

# FAMILY 4-1-1

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Editor: Bruce MacKenzie > Telephone: 250-380-5346 > E-mail: [features@tc.canwest.com](mailto:features@tc.canwest.com) ■ WEATHER, D8-D9

## UVIC STUDY

# Small steps to post-natal health

Fitness patterns of parents with growing families to be tracked

**PEDRO ARRAIS**  
Times Colonist

Two children make four times as much work as one, say harried parents everywhere. A University of Victoria researcher wants to find out if it's true.

A study that appeared recently in the journal *Women and Health* found new mothers reduced the time they spent on exercising by 80 minutes on average, and 53 per cent of those who were getting recommended amounts of exercise before giving birth dropped below the guidelines after having a baby.

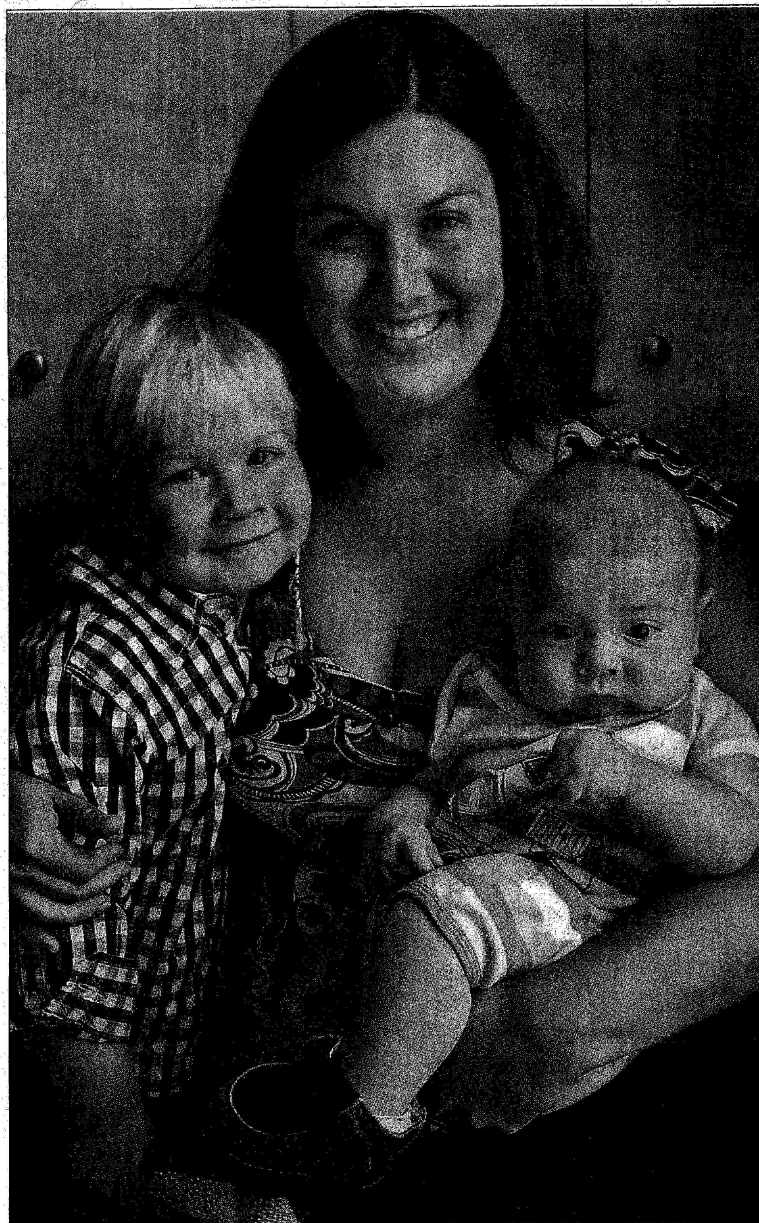
"Many complain of fatigue," says Ryan Rhodes, a University of Victoria exercise psychologist who co-authored the report, which followed 139 Victoria-area mothers. "The drop in physical activity was due to loss of control over their former free time rather than attitudes or a lack of knowledge about the importance of physical activity."

Building on those findings, he has embarked on two new studies to challenge the conventional wisdom that having two children means four times more work for parents. The new studies will track the pre-birth exercise behaviour of expectant parents of both a first and second child.

It's information that is of interest to new mother Angela Wignall. She and her husband David just had their second child, Henry, four months, joins his brother Lucas, 4.

Wignall is a postpartum doula and she hopes the data from her experience and others participating in the study will be an asset in her work.

"I hope to use data from



DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST  
Angela Wignall, with sons Lucas, 4, and four-month-old Henry, is participating in a UVic study measuring how a family copes on the health and fitness front with having a second child. Participants wear an accelerometer to measure movement.

this study to help new mothers deal with depression and weight gain," says Wignall,

30. "It will help them understand how their body and life changes during and

after a pregnancy."

The participants will wear an accelerometer to

measure their activity during the day. Unlike a pedometer, which only measures footsteps, the accelerometer will track movement of the wearer. The device is incorporated in a belt that participants will wear during waking hours. They will not be required to put it on when tending to their children during the night.

When participants return the accelerometer, they also complete a seven-page questionnaire that quizzes them about their attitudes on nutrition, physical health and emotional well-being.

Both parents will wear it for a week before returning it to the researchers to download the data. It will be returned to them again in six months' time. The study lasts two years. The Wignalls started the study in May, before their second son was born.

Male participants have the added benefit of having a full physical assessment done at UVic every six months, which includes a stress test. Due to concerns about performing stress tests on pregnant women, Angela will not have one until a year after childbirth.

A food diary will measure how having children alters the family's diet, which is another important influence on fitness, Rhodes says.

The researchers are looking for 70 couples for each study. Couples without children are also welcome to participate.

Because young parents in this target group usually have enough going on in their lives to consider taking on yet another task, Rhodes is offering to compensate participants for their time. In addition, if couples can't find the time to go to the lab, researchers will go to their homes to retrieve the data.

Anyone interested in participating can contact Leila Pfaeffli at 250-472-5022 or [bml@uvic.ca](mailto:bml@uvic.ca) or [parrais@tc.canwest.com](mailto:parrais@tc.canwest.com)



## THINGS TO DO

Vancouver Island Baby Fair, shopping, resources and entertainment for parents and kids at Seakwaka Recreation Centre, 3100 Millicum Rd., Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Post: \$6/\$7 weekend pass/12 and under free. Tel. 250-475-4400.

Bowker Creek Pennant Printing Workshop at the North Jubilee Spirit Garden, between Kings and Newton, near Richmond Road. Free event to make relief-printed cloth pennants and learn about Bowker Creek Watershed., Saturday, noon-3 p.m. A family event. Tel. 250-70-4365.

LiveSong: Life Along the Colquitz, celebrating mosaics made by Colquitz Middle School or B.C. River Day, Sunday at Colquitz River Linear Park, everyone welcome, 1-4 p.m. Free. Tel. 250-475-5557. [recreation.saanich.ca](http://recreation.saanich.ca)

B.C. River Day at Qualicum Beach Salmon Forest, Sunday, noon with Blessing of the Salmon at 1 p.m. followed by tour to third tallest Sitka Spruce tree. Meet at Qualicum Beach, at 10, look for signs and pink salmon at corner of Kinkadee Rd. and Old Island Highway. 250-52-6585.

For Guide Dogs Walk. Five kilometre dog walk at 10:30 a.m. followed by family fun with rallywags amazing Doggily Demo, Guide Dog Teams, puppy Walkers and more. Event at Beaver Lake Regional Park, Friday. Tel. 250-220-0509 or [didedogs.ca](http://didedogs.ca)

Night Sky Viewing with Victoria Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada and Fairfield Gonzales Community Association, Monday, 6:30-10 p.m. Gary Oak 301m. Sir James Douglas school playgrounds. See [victoria.rasc.ca/events](http://victoria.rasc.ca/events)

ie Last Luau Kids Fun Swim at Tak Bay Recreation Centre, 375 Bee St., 1-5 p.m. Tel. 250-35-7946.

ids Matinee at Cincecenta, every Saturday and Sunday at Vic, 1 p.m. This week: Night at e Museum. [cincecenta.com](http://cincecenta.com)