

Comments by Dr. Koop  
Healthy Mothers/Gerber Press Briefing  
September 22

(approximately 10 minutes)

"Goal: To continue to improve maternal and infant health and to help achieve the goal of reducing infant mortality to fewer than nine deaths per 1,000 live births by 1990."

--Objectives for the Nation

- o Reducing the incidence of low birth weight and birth defects through intervention with the mother before and during pregnancy is a high priority for promoting infant health.
- o Diet, social and economic status, marital status, the age of the mother, use of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, and prenatal health services affect birth weight and health of the mother and child.
- o Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is a partnership of government, professional, and voluntary organizations and agencies designed to increase the awareness of pregnant women about the importance of good health for themselves and their unborn babies. (Membership list is attached.)
- o One Coalition project is a series of six posters (titles are attached) and health information cards for clinics serving low-income new or expectant mothers. Clinic subscribers will receive materials on a new subject every other month for a year beginning approximately January 1983. Each of the series is co-sponsored by the Public Health Service and a private sector group:
  - Nutrition - Gerber Foods (photo in press packet)
  - Breast feeding - American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
  - Smoking - March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation
  - Alcohol - Licensed Beverage Information Council

(Co-sponsors have not been named for medications and prenatal care topics.)

This is one of several Coalition projects.

- o In addition, we know that women in their childbearing years read what you write (chart of ten most popular magazines for this age group is attached). And some of you write especially for pregnant women.

- o How you can help - feature articles on health promotion during pregnancy give attention to prenatal care in health columns or other magazine features; include a letter to the editor from the Surgeon General; use public service print ads (based on posters). Brief information on each of the six most important topics is included in the press kit. The Public Health Service can provide any background information or other assistance you may need.