

# Viva Views

Issue 1.5.5

A Newslet-

## A Message From The Project Investigators



Matthew Gillman, MD, SM

It's been about six years since we began planning for Viva, and now it's in full swing! I can hardly express enough thanks to you for participating in a project that is the first of its kind. We are now beginning to see how Viva results could really improve the health of pregnant women and their children as they grow up.

—Matt



Janet Rich-Edwards, ScD

Project Viva truly depends on the enthusiasm and volunteer spirit of mothers like you. As a mother, I know how hard it is to make time to fill out questionnaires. As a researcher, I know we need better information about the ways in which diet, lifestyle and stress affect the health of mothers and their infants.

Your participation is a very real contribution to the health of all mothers and children. —Janet



### Interesting Tidbit

During pregnancy a woman's blood volume increases up to 50%. In addition to meeting the needs of the fetus, this is a reserve against fluid loss that occurs during childbirth. —www.allaboutmoms.com

### A Few Websites Our Viva Moms' Found Helpful

www.childbirth.org

www.nursingmothers.org

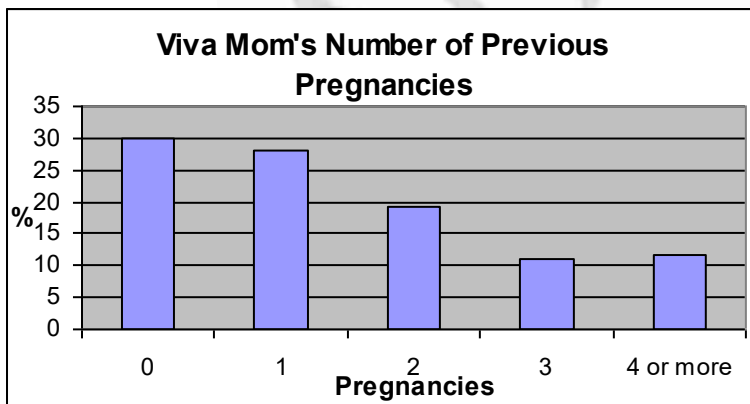
www.parentsplace.com

www.zerotothree.org

www.babycenter.com

www.bostonchildhealth.org

www.storknet.com



Of our Viva participants, 30% are pregnant for the first time!



### Mother's Day

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the orders that made Mother's Day a national holiday.



## Questions and Answers

### When will I see you again?

This will be the first and only time we will be meeting, as your participation was completed at the end of our visit. However, please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions about the study or your participation.

Phone Number: 1-800-598-4247 ext. 86067

Email: [Project\\_Viva@hphc.org](mailto:Project_Viva@hphc.org)

### I thought Project Viva met with moms and babies? Why don't you need to follow-up with me after my delivery?

You're right, Project Viva is a large study that is interested in the health of moms and their babies. Recently, we received funding to focus on some questions that are directly related to pregnancy only. That's what you've been helping us with! We need to meet with you for only one visit, but the information you share with us will help shape the future health of moms and their babies. Thank you!

### It has been more than two weeks since my visit with Project Viva—is it too late to mail back the questionnaire?

It is never too late to send back your questionnaire! We would like the questionnaire back within two weeks of our meeting, but we will gladly accept it at any other time.

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND VIVA

Premature delivery is the second leading cause of infant mortality in the United States and it is the primary cause of death among African-American infants. Yet, until recently, scientists understood the causes of the common cold better than they understood the triggers of labor and delivery.

Although researchers had been studying whether stress in women's lives affected their pregnancies, they were not getting very satisfying answers. Perhaps they were not asking the right questions about stress. Also, stressful experiences throughout a woman's life shape her body and may affect her pregnancy. This is the reason we have asked you to tell us about some of your experiences as a child, as a teenager and as an adult. We are also looking at certain aspects of stress such as symptoms of anxiety or low mood, experiences around discrimination and personal safety, and ways you have coped with stress and your financial situation.

Recent research has suggested that levels of a placental hormone called corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), may be linked to the length of pregnancy. This is exciting news for scientists because it just so happens that CRH is also the first hormone that our brains release in response to stress. When we collect enough data from women in Project Viva, we will be able to relate women's lifetime experiences of stress to levels of CRH (measured in the blood sample you gave us) and to the risk of premature delivery. With your help, Project Viva may be able to crack some of the mystery around premature delivery. With this information, we hope to educate the public about ways women can reduce their stress and risks of pre-term delivery.



Special Thanks to:

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