



Newsletter

Spring 2021

WHAT'S NEW WITH APrON?

Happy Mother's Day!



We would like to wish all of our APrON mothers a Happy Mother's Day! We hope that you enjoy celebrating and spending time with your family.

APrON 10th Anniversary Conference

Since the fall 2020 newsletter was sent out, the **Celebrating 10 Years: APrON Achievements and Evolution Conference** occurred from October 29 - 30, 2020 online. Thank you to all those who attended and helped out to make this conference a success. Please see the link below for conference videos:

<https://apronstudy.ca/news-events/conferences/conference-2020/>

Hope During Difficult Times

The APrON study team would like to take this opportunity to wish all participants the best for their health and wellbeing during this difficult time, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. We realize that some families might be celebrating this Mother's Day differently than the ones that occurred in years past, for example with Zoom celebrations among extended family instead of in-person gatherings. We sincerely hope that your family enjoys your company together this Mother's Day, whether this be in-person or virtually, and also some well deserved

relaxation time. We also hope that the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines over the last few months means that there's light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, as of May 10 all Albertans aged 12 years and over will be eligible to receive a vaccine. We are hopeful that better days are ahead of us in the near future.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on Maternal and Child Health



Update: COVID-19 Mothers Questionnaire

All mothers who are currently participating in the APrON study have been invited to participate in the APrON COVID-19 Impact study, which is investigating the impact of the pandemic on work life, activities of daily living, finances, coping, and maternal and child physical and mental health outcomes. This study is also examining factors that contribute to risk and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and will identify pre-pandemic factors that predict functioning over time. The electronic COVID-19 Impact Survey was sent out in May 2020, with mothers completing this survey from May - September 2020. Mothers who responded to the first survey are currently being resurveyed at 6 months follow-up, from February - June 2021. Mothers who will complete the 6 months follow-up survey will be re-surveyed at 12 months follow-up, from August - December 2021.

Update: COVID-19 Child/Youth Questionnaire

Essentially, we are interested in understanding how COVID-19 has impacted children and youth's mental health, well-being, and coping. We are interested in understanding their feelings about going back to school, worries, and feelings of sadness or isolation, but also how they might be thriving or coping during these stressful/uncertain times. It is anticipated that the APrON COVID-19 child/youth study will assist with developing strategies to improve maternal, child, and family health during COVID-19.

The electronic COVID-19 child/youth questionnaire was sent out in October 2020, with mothers completing this survey from October - December 2020.

Please refer to the following APrON study website link for important COVID-19 resources:

<https://apronstudy.ca/covid-19-resources/>

APrON Data Collection Update

Since the last update, the Eight is Great questionnaire has continued arriving in participants' mailboxes. The Eight is Great questionnaire is part of our collaboration with the All Our Families cohort called the Alberta Births Common Data (ABCD) project, which has been looking into topics such as socioeconomic status, child behaviour, child health and development, early childhood experiences, parenting, maternal health and wellbeing, and much more among APrON participants. The ABCD project began linking APrON and All Our Babies studies together starting at age 5. Together, this represents more than 5000 Alberta families! All participants should have received the e-mail to complete this questionnaire by this point, with data collection to be completed in the near future.

[Read more](#)



Join APrON's Participant Advisory Committee

The APrON team is always looking for participants to join our advisory committee meetings and we want you to be a part of it! Share your ideas on how we can keep participants, like you, engaged and interested in our research. We want to hear from you. If you would like to

learn more about this exciting opportunity, please contact us by email at apron@ucalgary.ca.

RESULTS



Study Title: Pregnancy anxiety and preterm birth: The moderating role of sleep

Preterm birth (PTB) is a condition when the baby is born earlier than the expected due date, usually before 37 weeks of gestation. Preterm birth is sometimes associated with health and developmental issues. Previous studies have shown that poor quality of sleep, short duration of sleep, and pregnancy anxiety all increase the risk for PTB. However, no studies have investigated how the interaction between sleep and pregnancy anxiety are related to preterm birth. There were two main goals of this study: 1) Examine the association between sleep, pregnancy anxiety by using sleep assessment tools and length of pregnancy; 2) Investigate if sleep helps to buffer the relationship between pregnancy anxiety and length of pregnancy. In this study, the Pregnancy-Related Anxiety Scale, the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and Actigraphy were used to collect data on pre-existing sleep and pregnancy anxiety and length of pregnancy was extracted from the medical record. Results showed that having longer sleep was associated with reduced risk of PTB, even if pregnancy anxiety was high. Problems with sleep and pregnancy anxiety are common among pregnant women, but they are also modifiable. Next steps in this research include testing if treating sleep problems and anxiety in pregnancy can increase gestational length.

Reference: Tomfohr-Madsen, L., Cameron, E. E., Dunkel Schetter, C., Campbell, T., O'Beirne, M., Letourneau, N., & Giesbrecht, G. F. (2019). Pregnancy anxiety and preterm birth: The moderating role of sleep. *Health Psychology, 38*, 1025 - 1035.

Study Title: Cerebral Blood Flow Increases Across Childhood

The brain grows and develops rapidly during childhood. To support this growth, blood and nutrients must be delivered and distributed throughout the brain. Adequate cerebral blood flow (CBF) is essential for proper brain function and development. Previous studies have shown CBF increases during infancy and decreases during adolescence, yet we did not know when the increases changed to decreases because no one had thoroughly studied CBF changes during early childhood. This study aimed to identify developmental changes of CBF and evaluate sex differences in young children 2-7 years. Arterial spin labeling, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technique, was used to map age-related changes of CBF in a large longitudinal sample of 96 participants ages 2-7 years. Steady increases of CBF were found across early childhood in many different brain regions. Boys and girls showed similar age-related changes. Our results show that CBF continues to increase until at least 7 years. These changes happen alongside improvements in brain structure and function, suggesting that CBF provides ongoing support for growth, learning, and behaviour.

Reference: Paniukov, D., Lebel, R.M., Giesbrecht, G., & Lebel, C. (2020). Cerebral blood flow increases across early childhood. *Neuroimage, 204*, 116224.

To request the above or any other APrON publication please contact us at apron@ucalgary.ca

Click here to view all of the APrON publications to date, or by following the link below:

Send Us Your Feedback!

If you have any comments or questions about the APrON Newsletter, we want to hear them! We would also like to hear your ideas for future newsletters. Please contact us at apron@ucalgary.ca. We truly value your feedback!

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Help Keep Our Files Up-To-Date

Staying in touch with our participants is a key part of our work. When we lose touch with people we lose our ability to answer important health questions. If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please take a moment to let us know of these changes. Keep in mind that we can send you surveys and keep you up-to-date with the APrON Leaflet no matter where you live, even if you are outside of Alberta or Canada.



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apronstudy.ca

Questions? Email us at apron@ucalgary.ca

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APrON Calgary

The Owerko Centre 3rd Floor
Child Development Centre
University of Calgary
355-3820 24 Avenue NW
Calgary, AB
T3B 2X9
Phone: (403) 441-8471

APrON Edmonton

4-126 Li Ka Shing Centre for Research
University of Alberta
11203-87 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB
T6G 2H5
Phone: (403) 441-8471

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