

New moms struggle to keep fit

Mothers not getting the exercise they used to prior to getting pregnant: study

Erin Cardone
News staff

Kirstin Pitre didn't see this coming.

She was always active – running and riding her bike – and didn't think anything would change just because she had a baby.

When her first daugh-

ter came along, Pitre was surprised at the downfall of her physical activity regime.

"I was really shocked actually at the experience," she said. "I thought I knew better and I do know what I should be doing (physically), but I thought I'd be able to make that happen for myself."

Pitre said she's traded running for walking, and an intense bike ride for playtime at the park.

Pitre is just one mother in a group who participated in a University of Victoria study that measured the physical activity level of women before having children, and found that many didn't resume their exercise habits, even up to five years after childbirth.

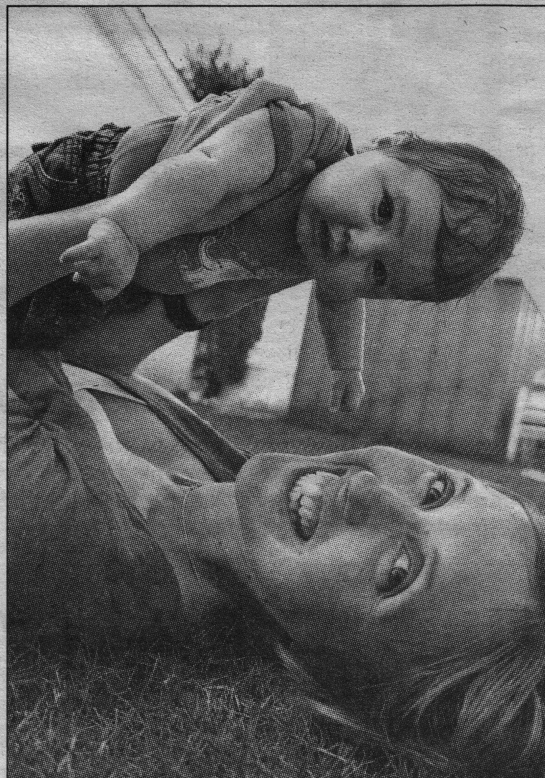
"What is given up is the strenuous activity, the vigorous exercise," said Ryan Rhodes of UVic's physical and health education department and lead researcher in the study.

"The vigorous activity is obviously very important. Moms are doing a lot more around the house but a lot more low-end (activity)."

Rhodes is working on two new studies. The first intends to validate or dispel the myth that two children equal four times the work. The second will measure physical activity changes in new fathers.

"Early evidence suggests fathers also have physical activity issues," Rhodes said.

Rhodes and his research team are looking for couples who have one child or no children to participate in the four-times-the-work study. Participants are compensated



Sharon Tiffin/News staff

Mom Kirstin Pitre lifts three-month-old Kaelyn as they play in their backyard. A UVic study suggests new mothers abandon their physical activity regime after giving birth.

for their time. Call Leila Pfaeffli for more information at 250-472-5022. ecardone@vicnews.com