

# New study finds text messaging program benefits pregnant women

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This is a sample text message for pregnant women. Credit: National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition.

The leading mobile health service in the nation, Text4baby, was found to significantly benefit pregnant women, according to a new study led by Milken Institute School of Public Health (Milken Institute SPH) at the George Washington University and the Madigan Army Medical Center. The pilot study examined several things including the short-term effects of Text4baby exposure four weeks post enrollment on attitudes, beliefs and behaviors targeted by the text messages.

"This study provides the strongest evidence to date that Text4baby reduces [health](#) risk beliefs targeted by the text messages. It advances knowledge of the effects of [mobile health](#) programs," says lead author of the study W. Douglas Evans, PhD, who is a professor of prevention and community health at Milken Institute SPH.

The research team, led by Evans, conducted a randomized controlled trial, supported by a grant from the Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), part of the US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command from December 2011 through September 2013. The research team recruited 943 [pregnant women](#) (both active duty and family members) who first presented for prenatal care at Madigan. The study found that "targeted beliefs, including those about the importance of pre-natal health care, the risk of alcohol use during pregnancy and the importance of pre-natal vitamins were more likely to improve given exposure to Text4baby."

Text4baby is a free mobile health information service of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) that provides pregnant women and new moms with critical health and safety information via [text message](#). The content includes messages about immunization, nutrition, birth defect prevention, safe sleep and more. Text4baby was developed in partnership with Founding Sponsor Johnson

& Johnson and founding partners Voxiva, The Wireless Foundation and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company).

This research study reinforces findings from a previously released randomized evaluation by researchers at Milken Institute SPH which found Text4baby mothers were "nearly three times more likely to believe that they were prepared to be new mothers compared to those in the no exposure control group." The effectiveness of the service, highlighted through these studies, confirms the Text4baby program model, and can be viewed as a best practice for other mobile health programs, Evans says.

This is the first publication of findings from this study. Future analyses will examine effects of the intervention on behaviors and clinical outcomes.

A copy of the executive summary of Text4baby evaluation report can be found on [the \*Journal of Medical Internet Research\* website](#).

**More information:** George Washington University

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