



Text4baby: An Innovative Free Health Text Messaging Service & App

Background on Text4baby

Text4baby, the largest mobile health initiative in the nation, uses the power of cell phone technology to help new mothers and expectant women keep themselves and their babies healthy. Customized health information and safety tips are communicated through text messages at no charge to participants.

Text4baby delivers the information mothers and expectant women need most, reaching them directly on cell phones (that 89% of young women carry at all times). The service is for pregnant women and moms with infants under age one—and their partners and loved ones. Participants sign up by texting **BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411** to receive at least three free text messages a week containing expert health tips and safety information, timed to their due date or baby's birth date. Participants can also **download the app** free from iTunes and Google Play.

Why Text4baby is Important

Too many babies in the U.S. are not given a healthy start. That's where Text4baby can help. The service was created to help address the overwhelming infant mortality rate in the U.S., with 1 in every 8 babies born prematurely and 28,000 deaths each year. The U.S. ranks near the top among developed nations in infant mortality. Some causes for this are lack of access to health information, lack of access to care and poverty. Text4baby addresses lack of health information and access to care. By providing valuable information to women in a convenient, free and easy way, more babies can be given a healthy start.

"This service is commendable because it merges a common communication tool with free information to help parents provide the best care for their babies."

-Senator Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi)

Unprecedented Public-Private Partnership with Broad Reach

Text4baby is a free service of the nonprofit ZERO TO THREE and Voxiva, created in collaboration with the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Johnson & Johnson, CTIA Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company). Carriers who support the service so it can be free to the end user include: AT&T, Bluegrass Cellular, Boost Mobile, Cricket Wireless, MetroPCS, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile, TracFone, U.S. Cellular, n-Telos, Verizon Wireless and Virgin Mobile U.S.A. Text4baby is supported and promoted by over 1,400 health departments, academic institutions, health plans, businesses and the federal government.

What Text4baby Moms Learn:

Text4baby sends messages on a variety of topics vital to maternal and child health, including:

- Prenatal care
- Labor signs & symptoms
- Immunizations
- Health care resources/hotlines
- Urgent alerts
- Postpartum depression
- Baby's developmental stages
- Car seat safety
- Breastfeeding
- Appointment reminders

"I love that Text4baby gives out really good ideas for my baby to be safe, and it goes by your baby's age so it's just the right timing....Text4baby gave me great support throughout my pregnancy."

-Norma, Text4baby mom (San Elizario, TX)

Text4baby works with a **Content Development Council** made up of leading national medical health organizations and federal partners who review message revisions to keep content current and accurate. Messages are based on evidence-informed guidance. Partners that comprise the Content Development Council include:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
- Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- March of Dimes
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration

"We're used to hearing about public initiatives that get mired in politics or entangled in bureaucracy, but we rarely hear about services that exceed expectations. So here's one: last week marked the one-year anniversary of a service called Text4baby, a service that sends free text messages to women who are pregnant or whose babies are less than a year old, providing them with information and reminders, to improve their health and the health of their babies."

-David Bornstein, New York Times, February 2011

Sample Messages:

- You need breakfast now more than ever. Try whole grain cereal with fat-free milk & fruit or yogurt with fruit. More breakfast ideas at text4b.org/025.
- Even if you feel great, a pregnant woman needs checkups with a Dr./midwife (CNM/CM). For help with costs, call 800-311-2229 or finder.healthcare.gov.
- Safe travel is so important now! Seat belts protect you & baby. Wear it between your breasts & under belly (not on or above). Info: text4b.org/071.
- Get a crib to keep baby safe. The safest way for baby to sleep is on his back in a crib near your bed. Video tips on safe sleep: text4b.org/106.

Text4baby's Impact

Evaluations of the service demonstrate that Text4baby is increasing participants' health knowledge, facilitating interaction with health providers, reminding participants of appointments and immunizations, and strengthening access to health services. A study conducted by the University of California San Diego and California State University San Marcos with Text4baby participants found that:

- 82% learned about medical warning signs they did not know
- 65% talked to their doctor about a topic they read on a Text4baby message
- 75% reported Text4baby helped them remember an immunization

A George Washington University randomized evaluation found that Text4baby mothers were nearly 3X more likely to believe they were prepared for motherhood than non-text4baby participants. Another randomized evaluation found that among Text4baby mothers who were planning to get the flu vaccination, those who received a reminder were 2X more likely to report vaccination and that among Text4baby mothers who weren't planning to get vaccinated due to cost, those who received text-based tailored education on free/low cost flu shots were nearly 2X more likely to report vaccination.

Media Exposure

Text4baby has received extensive media coverage in diverse venues. The service has been written up in major publications such as the New York Times, Time Magazine, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, and Boston Globe. Text4baby has been featured on MTV's Teen Mom and 16 & Pregnant, major networks like ABC and CBS, and cable channels including CNN, Discovery Fit & Health and ION Network. Online stories about the service have appeared on NewYorkTimes.com, Time.com, AOL.com, the Huffington Post, CNN.com, ABCnews.com, and others.

"Text4baby has seized the opportunity to deliver urgent alerts...for example, in California, a text was sent to subscribers living in a certain zip code that was experiencing a pertussis [whooping cough] outbreak."

-Time Magazine, May 2010