

Centers for Birth Defects Research and Prevention



In FY 1996, Congress enacted legislation that directed CDC to establish Centers for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. These Centers have been established in seven states: 1) Arkansas, 2) California, 3) Iowa, 4) Massachusetts, 5) New Jersey, 6) New York, and 7) Texas. Major activities include:

- A collaborative study of infants born with major birth defects,
- Genetic and environmental epidemiological studies,
- Expansion and improvement of state birth defects surveillance systems.

Collaborative Study to Find Causes of Birth Defects

All of the centers are participating in the National Birth Defect Prevention Study, one of the largest case-control studies of birth defects ever conducted. The study involves:

- Identifying infants with major birth defects,
- Interviewing mothers about their medical history, environmental exposures, and lifestyle,
- Collecting cheek swabs from infants and parents to study gene-environment interactions,
- Establishing a specimen bank to store biologic samples for future study.

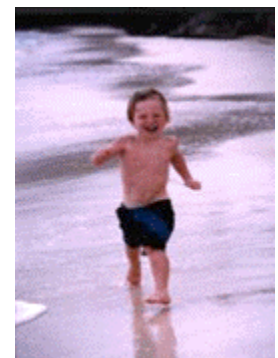
Including CDC, there are eight centers for data collection. Each center will conduct at least 400 interviews per year, resulting in a pooled database of 16,000 interviews over five years. This study will provide the nation with a continuing source of information on potential causes of birth defects and will serve as a mechanism for identifying new substances in our environment that are harmful to developing babies.

Birth Defect Surveillance and Research

In addition to the collaborative study, each center will expand and improve its state birth defect surveillance system and will conduct additional epidemiologic studies looking at possible genetic and environmental causes of birth defects. Proposed areas of study include:

- Maternal diet and vitamin use,
- Medication use during pregnancy,
- Exposure to pesticides, heat, and drinking water contaminants,
- Genetic susceptibility and biologic markers of exposure.

The research conducted by these centers will dramatically increase our understanding of the causes of birth defects and will provide information for developing effective programs to prevent the tragedy of birth defects, which occurs among 150,000 American families every year



Promoting the health of babies, children, and adults, and enhancing the potential for full, productive living.

1.888.232.5929
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd

Department of Health and Human Services