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## Did You Know?

A child who receives poor nutrition before birth is more likely to develop diabetes as a child and suffer a heart attack as an adult.

## Greetings

This month we begin a multi-part series discussing the link between prenatal health and lifelong health. You will also learn how you can play a vital role in improving the health of future generations.



### Why the link between prenatal and lifelong health must be explained

## The Future of Public Health Depends on You

### How teaching teens about prenatal development could revolutionize human health

A few years from now, a girl named Katie will be born premature. Growing up, she will struggle in school and suffer from childhood diabetes. In her early teenage years, she will experiment with drugs and alcohol. As an adult, Katie will be more likely to develop a heart attack than many of her peers.

Unfortunately, her mother's poor nutrition and smoking during pregnancy will significantly contribute to Katie's physical, academic, and behavioral difficulties. Katie's problems, however, could be prevented if her mother quits smoking and improves her nutrition before she becomes pregnant.

### Poor Prenatal Health is Linked to Lifelong Health Risks

Medical evidence shows that a woman's health and lifestyle choices before and during pregnancy may influence the lifelong health and educational potential of her children. A pregnant woman who makes poor health decisions (such as unhealthy diet and use of harmful substances) may substantially increase her child's risk of common chronic illnesses.



### Adapting to Survive

Developing humans faced with shortages of oxygen or essential nutrients, or exposed to harmful substances, adapt in order to survive. These adaptations change the way some organs develop before birth, increasing the risk of disease later in life.

For example, when the fetus does not receive enough oxygen, the brain and heart take what they need to survive. But other organs such as the liver, pancreas, and kidneys may not get enough oxygen. As a result, these organs may not grow to normal size or work as effectively as they should. They may also be more prone to disease.

### Education is the Key to Future Health

The key to improving lifelong health for future generations is to ensure that all young people are healthy before and during pregnancy. But how can this be done? As with many public health campaigns, a broad effort reaching all young women and men is the most effective way to inspire a healthy generation.

Prenatal education should be an integral part of every student's learning. This will teach future mothers and fathers about the importance of their health decisions well before they are likely to be involved in pregnancy. This will also motivate future fathers to create a healthy environment for their pregnant partners.

### A Two-Step Strategy

You are a vital part of our strategy to improve lifelong health through prenatal development education. This simple two-step strategy is:

#### 1. Explain "the Link"

Teach students about the link between prenatal health and lifelong health. Empower them to understand how their own health and behavior will impact the next generation.

#### 2. Make Pregnancy Real

Show students human development as it unfolds in the womb. This visual appreciation is essential to help them put "the link" into context.

### Hope for a Healthier Future

Knowing about the link between prenatal and lifelong health gives us an unprecedented opportunity to change the course of human health. Educators, clinicians, public health officials, community groups, and parents are uniquely positioned to help young people understand "The Link" and motivate them to engage in healthy decision-making.

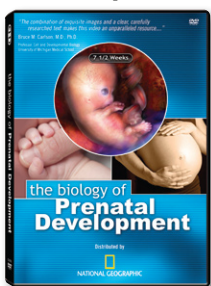
If the parents of the future can be given a true appreciation for the importance of the prenatal period, their children could be given the healthiest foundation possible. For babies of the future like Katie, that could make all the difference.

Next month, we will look at how certain nutritional deficiencies before and during pregnancy may influence lifelong health.

## Give A Gift

Buy our award-winning science documentary for family and friends.

### The Biology of Prenatal Development



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To purchase, visit  
[EHD's Online Store.](#)



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EHD is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health science education and public health.

EHD equips educators, clinicians, and governments to help everyone appreciate, apply, and communicate the science of health and human development.

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## What You Can Do

**Professional educators:** We invite you to complete the [free registration process](#) and our free webinar. This 60-minute course will help you become familiar with the subject and the extensive resources at [www.ehd.org](http://www.ehd.org). Please encourage your colleagues, supervisors, and administrators to do the same. Eligible educators in some states (TX, FL, KY, AL) who complete the webinar qualify for a free copy of our award-winning DVD, *The Biology of Prenatal Development*.

**Health care professionals:** Explore the free resources at the [Little One Pregnancy Place](#). Here your pregnant patients can create a personalized pregnancy calendar, journal, and guestbook that can be shared with family and friends. Details and images of the developing human are included throughout the calendar.

**Parents:** Please become familiar with our website and [purchase our DVD](#). Share what you learn with your family and other families who might benefit. You could also contact teachers and health care professionals in your community and ask them to consider helping any way they can. Please consider [printing and posting](#) a flyer on community bulletin boards to help spread the word about the [Little One Pregnancy Place](#).

**Everyone:** We invite you to help build a healthier future. You can start by becoming familiar with our website and DVD. Perhaps you can [give a tax deductible financial gift](#) to help train and equip educators and schools in your state. Please introduce this education project to friends and local business owners who could match or even exceed your gift.

## New \$50,000 Challenge Grant for Nebraska Health Education



Young people in Nebraska are closer than ever to realizing a healthier future. EHD is actively seeking donations to launch a year-long, \$146,000 campaign to train educators and equip public libraries across the state. Thanks to your generous support, the Nebraska fund now contains \$27,000, with \$119,000 still needed.

We have just received a \$50,000 challenge pledge from generous individuals who are committed to improving the health of Nebraska children. They will match new contributions for Nebraska teacher training and DVD distribution, dollar for dollar. EHD is seeking \$50,000 to qualify for this grant plus \$19,000 to fund the balance of the Nebraska plan and begin the campaign.

You can help build a healthier future by donating to the Nebraska fund or the state fund of your choosing. [Donate now.](#)

Thank you for your interest and please invite your family and friends to visit our site. Please also invite them to sign up for our free newsletter using the link on our home page or at the foot of any of our web pages.