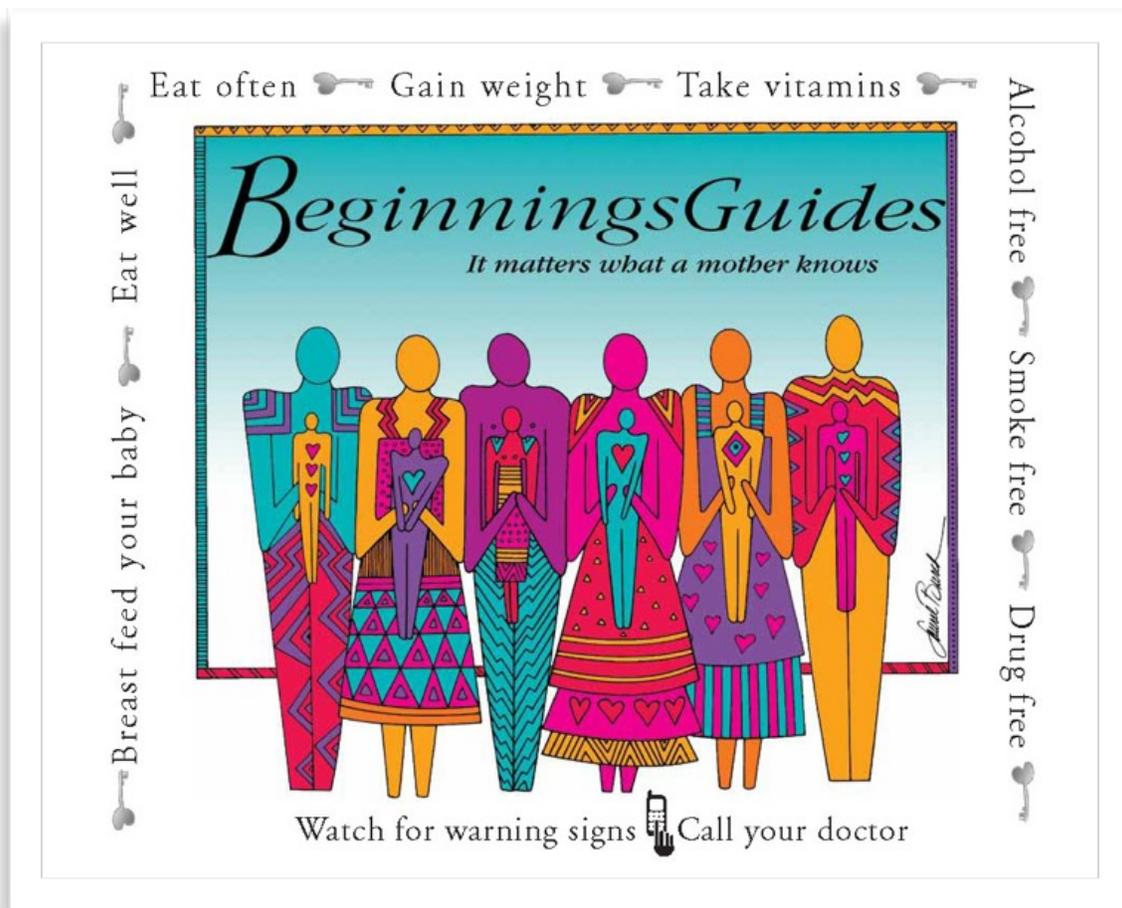


It matters what a mother knows
How mothers' knowledge affects birth outcomes



The health behavior messages on the *Beginnings Guides* Key Messages Poster are from the Guidelines for the Content of Prenatal Care for the US and Canada. They were tested with a nationally representative population of over 9,000 mothers. Women who recalled receiving information on these topics were significantly less likely to deliver a low-birth-weight (LBW) infant compared with those who did not recall being informed on these topics. The poster, with art by [Laurel Burch](#), is included with the *Beginnings Pregnancy Guide*. Encourage mothers to display the poster where they will see it often. Discuss the key messages at each visit.

Key Messages Linked to Birth Outcomes

- Eat well
- Gain weight*
- Take prenatal vitamins*
- No alcohol*
- No drugs
- No smoking
- Breast feed your baby*

* These four topics had independent effects. Significantly lower percentages of low birth weight were found for women who recalled receiving information on any one of these four topics even in the absence of other topics.

ALL TOPICS	%LBW	% change
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No recall	6.2	25
Yes recall	4.7	

Priority Topics

Gain weight	%LBW	P	% change
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No recall	6.9	<.01	24
Yes recall	5.3		

Take vitamins	%LBW	P	% change
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No recall	8.6	.04	35
Yes recall	5.6		

Don't drink alcohol	%LBW	P	% change
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No recall	5.4	.03	17
Yes recall	6.5		

Breast feed	%LBW	P	% change
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No recall	6.7	<.001	27
Yes recall	4.9		

Additional Key Messages

- Baby's growth and development
- Call for help.
 - Report warning signs
 - Discuss family violence with your doctor, midwife, doula or home visitor

Baby's growth and development: While this topic has not been directly linked to birth outcomes, Davis and others report that knowledge of fetal development increases bonding between mother and infant. Bonding during pregnancy may affect maternal behaviors and self-care and thereby affect newborn health.

Call for help. Report warning signs: This message is based on Libbus' finding of an adjusted risk ratio of 2.87 between risk of preterm low birth weight and lack of advice to call the provider when preterm labor was suspected. Informed pregnant women can initiate timely intervention by recognizing and reporting warning signs. Beginnings readers were significantly more likely to recall this advice than others in the same health plans and same provider panel (RR 1.41 p.03).

Call for help. Discuss family violence with your doctor, midwife, doula or home visitor: ACOG recommends that all pregnant women receive information about abuse and neglect and be encouraged to discuss family violence with providers.

References

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