

## PRESS RELEASE

**CDC Creates Comprehensive Information Resource  
About Exposure to Diethylstilbestrol (DES)**

*CDC's DES Update Web Site offers information and resources about health risks,  
ongoing research for individuals exposed to DES during 1938 – 1971*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced the launch of the *DES Update* Web site, a resource that individuals who were pregnant or born during 1938–1971 can access to learn more about Diethylstilbestrol (DES) exposure and learn how exposure could affect them, their family, and their friends.

In the United States, an estimated five to 10 million people were exposed to DES, between 1938 and 1971. DES is a synthetic estrogen that was prescribed to prevent miscarriages or premature delivery. However, in 1971, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a *Drug Bulletin* advising physicians to stop prescribing DES to pregnant women. The FDA warning was based on a study published in 1971 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* linking DES to a rare vaginal cancer in girls and young women exposed to DES in the womb.

Subsequent research links DES exposure to health risks among the women who were prescribed DES while pregnant and the children born to these women. Women who were prescribed DES while pregnant are at a modestly increased risk for breast cancer. Women exposed to DES in the womb—DES Daughters—experience lifelong, increased risks that include a rare vaginal and cervical cancer, reproductive complications, and infertility. Men exposed to DES—DES Sons—face an increased risk for noncancerous epididymal cysts (growths on the testicles).

“Researchers have been studying the health effects of DES for more than 30 years,” said Marsha Vanderford, PhD, deputy director of the Office of Communication at CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health. “CDC’s *DES Update* Web site helps people who think they may have been exposed to DES learn more about health risks related to DES and provides resources for protecting their health.”

CDC's *DES Update* Web site is a comprehensive resource for health care providers and consumers. Through the Web site, individuals who are unsure of their exposure status and who were pregnant or born between 1938-1971 can access additional information and resources about DES, including an online version of CDC's *DES Update Self-Assessment Guide* to help them assess the likelihood of their exposure to DES.

Health care providers can access educational materials, including DES case studies, presentations, and self study materials through CDC's *DES Update* Web site. Providers can download these materials from the Web site.

To access CDC's *DES Update Self-Assessment Guide* or additional DES resources, log onto CDC's *DES Update* Web site at [www.cdc.gov/DES](http://www.cdc.gov/DES). Print versions of CDC's *DES Update* resources can be ordered online or through CDC's toll-free phone number at 1-888-232-6789.

### **About CDC's *DES Update***

Congress is funding CDC's *DES Update* to provide the most accurate and comprehensive information to the public and to health care providers about DES and the health risks associated with exposure. CDC's *DES Update* was developed in conjunction with the National Cancer Institute and several other partner organizations.

As research continues and results are published, CDC will provide updates on the *DES Update* Web site at [www.cdc.gov/DES](http://www.cdc.gov/DES).

###

---

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.*