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Annual Meeting
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Wellness REVIEW

2023

Delivering Safer Pregnancies Lower Your Risk of Health Problems

(NIH-News In Health)

Pregnancy and childbirth can be a joyous time. But growing and delivering a baby are some of the most challenging things the human body can do. These processes can put so much strain on the body's systems that they may lead to serious health problems.

Most people have healthy pregnancies. Millions of births occur each year in the U.S. But, more than 50,000 people have serious health problems during or after pregnancy. Many can be successfully treated. But some may cause life-long difficulties or even disability.

Pregnancy can trigger or uncover heart problems, high blood pressure, blood clots, or diabetes. Some people experience severe bleeding or infection from giving birth. Others develop mental health conditions, like depression or anxiety.

The number of serious health problems and deaths from pregnancy have been rising in the U.S. in recent years. Knowing the symptoms to look out for and getting care quickly can help keep both mothers and their babies safe.





whether people get the care they need. In part because of factors like these, Black women and American Indian/Alaska Native women in the U.S. have a higher risk of death from pregnancy-related causes than White women.

“And, pregnancies nowadays are very different from what they used to be,” Pacheco says. People have babies later in life than they used to. They’re also more likely to carry excess weight.

“These things result in a higher chance of problems like diabetes and high blood pressure in pregnancy,” Pacheco

says. “But if we catch them early enough, we can provide care and control these diseases.”

“The healthier someone is entering pregnancy, the healthier their pregnancy will be,” adds Catov. “Things like good sleep and staying physically active are important for health, and for a healthy pregnancy.” So is maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding excess weight gain.

But, however healthy you are, you should still watch for certain warning signs during pregnancy.



Addressing Health Problems

There are effective treatments for many pregnancy-related health problems. Some drugs used for diabetes and mental health conditions can be used safely during pregnancy. Your doctor may prescribe aspirin to prevent a dangerous condition called preeclampsia if they find signs that you’re at high risk. Preeclampsia can turn into a deadly condition called eclampsia.

NIH-funded researchers are now studying whether there are benefits to treating milder health conditions during pregnancy, too.

Many women start their pregnancy with mild high blood pressure, says Dr. Alan Tita, who studies



Warning Signs

The body goes through many changes during pregnancy. So women may dismiss some potentially concerning symptoms.

“But you can catch a significant number of life-threatening conditions just by listening to your body and not ignoring certain things,” says Dr. Luis Pacheco, a pregnancy expert at the University of Texas.

“If something doesn’t feel right, talk about it with your care provider,” says Dr. Janet Catov, who studies pregnancy-related health problems at the University of Pittsburgh. “The majority of severe health problems from pregnancy are preventable.”

Health problems from pregnancy and birth can happen to anyone. But some women are at higher risk than others. These include women with pre-existing health problems or who are pregnant with twins or other multiples.

Access to quality health care can play a big role in whether people stay healthy during and after pregnancy. Some parts of the country have few doctors who specialize in pregnancy and childbirth. Poverty and lack of health insurance can also affect

pregnancy risks at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In the past, it often went untreated.

“We weren’t sure if treatment with blood pressure medicine would be helpful during the relatively short duration of pregnancy,” he adds.

So, in a large study, Tita and others looked at whether treating mild high blood pressure with a certain medication during pregnancy could reduce health problems. They found that it did.

“Treatment reduced the risks of problems such as preterm birth and low birth weight,” he explains. It also lowered the risks of the women’s high blood pressure getting worse during pregnancy and for severe preeclampsia.

He and others are looking at whether treating other health problems and risks during pregnancy and delivery can bring benefits, too.



Staying Healthy After Delivery

Health risks from pregnancy don’t end after delivery. Serious health problems can begin up to a year after giving birth. But the weeks right after delivery can be especially important.

“The first six weeks after pregnancy is another important time for women to pay attention to their own health. Most deaths happen in that short time after delivery,” Catov explains. “It’s a time when women are very focused on their baby. But they also need to be paying attention to how they’re feeling. Anything that doesn’t feel right, like bleeding, chronic headaches, or a chronic cough, is worth a call to the doctor.”

Catov recommends that people have a plan for emergencies in the months after birth. This could include lining up support in advance for transportation and childcare.

Prenatal care is vital for the healthiest possible pregnancy. But access to care after birth is important, too. If you’re pregnant and don’t have

coverage, you can look for resources at [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) (HHS)(link is external).

Catov’s team is testing programs to improve mothers’ health in the year after birth. They’re looking for ways to manage high blood pressure from pregnancy. Women who have certain pregnancy problems, like preeclampsia and preterm delivery, are at higher risk for high blood pressure up to seven years later. “And the majority of maternal deaths happen after delivery,” Catov adds.

Catov’s team is testing a health education program for Black women who experience high blood pressure during pregnancy. Black women are much more likely than other women in the U.S to die from blood-pressure problems related to pregnancy.

Study participants get in-home training in how to measure and manage their blood pressure. The study will show if the program improves women’s blood pressure a year after giving birth.

“If we can help them get back on track for their own health, that’s going to be good for them and for their families,” Catov says.

Signs of a Pregnancy Problem

Symptoms that can signal a dangerous problem during or after pregnancy include:

- Severe headache
- Dizziness or fainting
- Changes in your vision
- Fever
- Trouble breathing
- Overwhelming tiredness
- Chest pain
- Severe belly pain
- Severe nausea and throwing up
- Severe swelling
- Thoughts about harming yourself or your baby

Adapted from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



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The average family of four gets over 30 prescriptions per year. Many of those prescriptions are either not covered or are too expensive on their health plans.

C L E V E R



Log in at www.allianceofgigworkers.com for more information on how to use this benefit.
Benefits may not be available in all membership levels.



Autumn is Coming: Get Ahead of Allergy Symptoms Now

(BPT) - You probably know what's coming: Along with changing leaves and dropping temps this fall will come the sniffles, stuffy nose and itchy eyes from allergies to certain plants like ragweed. Unfortunately, climate change has increased the intensity of symptoms and the length of time that many people cope with their autumn allergies.

If fall is a time when you're hit hard by allergies, you are better off acting now - instead of after you're already experiencing symptoms.

"Don't let the changing seasons catch you by surprise," says Kathleen May, M.D., president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and

Immunology (ACAAI). “Planning ahead can help make this year’s fall allergy season a lot more manageable, no matter what’s happening in the environment where you live.”

Whether you’ve had allergies for years or you suspect that they may be the cause of your recent unpleasant symptoms, here are tips from ACAAI to help you prepare for autumn allergies before they strike - so you can reduce itching, sneezing and wheezing and enjoy everything the season has to offer.

Stay in the know

Keep an eye on your local pollen and mold counts. When they are high, it’s best to avoid spending too much time outdoors. Keep the AC running in your car and home to help filter out allergens (rather than leaving the windows open).

You can also protect yourself when you need to be outdoors on higher pollen count days by wearing an N95 mask to help filter out pollen, and wearing a hat and sunglasses to help keep pollen out of your eyes.

Don’t wait to medicate

If you already take allergy medication each fall, make sure not to wait until after your symptoms start. Instead, plan to begin taking your medication about two weeks before your symptoms usually begin for full effectiveness - and keep taking the medication two weeks after the first frost, as your symptoms may linger after most of the pollen is gone.

Unsure exactly when to start taking your medication? Talk to your allergist for advice on a treatment plan that’s proactive rather than reactive. Then take a simple step like adding a medication reminder to your calendar so you won’t forget.

Adjust some household habits

Making a few minor changes to your household routine in the fall - or even year-round - can have an impact on your exposure to allergens while you’re at home. Here are some recommendations:

- **Change your HVAC filter every three months** - and choose a high-quality filter such as those with a MERV rating of 11-13 for the best filtration of pollen and mold.
- **Leave shoes at the door** - and wash clothes immediately after spending time outdoors.
- **Shower or bathe at night** to avoid bringing allergens into your bed.
- **Don’t hang clothes or bedding outside** to dry after washing.

See an allergist

Because the environmental conditions that create allergens and your body’s response to them can change over time, it’s a good idea to see your allergist for an updated, personalized treatment plan that can best help you manage your symptoms, no matter the season. Allergists are specially trained to help diagnose and treat your specific allergy and/or asthma symptoms, using the latest testing and treatments to help you get back to enjoying your life.

If you are - or think you might be - one of the over 50 million Americans who suffer from allergies, you can find an allergist in your area by visiting [ACAAI.org/find-an-allergist](https://acaai.org/find-an-allergist).

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Alliance of Gig Workers will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131, on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY **Alliance of Gig Workers** **September 20, 2023 Annual Meeting of Members** **THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF** **ALLIANCE OF GIG WORKERS**

The undersigned member of Alliance of Gig Workers does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Alliance of Gig Workers, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Alliance of Gig Workers and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Ryan Kerner, Scott Warman, and Tim Twellman
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2023

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri
August 22, 2023
Date



alliance of gig workers

The Alliance of Gig Workers is a non-profit organization serving the goals and needs of small businesses, the self-employed, independent contractors, and entrepreneurs from across the nation. Since its inception Alliance of Gig Workers has been dedicated to providing benefits and resources to help its members with professional, lifestyle and health-related benefits, as well as advocacy opportunities so they can have a voice on issues that may impact their success. Despite changes to the economy and the health care landscape that have made an uncertain future, Alliance of Gig Workers is focused on assisting its members in any way possible and growing into a leader for the independent business person.

At Alliance of Gig Workers we seek out quality benefits, services and resources to help members succeed by reducing costs and taking control of both their personal and financial health. With the group buying power of an Association Alliance of Gig Workers members receive discounts on business, health and even consumer products and services. As well we strive to provide our members with valuable information relevant to your life. Alliance of Gig Workers shares information on business, finance, wellness, lifestyle, nutrition, philanthropy and more through our newsletters, website and emails. Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Benefits may not be available in each membership level. For more information, or to upgrade your membership, contact Membership Services Office, Alliance of Gig Workers, 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131 or (800) 992-8044.

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