

Fetal Ultrasound: A Bad Idea

Finally medical researchers are warning about ultrasound scans of the fetus. Unfortunately, it was not before medical entrepreneurs began opening “Ultrasound Scrapbook Clinics.” Expectant parents can go to these clinics to have their developing fetus chronically scanned with ultrasound. Called “entertained ultrasound,” the collected images are put together in a scrapbook. Given the intricacies of the developing nervous system of the fetus, the fact that this use of ultrasound is frivolous at best, and that millions of people are sold on the ultrasound procedure, this medical warning is late but heartily welcome and absolutely necessary.

The final pronouncement on the research? What we have surmised all along—that exposure to ultrasound can affect fetal brain development. The study involved mice whose nerve cells in the brain became damaged from ultrasound. Researchers are quick to point out that research on mice doesn’t always apply to humans. But fortunately they add that “women should avoid ultrasound scans until more research has been done.”

Say No to Vanity Ultrasounds

The brain cells of mice failed to function properly following ultrasound. This caused what is known as “misplacement of brain cells during development.” And while the exact effects of ultrasound on humans are not known, one thing is certain: Putting ultrasound on a woman’s abdomen for long periods of time to take unnecessary pictures of the fetus is a ridiculous concept.

Even the researches note that misplacement of human brain cells during development can cause mental retardation, childhood epilepsy, dyslexia, schizophrenia, and autism. Now let’s see, what three things have skyrocketed in the last 15 to 20 years? There are more vaccinations, there are more and more ultrasounds, and there is an epidemic of autism. Do not use ultrasound on your developing fetus as a toy! Use it only when needed and not to just entertain yourselves. And when needed, keep the time of exposure to the absolute minimum. Even with the mice, the longer the exposure to ultrasound, the worse the brain damage.

This report, in the August 8, 2006 Proceedings of the national Academy of Sciences, is good work. Finally medicine has it right. Heed the warning.