IMPLICATIONS for NURSES and RESEARCHERS of INTERNET USE by CHILDBEARING WOMEN

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Seeking information and advice during pregnancy and early childrearing is no longer limited to talking to one's own mother, picking up a copy of What to Expect When You're Expecting (Murkoff & Mazel, 2008) and signing up for prenatal classes. Twenty-first century childbearing women turn to the Internet for information of all types, but little is known about exactly where they go and what information they are seeking.

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to share the growing body of literature on Internet use by childbearing women and to present findings of our pilot study done to learn more about this population's information-seeking behaviors. In our sample of 42 women, 97 percent used the Internet to seek health information. They searched for the purposes of decision making, anticipatory guidance, connecting and for general information. Nurses and other health care providers should anticipate that women are using the Internet for health information and should be proactive in referring them to reputable websites and helping them identify trustworthy websites as part of routine prenatal care and childbirth education. Because so many women use the Internet, this is also a feasible venue for nursing research recruitment and potential intervention delivery.

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