



**HER FOUNDATION**  
HYPEREMESIS EDUCATION & RESEARCH

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## HER FACTS

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There's nothing quite like the excitement and anticipation experienced by most mothers-to-be. For many women, however, the joy of pregnancy is destroyed by Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG)—a debilitating and potentially fatal disease with no known cause or cure. Due to limited research, HG continues to be medically misunderstood, misdiagnosed and mistreated. Its physical symptoms are often devastating. Its emotional impact is just as great, and can leave women feeling depressed and alone as they struggle to cope with residual effects ranging from lost jobs and escalating medical bills, to strained personal relationships. The **Hyperemesis Education & Research Foundation (HER Foundation)** raises public awareness and provides support for women and their families impacted by HG.

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### About Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG)

- HG is an overlooked pregnancy disease **marked by rapid weight loss, malnutrition and dehydration**, due to unrelenting nausea and/or vomiting with potential adverse consequences for the newborn.
- HG is the **leading cause for hospitalization** in early pregnancy and is second only to preterm labor as the most common cause overall during pregnancy (ACOG, 2004).
- Total incidence of the disease is unknown, in part to inconsistent diagnostic criteria; however, .05 to 2 percent of US pregnant women are hospitalized for HG each year (AGOG, 2004). International studies report an **incidence of HG as high as 10 percent** (Zhang, 1991; Czeizel, 2003).
- Despite available medications to lessen the severity of [HG], many women are **not offered effective treatment** (Kouzi: *Am J of Pharm Educ*, 2003), (Motherisk, 1998).
- Nearly 20 percent of **wanted pregnancies** are reportedly terminated due to lack of diagnosis and/or ineffective treatment of HG (HER Foundation surveys, 2002-2005).
- Contrary to current medical opinion, HG **recurs in over 85 percent** of women, and **persists** throughout pregnancy in nearly 40 percent (HER Foundation surveys, 2002-2005).
- Approximately 75 percent of HG women surveyed report reducing the number of **future pregnancies** rather than risk serious complications to themselves or their unborn children (HER Foundation surveys, 2002-2005).
- HG women surveyed were twice as likely to **miscarry** compared to non-HG women (HER Foundation surveys, 2002-2005).
- HG increases the risk of **premature delivery** and a low-birth-weight neonate (Paauw, 2005), as well as prenatal and postnatal complications (American College of Preventive Medicine, 2005).
- Infants born to mothers with HG have an increased risk of significant **cognitive and behavioral disorders**, as well as **chronic illness** in later life due to maternal malnutrition (McMillen, 2005) and stress (Van den Bergh, 2005).
- Most women with HG are **unable to maintain employment** and/or care for their families during early pregnancy, and some throughout their pregnancy (O'Brien, 1992), (Meighan, 2005).
- Often misunderstood, many **health professionals still inaccurately view** HG as a psychological disorder or regard it as a normal pregnancy condition, thus limiting or delaying vital medical care (Munch, 2002).

### About the HER Foundation

The HER Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization with the mission to provide **education and support** to those seeking effective management strategies for Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG). Founded in 2003 by fellow HG survivors Kimber MacGibbon, RN, and Ann Marie King and her husband Jeremy, the foundation serves as a support network and voice for HG sufferers and their families. Its Web site (**HelpHER.org**) is the leading source of HG information, with nearly a quarter of a million worldwide visits last year. Through its collaboration with health professionals, educational outreach and online forums, the HER Foundation works to **improve understanding**, diagnosis and treatment of HG, and the **impact** it has on pregnant women and their children.

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