



APS Foundation of America, Inc.

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APS Linked to Birth Difficulties

The Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome Foundation of America, Inc. (APSFA) urges the public, as well as the medical community, to learn more about this rare disease. APS Awareness Month runs throughout June.

APS is an autoimmune disorder. Such illnesses occur when the body's tissues are attacked by its own substances. In APS, the body recognizes certain components of blood or cell membranes as foreign substances and produces antibodies--a specialized protein the body uses to prevent infection--against them. It is the major cause of strokes in persons under 40 years old, blood clots (thrombosis) -- which can lead to heart attack or stroke -- vision disturbances and repeated, otherwise unexplainable miscarriages.

Even otherwise-healthy women are at higher risk of developing blood clots and preeclampsia, a blood pressure disorder that occurs only during pregnancy. In women with APS, blood clots can form in the placenta and starve the baby of nutrition. Placental clots can cause fetal growth problems and distress, premature birth, or miscarriage. Some women with APS have difficulty becoming pregnant at all.

Babies born to women with APS often are delivered between 30 to 35 weeks gestation, or about 5 to 10 weeks early. Low birth weight -- between 3 to 5 pounds -- is not uncommon, although the babies generally are healthy and thrive after delivery.

Physicians often suggest that women of childbearing age who also are susceptible to blood clots remain indefinitely on a course of low-dose aspirin therapy. Aspirin is a readily available, inexpensive drug to help guard against blood clots. As with gestational diabetes, in which the illness resolves itself once the baby is delivered, it is possible for some women with clotting issues during pregnancy to return to full health post-birth.

APS can be diagnosed with a simple blood test. It frequently is found in conjunction with lupus, another autoimmune disorder that primarily targets women.

Knowing more about APS can make all the difference. APS: Know the Symptoms of the Syndrome!

Founded in 2005, the APSFA is the leading United States health agency dedicated specifically to bringing national awareness to APS. We are a volunteer-run, community-based, non-profit organization.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The key blood tests are Anticardiolipin (aCL) antibodies (IgG, IgM, and IgA), Lupus anticoagulant (LAC) – a panel of blood clotting tests that may include the dilute Russel Viper venom time (dRVVT), lupus aPTT, mixing studies, and hex phase phospholipid test, platelet neutralization procedure and Antibodies to b2-glycoprotein I (IgG, IgM, IgA).
- The conservative estimate of people at risk from Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome (APS) is 1% - 5% of the population.
- In pregnancy clotting of the placenta can cause miscarriage or stillbirth. Typically, women are not tested for APS until after three consecutive miscarriages.
- The recognition and treatment of APS improves the chances of preventing miscarriage from below 20% to above 80%.
- Some cases are misdiagnosed as multiple sclerosis. Some APS patients also have Lupus.
- Founded in 2005, the APS Foundation of America, Inc. is the leading United States nonprofit health agency dedicated to bringing national awareness to Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome (APS), the major cause of multiple miscarriages, thrombosis, young strokes and heart attacks. We are a volunteer run, community based 501(c)3 non-profit Public Charity organization and is dedicated to fostering and facilitating joint efforts in the areas of education, support, public awareness, research and patient services. Our URL is <http://www.apsfa.org>
- All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from <http://www.apsfa.org>.