

New web site helps women stay fit during pregnancy and have healthier babies.

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Today's Date

Contact: Helene Byrne, hbyrne@mac.com

Phone: 510-530-5710

Fax: 510-530-2416

OAKLAND, CA—BeFit-Mom publishes free internet resource at www.befitmom.com that provides extensive information on prenatal and postpartum fitness and exercise to help women have healthier pregnancies and babies.

Gone are the days when doctors speculated that moderate to rigorous exercise might negatively impact fetal development. It is now widely recognized that participation in regular fitness activities during pregnancy provides numerous outstanding physical and psychological health benefits for the mother and her developing baby, and is a key determinate of maternal, fetal, and childhood health.

However, recent studies estimate that only 15% of all pregnant women are meeting the basic guideline of walking for 30 minutes on most days of the week, as recommended by ACOG (the American College Of Obstetricians and Gynecologists).

“The mission of BeFit-Mom is to motivate and inspire all women to be as fit and healthy as possible during pregnancy by giving them the tools, information, and support that they need,” explains perinatal fitness expert, author, and founder of BeFit-Mom, Helene Byrne. “Most women don’t realize the numerous and truly profound health benefits that exercise during pregnancy generates, both for herself and her baby, and that these benefits can have a positive impact on her entire family.”

Fit mothers have easier pregnancies with fewer complications, shorter labors, fewer “C” sections, gain less weight, and bounce back from pregnancy and childbirth much more quickly than less fit women. Just as importantly for expectant mothers, fitness activities relieve anxiety and stress, elevate mood, boost energy levels, improve self-image, and enhance self-confidence and overall quality of life.

As an added bonus, babies born to fit mothers are leaner, stronger, and healthier from day one, and have dramatically reduced risk for developing health problems like obesity, diabetes, and asthma later in life.

Many of today's women are very health conscious, want to stay fit and active during their pregnancies and beyond, but are unsure about how to safely modify their fitness activities as pregnancy advances, or cope with the many physical discomforts that plague pregnancy, such as back pain.

Unfortunately, misconceptions, half-truths, and contradictory advice about prenatal and postpartum fitness issues such as heart rate, heat regulation, abdominal separation, ligament laxity, and proper exercise modifications still persist, causing unnecessary confusion, anxiety, and sometimes injury to expectant mothers.

To set the record straight, befitmom.com provides scientifically accurate, comprehensive information, advice, and support on all aspects of maternal fitness and exercise so that every woman—no matter what her fitness level—and her developing baby can reap the significant health benefits that a fit pregnancy provides.

The web site explains how pregnancy impacts posture and balance, ligament length, joint stability, and muscular functioning, and offers advice on how to safely adapt and cope with these physical changes. Other pages discuss contraindicated activities, cardiovascular exercise—including tips both for the very athletic and the less fit—proper strength training and core conditioning modifications, safe stretching techniques, abdominal separation, pelvic floor health, heat regulation and hydration, positional low blood pressure, and more.

Weight gain is a natural, healthy, and necessary part of pregnancy, but apprehension and anxiety about excessive weight gain afflict most expectant women, especially with a first pregnancy.

“Many of us are hyper-conscious of our body weight before we even become pregnant,” explains Byrne, “and during pregnancy, we have frequent reminders that reinforce that preoccupation as we are weighed, measured, and evaluated during every prenatal checkup. Almost all pregnant women worry that they’ll gain too much weight and that they won’t be able to slim down afterward.”

Complicating the issue, more women now enter their childbearing years either over-weight or obese than ever before. This has led to a corresponding increase in the occurrence of gestational diabetes and other serious pregnancy complications that threaten the health of both the mother and her unborn child.

Recent studies have shown that babies born to mothers with gestational diabetes may have impaired blood sugar regulation from birth. Other studies have shown that babies born to mothers who were significantly overweight before pregnancy or gained too much weight during pregnancy are more likely to become overweight as children.

But the amount of weight an expectant women gains, or her ability to rebound afterward need not be left to fate, or luck. To help women meet this challenge, befitmom.com offers practical tools and reassuring advice on how to safely and effectively optimize prenatal weight gain and postpartum weight loss. Caloric requirements charts, which take into account height and weight, body composition, and activity/fitness level allow women to estimate their individual caloric balance points throughout pregnancy and again while breast feeding.

“Eating a high-quality, nutrient-rich diet—in the proper amount for one’s individual metabolism—and participating in regular physical activities, are the keys to controlling excessive weight gain during pregnancy, to losing weight quickly after childbirth, and to insuring that your baby is off to the healthiest start possible,” says Byrne.

Pregnancy opens a unique window of opportunity for women to improve their overall health and wellness. Concern for her baby fuels the expectant mother’s motivation to be more fit and adopt other healthy lifestyle choices.

As we all know, obesity and low fitness level during childhood are now commonplace, and cause myriad of physical and psychological problems. Because fit, healthy moms have stronger, healthier babies, and fitter families, promoting maternal fitness provides a potent antidote to this seemingly intractable health problem.

Good health and fitness habits established during pregnancy can last a lifetime and provide a springboard for better family health and wellness. Physically fit mothers demonstrate positive role modeling, and pass on solid health and fitness habits and values to their children, which serve as the most powerful determinate for our society’s future health.

About BeFit-Mom founder Helene Byrne

Helene Byrne is a nationally recognized perinatal fitness specialist, author, and certified Personal Trainer with over twenty years of professional experience which runs the gamut from group exercise and private training, to Pilates, yoga, injury rehabilitation, and special populations.

A former professional dancer, Helene was inspired to focus on prenatal and postpartum fitness and exercise after the birth of her son. Drawing on her knowledge of Pilates, dance, yoga, and cutting-edge fitness techniques, she created a unique system of exercise that quickly and effectively restores the body after pregnancy and childbirth. Both her book, *“Exercise After Pregnancy: How to Look and Feel Your Best”* (Celestial Arts, 2001) and DVD, *“Bounce Back*

Fast!: Post Natal Core Conditioning" (BeFit-Mom, 2005) have received wide acclaim in the fitness and birthing communities, and with women everywhere.

Through her workshops, she has had the pleasure of helping hundreds of women recondition their bodies after childbirth and live active, fit, healthy lifestyles.

Helene speaks regularly at fitness conventions, and has appeared on many radio and TV programs championing the numerous and outstanding benefits of prenatal and postpartum fitness and exercise.

Her mission is to motivate and inspire all women to stay fit and healthy during pregnancy and beyond, and to become positive role models that lead their entire families toward better health and wellness.

For interviews and feature story ideas please contact her at:

hbyrne@mac.com or
510-530-5710