

# TAB 2: WHAT WE ARE LEARNING ABOUT DES

## Overview

Between the time that diethylstilbestrol (DES) was first manufactured in 1938 and the discovery of related health problems in 1971, approximately 5–10 million pregnant women and their children were exposed to the drug. In 1971, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning to physicians advising them not to prescribe DES to pregnant women. The warning was based on a discovery the same year that exposure to DES before birth (in the womb) increased the risk of clear cell adenocarcinoma (CCA) of the vagina (Herbst, 1971) and cervix (Noller, 1972). Since the time that DES was linked to CCA, researchers have been monitoring the health problems of women prescribed DES during pregnancy and their children exposed to DES before birth (in the womb). For more information on the confirmed health risks, refer to the section of CDC's DES Update titled [WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DES: Known DES Health Effects](#).

Researchers are currently working to learn more about DES. It is possible that they will learn about new health risks as individuals who were exposed to DES grow older. Health risks that are currently being investigated and related concerns that may not be confirmed by research are discussed in this section. Staying informed about DES is important, giving you the knowledge to ask your health care provider appropriate questions to protect your health and the health of your family.

This section of CDC's DES Update includes the following information.

- **Recent DES Research** – A review of current DES research.
- **Related Concerns** – A discussion of potential, but unconfirmed, health risks and other related health issues.
- **DES Teleconferences** – A series of conversations with DES researchers and clinical experts.

To learn more about how DES research is conducted, refer to the section of CDC's DES Update titled [WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DES: Understanding DES Research](#).