Prenatal care is key to preventing pregnancy complications and identifying intimate partner violence.\textsuperscript{1,2,3} “Inadequate” prenatal care is associated with an increased risk of preterm delivery compared with women receiving “adequate” care.\textsuperscript{4} “Adequate” care significantly reduces risk for premature birth, low birth weight, and small-for-gestational-age status in drug-exposed infants.\textsuperscript{5} Late entry to prenatal care has been associated with increased risk for neonatal death, infant death, and cumulative death within the first year of life.\textsuperscript{6}

Maternal stress, anxiety, and depression during pregnancy has been linked to adverse birth and developmental outcomes, including: preterm delivery and low birth weight;\textsuperscript{7,8,9} difficult and reactive infant behavior;\textsuperscript{10,11} poorer physical outcomes such as the development of Celiac Disease and asthma.\textsuperscript{12,13}

Postpartum depression is associated with less infant weight gain, increased infant physical health concerns, and increased infant night awakenings. Postpartum depression has also been linked to a lack of appropriate mother-child engagement, poorer developmental outcomes, and insecure attachment in the infant.\textsuperscript{14,15} In addition, low maternal responsiveness and sensitivity is significantly associated with the development of insecure attachment in infants.\textsuperscript{16,17,18}

Breastfeeding confers significant benefits to premature babies including host protection and improved developmental outcomes compared to premature babies given formula.\textsuperscript{19} Breastfeeding is strongly linked with a reduction in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) with one meta-analysis concluding that a history of breastfeeding is associated with a 36 percent reduction in the risk of SIDS compared to infants without a history of breastfeeding.\textsuperscript{20,21} Finally, breastfeeding is associated with a reduction in risk for a variety of physical conditions, including diarrhea in infants, acute otitis media,\textsuperscript{22} gastroenteritis, severe lower respiratory tract infections, atopic dermatitis, asthma (young children), obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, and childhood leukemia.\textsuperscript{23}

Safe sleep practices decrease the likelihood of SIDS, the risk of infant breathing problems, overheating, and issues with the infant cardiovascular system.\textsuperscript{24} Prone or side sleep positions (as opposed to supine) are linked with these negative outcomes. Additional independent risk factors that contribute the risk of SIDS include: sleeping on a soft surface, maternal smoking during pregnancy, overheating, late or no prenatal care, young maternal age, preterm birth and/or low birth weight, and male gender.\textsuperscript{25}
THE EVIDENCE BASE: PREDICTORS OF INFANT HEALTH


7. Endnotes


26. Ibid.