born, you don't really have that kind of time” (Sue)*
- Information needs to be legitimized
 - *Existing messages not taken seriously (focus groups)*



What have we learned?

- Lack of awareness, low priority
- Information is available but not trusted or not accessed
- Identified need to formalize and integrate EH into prenatal care
 - Bring key players together to explore opportunities/barriers
 - Legitimize and integrate existing knowledge, experience, resources
 - Tools are needed to 'personalize' information



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Improving prenatal environmental health awareness

- Prenatal EH forum (Oct. 2014)
 - Forum examining EH practices, barriers & opportunities
- National survey of practitioners
- Development of educational tool and strategy

Example: 'Your Baby's Environment' App

- Identify potential exposures of concern
- Raise awareness about these exposures
- Identify 'actionable' steps to reduce exposures
- Alert healthcare providers about potential risks



'Your Baby's Environment'

- Receptive group, most vulnerable period
- Uptake of existing information, tools
- 'Personalized' health information
 - For women
 - For healthcare provider
- Waiting room = time
- Pooled data will inform policy and practice
- Expandable to other prenatal health issues



Improving prenatal environmental health awareness

- Support from key players
 - Practitioner groups
 - Research groups
 - Advocacy groups
 - Government agencies

- Partnerships and funding



Thank-you!

For more information:

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or

www.sandboxproject.ca/index.php/projects/working-group-the-environment