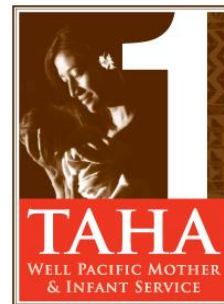


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Headline: Pacific pregnant women who smoke can quit smoking!

World Smokefree Day, 31 May 2010.

Every year on 31 May, the world celebrates 'World Smokefree Day'. This year the focus is on giving quitting smoking a go, and family and friends supporting those who want to quit. We want to especially support our Pacific pregnant mums to quit smoking. It may be difficult to quit, but it *is* possible.

During pregnancy is a perfect time to give up smoking. Research shows that when women become pregnant their attitudes change, because of their sense of responsibility to the baby and in response to their role as a mother¹. A study in the Pacific Drugs and Alcohol Consumption Survey (2003), reported that 94% of Pacific women tobacco smokers who planned to become pregnant, indicated that they would change their cigarette smoking after they became pregnant.

However, The Pacific Island Families (PIF) Study '*Smoking among mothers of a Pacific Island birth in New Zealand*' (2004) showed that smoking is common among pregnant Pacific women. Approximately one-quarter of the mothers in the study reported smoking during pregnancy. Three-quarters of the 435 smokers (before pregnancy) continued to smoke during pregnancy and eight mothers' commenced smoking once pregnant¹.

Although the Pacific Drugs and Alcohol Consumption Survey (2003) reports that Pacific women intend on quitting if they become pregnant, the PIF (2004) study shows that Pacific women still continue to smoke during their pregnancy, putting at risk their unborn child.

Reasons for Pacific pregnant mothers to quit smoking include:

- Smoking is harmful to you, as well as to your baby/foetus;
- When you smoke, your baby/foetus is smoking too;

¹ Sarnia Butler, Maynard Williams, Janis Paterson, Colin Tukuitonga. The Pacific Island Families Study, 2004. '*Smoking among mothers of a Pacific Island birth in New Zealand*.'

- Smoking can harm the development of baby's/foetus's lungs and make it hard for them to breathe;
- Smoking causes low birth weight; and
- Smoking increases the risks of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI), Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and Stillbirth.

The benefits include:

- Healthier mum, baby and family;
- More energy;
- Less complications during delivery; and
- Saving money for yourself and baby.

There is a Samoan proverb used in relation to parenting which can also be used to help Pacific pregnant mothers who smoke, to quit smoking. It is from the publication 'A Theology of Children' written by Reverend Nove Vailaau.

"O au o matua fanau'
'Children are the parents' liver' (precious)

This proverb likens children to an internal organ, the liver, a vital part of a human being's system. The word 'au' means liver of an animal or human being. Just as a person needs to protect and care for his/her liver, so the parents are to care for and protect their children by being Smokefree before, during and after pregnancy.

For more information on quitting smoking contact Quit Line on 0800 778 778, ask your midwife, doctor or nurse.

Give quitting a go... you can quit smoking!

END

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