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**For Immediate Release**

***2014 Preeclampsia Awareness Survey Highlights Need for Education***

***Lends Greater Importance to Preeclampsia Awareness Month Messages***

Melbourne, FL – May 6, 2014 – The Preeclampsia Foundation, the nation’s only non-profit patient advocacy organization for preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, today announced the results of a recent nationwide Preeclampsia Awareness Survey of more than 1,500 expectant and new mothers. These findings are driving the Foundation’s strategies associated with National Preeclampsia Awareness Month.

The survey, which was conducted by BabyCenter®, the #1 pregnancy and parenting digital resource, shows a high overall awareness of preeclampsia and that it is serious and associated with high blood pressure. There was also near universal knowledge to call a healthcare provider if experiencing symptoms of preeclampsia.

“We’re very encouraged by the awareness that’s been raised in recent years, in sharp contrast to our last study six years ago that found very low overall awareness of preeclampsia,” said Eleni Tsigas, Executive Director of the Preeclampsia Foundation. “But there’s more to do, because this year’s survey showed low awareness when respondents were asked about specific symptoms associated with preeclampsia.

“The more a pregnant woman knows about preeclampsia, the more likely she is to recognize and report symptoms to her doctor or midwife,” continued Tsigas. “That improves time to diagnosis and medical evaluation, which saves lives – for both mothers and babies. And that’s why we’re so focused on improving awareness of preeclampsia.”

Preeclampsia and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy remain a leading cause of maternal and infant illness and death. Globally, by conservative estimates, these disorders are responsible for 76,000 maternal and 500,000 infant deaths every year. In the United States, preeclampsia affects one in every 12 pregnancies, and its incidence has increased by 25 percent during the past two decades.

## **Key Survey Findings**

The recent survey of 1,591 women shows high overall awareness of preeclampsia, its severity and link to high blood pressure, and to immediately report symptoms to their healthcare providers:

- 83% of respondents had heard of preeclampsia and of those women, 99% knew that it is extremely serious, even life-threatening for mother and baby, very serious, or somewhat serious
- 88% knew that high blood pressure is a sign of preeclampsia
- 96% would call their doctor or midwife if they experienced symptoms

Results also show areas that the healthcare community needs to address:

- Raise awareness of the specific symptoms associated with preeclampsia
  - 78% incorrectly linked preeclampsia to swelling of the feet
  - Only 70% correctly linked preeclampsia to headache and vision changes
  - 3 out of 5 women were not sure about several other symptoms
- Educate women on when preeclampsia can occur and its long-term impact
  - 44% didn't know that preeclampsia can occur even after the baby is delivered, up to six weeks postpartum
  - 46% didn't know that women with preeclampsia are at risk for future health problems
- Improve access to information, regardless of education or income level
  - Compared to the 83% of respondents in general who had heard of preeclampsia,
    - 51% with some high school education had heard of preeclampsia
    - 37% who earned under \$25k a year had heard of preeclampsia

[Download the infographic and view the full report at [www.preeclampsia.org/PreAM](http://www.preeclampsia.org/PreAM).]

## **Survey Findings Drive Education Campaign**

Released in conjunction with Preeclampsia Awareness Month, the survey findings provided the basis of the Foundation's education campaign also launched in May. Its theme – *Take the Preeclampsia Pledge – Know the Symptoms. Spread the Word* – highlights the importance of early recognition and reporting of symptoms. The campaign features *Promise Walks for Preeclampsia™* across the country, social media events, and an easy-to-understand and share video called *Preeclampsia: 7 Symptoms Every Pregnant Woman Should Know*.

"As a preeclampsia survivor, I know that getting the right care at the right time can mean the difference between life and death," said Linda Murray, BabyCenter Global Editor in Chief.

"Educating women about the symptoms of preeclampsia is one way BabyCenter can help improve the odds for pregnant women, new moms, and their babies. Our survey showed that women don't know which symptoms are cause for concern or when to call their healthcare providers. Our goal is to change that and save lives."

## ***Know the Symptoms. Spread the Word.***

Early recognition and reporting of symptoms is the key to timely detection and management of preeclampsia. Women who are pregnant or recently delivered should contact their doctor or midwife right away if they experience any of the symptoms listed below. While these symptoms don't necessarily indicate preeclampsia, they are cause for concern and require immediate medical evaluation.

- Swelling of the hands and face, especially around the eyes (swelling of the feet is more common in late pregnancy and probably not a sign of preeclampsia)
- Weight gain of more than five pounds in a week
- Headache that won't go away, even after taking medication for pain relief
- Changes in vision like seeing spots or flashing lights; partial or total loss of eyesight
- Nausea or throwing up, especially suddenly, after mid pregnancy (not the morning sickness that many women experience in early pregnancy)
- Upper right belly pain, sometimes mistaken for indigestion or the flu
- Difficulty breathing, gasping, or panting
- "I just don't feel right"

It's also important to know that some women with preeclampsia have NO symptoms. Healthcare providers can only diagnose preeclampsia by monitoring blood pressure and protein in the urine, which is routinely done at prenatal appointments, so keeping all appointments is vital throughout pregnancy and immediately after delivery.

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### **About the Preeclampsia Awareness Survey**

The survey was conducted among visitors to the BabyCenter® website from January 17 to January 20, 2014. A total of 1,591 respondents completed the survey; qualified respondents are defined as female U.S. residents, 18 years or older, who are pregnant or have at least one child three years of age or younger.

### **About the Preeclampsia Foundation**

A U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2000, the Preeclampsia Foundation is dedicated to providing patient support and education, raising public awareness, catalyzing research and improving health care practices, envisioning a world where preeclampsia and related hypertensive disorders of pregnancy no longer threaten the lives of mothers and babies. More information can be found at [www.preeclampsia.org](http://www.preeclampsia.org) or by calling toll-free 800.665.9341.

### **About BabyCenter® LLC**

BabyCenter® is the voice of the 21st Century Mom® and modern motherhood. It's the #1 pregnancy and parenting digital destination worldwide, reaching more than 37 million moms monthly in 11 languages across 14 owned and operated properties from Australia to India to China. In the United States, 7 in 10 babies born last year were BabyCenter babies. BabyCenter is the world's partner in parenting, providing moms everywhere with trusted advice from hundreds of experts around the globe, friendship with other moms like them, and support that's remarkably right at every stage of their child's development. BabyCenter also works with some of the world's most prominent brands and institutions to provide life-stage marketing solutions and a direct line to highly engaged moms. BabyCenter established a Global Giving Program and partners with esteemed organizations to help make motherhood safer for all women. BabyCenter is a member of the Johnson & Johnson family of companies.