

VIVA VOICES: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

VISIT FOUR

Q: When will my fourth Viva visit be?

A: A Viva research assistant will meet with you and your baby about six months after delivery. This is a very important visit.

Q: Where will I meet you for my fourth Viva visit?

A: A Viva research assistant will be contacting you to schedule the time and location which would be most convenient for you and your baby. Right now, we have offices established at the Cambridge, Quincy, and Kenmore HVMA sites.

Q: If my baby is not enrolled in Project Viva, will I still have a fourth visit?

A: Yes. Even if you have chosen not to enroll your baby, all moms will be asked to participate in an interview and to fill out some brief questionnaires.

Q: What if my baby does not receive care at a Harvard Vanguard site?

A: We would love to meet your baby no matter where he or she goes for pediatric care. However, because of the necessary measuring equipment used at this visit, we can meet you only at a Harvard Vanguard site.

Q: What will happen during the fourth visit?

A: At this 60 minute visit, we will ask Viva moms to participate in an interview and complete questionnaires. A Project Viva research assistant will also take some measurements on your baby, including blood pressure and the Visual Recognition Memory Test. This test involves having your baby look at a series of pictures while sitting on your lap. **After your visit, you will receive a \$20 cash gift and will be reimbursed for parking.**

GENERAL

Q: If I have another child, can I be a part of Project Viva again?

A: Absolutely! We hope that your experience with Project Viva has been a good one and that you would consider sharing your time with us again during another pregnancy.

Q: How will I hear about the findings of Project Viva?

A: As you know, Project Viva is a long-term project. We expect to have results available in the next few years and we will keep you posted about how to find out about those results.

Is visit 4 my last visit with Project Viva?

When we touch base with you at Visit 4, you'll have the opportunity to hear about a new phase of our study to follow our Viva babies until they are 3-4 years old. This is especially exciting because continuing the participation of Viva children will allow us to study development of asthma and allergies, which are becoming more and more common in children. A research assistant will review with you this next phase, which includes mailed questionnaires once each year, and a single in-person visit around your child's 3rd birthday.

Please share your comments and ideas with Viva Staff.
Call our hotline at (800) 598-4247 ext. 86067.

Email the Viva Views editor at Julie_Hahn@harvardpilgrim.org or fax us at (617) 509-9853.

We are interested in what you have to say!

Viva Views

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VIVA VIEWS

A Newsletter From A Study of Health For the Next Generation

A MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT



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 now have our earliest glimpses at our data so we are just 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

OUR NUMBERS ARE GROWING!

Viva now has over **2,500** women enrolled, and so far, over **1,400** Viva babies have been delivered!

VIVA IN THE NATIONAL NEWS!

In our first national scientific presentation, in March, 2001, we looked at various factors that are related to blood pressure level in the first few days of life. We analyzed blood pressure data we obtained from the first 322 newborn babies we measured. To our surprise, we found that mothers who were in their 30s and 40s had newborns with blood pressure a few points higher than babies of younger mothers. We don't know the explanation for these early findings yet, but we will look into them further. We were happy that various news outlets—including newspapers, the internet, and TV stations—reported on these results, and especially happy that none of them used the information unwisely to discourage older women from having babies!

Thanks to all of you, Viva has already gained a national spotlight.

Project Viva will be the source of many important scientific findings for years to come.

We appreciate your ongoing participation!

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THE HISTORY OF PROJECT VIVA

For years, Dr. Matthew Gillman has studied diet and nutrition and how it affects our health. In 1994, he became very interested in the relationship between diet and pregnancy, especially in learning more about how a woman's diet during her pregnancy can affect the health of her children. To answer these questions, Dr. Gillman and his colleagues submitted an application to the National Institutes of Health to fund Project Viva.

However, before Viva could get underway, a pilot study had to be conducted to see whether Viva was reasonably designed and if the questionnaires could provide the necessary information to answer our research questions. In 1998, our pilot study, called the Pregnancy Diet Study, began. This study enrolled 250 pregnant women who agreed to answer questions and have a sample of their blood drawn. In February of 1999, the results from the pilot study showed that Project Viva was on the right track. With the financial support from the National Institutes of Health, we began enrolling pregnant women in April of 1999.

Project Viva, however, is about more than just nutrition. We have received additional funding from the March of Dimes Foundation and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to expand the scope of the study. Not only will we examine the effects of a mother's diet on her pregnancy and the health of her child, but Project Viva will also investigate the effects of stress on pregnancy and the impact of feeding practices on children's development.

As you can see, Project Viva has been in the making for a long time. We are extremely excited about the wonderful response we have received from our participants. Over 2,500 women have already signed up. We are grateful for your willingness to participate in the study and we hope that with your support, we can make a positive impact on improving the health of women and their children.

What we have learned from Viva Moms.

85% of participants experienced nausea

52% had new aversions & 42% had new cravings

29% are pregnant for the first time

25% of our participants *pray* or *meditate* at least once a day

7% identify themselves as *vegetarians*

2% of our participants are a **twin** or **TRIPLET**

We would love to add your baby's photo to our Viva photo album! If you would like your baby to be included, please bring a photograph to your fourth visit.

We would like to display our Viva baby photos in the next edition of this newsletter. Please let us know at Visit 4 if this is something you would consent to.

Even though most Viva moms now live in the Boston area, 22% of our participants were born outside of the continental United States.

Albania.Angola.Antigua.Argentina.Australia.Azores Is-



lands.Bahamas.Barbados.Belgium.Bermuda.Brazil.Brunei.Dominican Republic.Ecuador.El Salvador.England.Ethiopia.France.Germany.Ghana.Greece.Guadeloupe.Guatemala.Guinea-Bissau.Haiti.Honduras.Hong Kong.Hungary.India.Ireland.Israel.Italy.Jamaica.Japan.Kenya.Korea.Malaysia.Mexico.Nigeria.Pakistan.Panama.Peru.Philippines.Poland.Portugal.Puerto Rico.Russia.Senegal.Sierra Leone.Singapore.Somalia.South Africa.South Korea.Spain.Sri

STATS ABOUT VIVA MOMS

MEET THE PROJECT VIVA RESEARCH STAFF



Front row: Cynthia Gustafson, Liz Baldwin, Cristy Valla, Heather Brymer, Ginger Ward, Rachel Fournier, Karyn Brudnicki.
Second row: Katie Brown, Liz Santos, Kristen Cudmore, Mary Lane, Susan Maher
Not pictured: Jennifer Dotson

@ Very Special Thank You to . . .

*. . . CVS, Scholastic Inc., Costco, RS Athletics, and Toys 'R' Us companies for their generous contributions.
. . . Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates, The Brigham and Women's Hospital, and The Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center
. . . our participants. Hope you enjoyed your magnets!*

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 because 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 in the second trimester) 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.

