

CHERISH STUDY NEWSLETTER

January 2017



Happy New Year!

The **cherish** study team wishes you and your family a Happy New Year. We thank you very much for your contribution to our research throughout 2016.



CHERISH STUDY NEWS

It's hard to believe that the **cherish** study has been up and running for several years now. During this time we have followed over 300 mums and dads through pregnancy and into the postnatal period, and you have helped us collect very important information about the experiences of babies and their families. Many of you have expressed interest in our results and we are excited to share an update and some interesting facts. The boxes to the right show just how much data we have collected in the **cherish** study so far! →

1360

SALIVA SAMPLES

661

QUESTIONNAIRES

366

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

141

PLAY ACTIVITIES

66

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

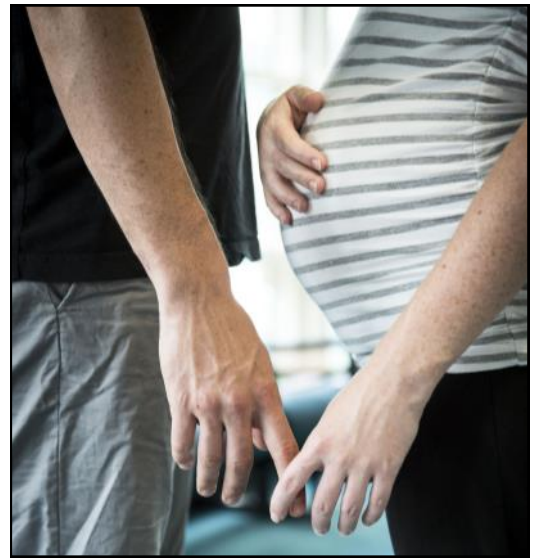
ABOUT OUR 196 CHERISH BABIES:



- There are 196 babies in the **cherish** study so far!
- 79 babies were diagnosed with a heart condition during pregnancy, 45 babies were diagnosed with a heart condition after birth, and 72 babies do not have a heart condition.
- There are more baby boys (64%) than baby girls (36%) in **cherish**.
- The average birth weight of **cherish** babies is 3.5 kgs.
- The average length of **cherish** babies at birth is 52 cm.

ABOUT OUR 317 CHERISH PARENTS:

- At the time of joining **cherish**, mums are, on average, about 32 years old and dads are about 34 years old.
- Over half of parents (60%) are expecting their first baby, 30% are expecting their second, and 10% are expecting their third, fourth, fifth or sixth baby.
- Parents come from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, including: Australian, European, Asian, Middle-Eastern, American and African.
- Most parents (83%) live in metropolitan Sydney, 14% live in regional NSW and 3% live in rural NSW.



WHAT PARENTS HAVE SAID ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN CHERISH...

"It has been beneficial to stop and reflect on this journey. I feel having follow up through the cherish study has allowed the opportunity to look forward and back on our milestones and journey." - Mother

"I feel a little bit empowered that I can talk about it and explain what we've been going through and hope that it might help others." - Mother

"I just like knowing that research is being done and that even though it's just me, my answers might help somebody else down the track. I like doing things like this to just help out." - Father

"I wanted to do the study to be part of something that was beneficial to other parents or other families who will be put in our situation in the future. Other people did that for us and without them, I wouldn't be having an idea of what it's like and we wouldn't have any websites with people sharing. If I can help in any way to ease another person's burden I would do so." - Father

WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS?

We hope to enrol another 60 families into the **cherish** study in the next 6 months. This will bring about an important milestone as we will have recruited all of our **cherish** families!

6 MONTH PLAY ACTIVITY:

88 of our **cherish** mums and babies have taken part in our 6 month play activity. This play activity is invaluable in helping us learn more about how mums and their babies play and communicate with one another. And we have really enjoyed meeting you and your baby during this activity!

12 MONTH PLAY ACTIVITY:

Over the next 6 months, more than 20 families will have taken part in our 12 month play activity. This activity provides important information about your baby's learning and development, and after the activity all families receive a free comprehensive report about their baby's development.

If you are visiting The Children's Hospital at Westmead, or the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick around the time your baby is 6 months old or around your baby's first birthday, please let us know by calling 1800 025 509 and we will coordinate a play activity with your visit.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH WITH FATHERS:

Becoming a dad is an important transition and for many years the psychological experiences of dads during the perinatal and early postnatal period was under explored in research. Research attention focused mostly on the experiences of mums and babies. In recent years dads have become more actively engaged in supporting their partners throughout pregnancy, labour and childbirth, and are more involved in the care of their baby over the first year of life. As a result, there has been growing research interest in understanding the unique experiences of fathers during the perinatal period. Research on fathers is helping us to learn about the many important roles that dads play in family life today.



By participating in cherish, dads can help us to improve the care and support provided for fathers during pregnancy and after the birth of their baby.

WHY IS MY INVOLVEMENT IN CHERISH SO IMPORTANT?

The purpose of the **cherish** study is to learn more about the experiences and needs of mums and dads during pregnancy and after their baby's birth. The **cherish** study is also focused on understanding the changes that occur before and after a baby's birth and how these changes shape the developing relationship between parents and their baby.

With your help, the results of the **cherish** study will guide the development of new programs and services to support families throughout the perinatal period — during pregnancy and their baby's first year. **Cherish** study results will also increase community awareness and understanding about the challenges faced by families of babies with heart disease.



WIN A \$100 GIFT CARD

Completing a **cherish** questionnaire will enter you into a draw to win 1 of 3 \$100 Coles Group & Myer Gift Cards. Our next draw will be on the 28th of February 2017. Please complete your **cherish** questionnaire to enter the draw!

FACTS ABOUT SALIVA:

Mums who joined **cherish** during pregnancy have helped us collect **780 saliva samples**. Mums and bubs who have attended our 12 month follow-up have helped us collect a further **580 saliva samples**. That's a total of **1360 samples so far!**

Many of you are interested in why we are collecting saliva, and we are often asked about this. Collecting saliva is a simple and safe way of looking at a hormone called cortisol. Everyone has cortisol in their body and it plays an important role in regulating many of our bodily functions, including the way we respond to stress.

We really look forward to sharing our results with you as soon as we can, but in the meantime we thought we would share some interesting general facts about saliva...



Saliva is 98% water. The other 2% is made up of hormones, electrolytes, mucous and enzymes.

A healthy adult produces between 1 and 2 litres of saliva each day. That's about 37,854 litres in a lifetime!

A person cannot taste food unless it is mixed with saliva. For example, if salt is placed on a dry tongue, the taste buds will not be able to taste it. As soon as a drop of saliva is added and the salt is dissolved, a definite taste sensation occurs.

Saliva is mainly produced by the glands in front of our ears, under our tongue, and in our lower jaw.

Saliva has healing properties and speeds up wound healing.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS



In 2015, A/Prof Nadine Kasparian presented on **cherish** at 8 international research meetings across the United States at venues such as Yale University, Stanford University and Columbia University in New York. In October 2016, Nadine presented on **cherish** at the International Marce Society Conference and the International Congress of Behavioural Medicine. These conferences are focused on understanding prenatal and postpartum mental health for mothers, fathers and their babies. Audiences at all of these meetings expressed great interest in our research and acknowledged the vital importance of our **cherish** study findings.

ABOUT THE HEARTS & MINDS RESEARCH PROGRAM

Our **Hearts and Minds Program** was established in 2010 at the Heart Centre for Children. We are Australasia's first and largest integrated psychology research program and clinical service dedicated to childhood heart disease. Our research spans across all developmental ages and stages, from early life in the womb through to childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, parenthood and grandparenthood. We focus on the issues that are important to children and families, understanding the challenges posed by childhood heart disease and developing new and better ways of transforming these challenges.



To learn more about how we provide support to children and families, please click here:

<http://www.heartcentreforchildren.com.au/support-for-families.html>



HAVE YOU MOVED OR CHANGED CONTACT DETAILS?

We would like to keep in touch to ensure you receive study updates and your study packages. If you have moved or changed your phone number or email address, please let us know by contacting us using the details below.

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE CHERISH TEAM:

If you would like to get in touch with our research coordinators to ask questions about **cherish**, provide feedback, share your thoughts about what it's like to be a part of **cherish** or to make a donation to our research, please don't hesitate to contact us - we love hearing from our **cherish** families!



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On behalf of the cherish research team, we would like to say a heartfelt **thank you** to all our cherish families. Your dedication to this research is making an important difference and with your help we are learning more about the very best ways to care for and support babies and their families.

This research is supported by a project grant from HeartKids Australia and research funding from the Heart Centre for Children, The Children's Hospital at Westmead.