Connecticut Program Encourages Fruit and Vegetable Intake in Expecting Mothers

The program will study the success of a food-as-medicine model in pregnant Latina and low-income women.

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A new Connecticut food program aims to improve fruit and vegetable consumption among women who are pregnant, Latina and low-income.

Twenty expecting mothers in Hartford were chosen to participate in the Food4Moms program, which will provide a fruit and vegetable prescription plan to improve the health and wellness for families, according to Patch.com.

The program is funded by the Department of Agriculture and the Point32Health Foundation in collaboration with the national nonprofit Wholesome Wave, the Hispanic Health Council and the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center (PRC), which will assess the success of the food-as-medicine model Jirair Ratevosian, DrPH, MPH.

For 10 months, participants will receive $100 per month to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.

“Research shows that Latina women are not consuming enough fresh fruits and vegetables during pregnancy and that there are systemic structural barriers preventing them from doing so,” said lead researcher Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, PhD, a professor at the Yale School of Public Health.

“At Wholesome Wave, we believe people should not only be able to get enough food when times get tough but to also get the healthy foods they need to thrive and prevent diet debilitating diseases, like diabetes and heart disease,” said Michel Nischan, cofounder and chairman of Wholesome Wave.

Indeed, cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death in new moms, and about 1 in every 16 Latina women 20 years and older have coronary heart disease, the most common type of heart disease, according to a study published in the American Heart Association journal Circulation.

What's more, Latina women are at higher risk of developing blood pressure disorders during pregnancy, including gestational hypertension (high blood pressure developed for the first time after the 20th week of pregnancy) and preeclampsia, a serious and sometimes fatal late-pregnancy complication that raises blood pressure and can damage the liver and kidneys.

To read more, click #Pregnancy or #Diet. There, you'll find headlines such as "Obesity During Pregnancy Raises Risk of Fatty Liver Disease in Kids," "Prioritizing Heart Health in Expecting Latina Mothers" and "Diet May Impact Pregnancy Complications Among Latinas."

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