[IMAGE]

Smoking Increases Diabetes Risk in Offspring

A pregnant mother's diet and lifestyle wield a powerful influence over the growth of the baby inside her. Many complications and birth defects can result from poor maternal decisions during pregnancy. A mother's smoking during pregnancy is suspected to increase the odds of her child developing diabetes later in life.

The authors of a recent study in the *British Medical Journal* determined the number of cigarettes mothers had smoked during pregnancy. Mothers of 15,000 people were classified as nonsmokers; medium smokers (1-9 cigarettes per day); heavy smokers (10 or more cigarettes per day); or smokers varying between medium and heavy. The children were all assessed for the presence of type 2 (adult-onset) diabetes 33 years later.

Heavy maternal smoking was linked to a nearly fivefold increase in early-onset type 2 diabetes. In addition, women who smoked heavily during pregnancy were far more likely to have children who would later develop diabetes than women who smoked less. Obesity and smoking by the children themselves also increased the risk for type 2 diabetes.

Smoking during pregnancy can increase the risk for other problems, such as low birth weight, miscarriage, and sudden infant death syndrome. If you smoke, quit before deciding to have children. And if you are already a pregnant smoker, consider the risks you place on your unborn child and try to quit immediately.

Reference:

Montgomery SM, Ekbom A. Smoking during pregnancy and diabetes mellitus in a British longitudinal birth cohort. *British Medical Journal* 2002:324, pp. 26-27.

To learn about more of the dangers of smoking, go to http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/general/smoking/index.html.

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