

DES UPDATE

For you, your family, and your health care provider

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



CDC's DES Update Includes Updated Information on Reproductive Health Risks Associated with Exposure to Diethylstilbestrol (DES)

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. Specifically, CDC's DES Update reveals important, updated information on DES-related health risks for reproductive complications and infertility.

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. The key reproductive health findings highlighted in CDC's *DES Update* include:

- DES Daughters – women who were exposed to DES in the womb – are at an increased risk for reproductive tract structural differences; pregnancy complications, such as ectopic (tubal) pregnancies and preterm deliveries; and infertility.
- Studies have shown that up to a third of DES Daughters were born with or developed some

form of reproductive tract abnormality of the cervix, uterus, or Fallopian tubes.

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. 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.

