

# Alcohol, pregnancy do not mix: study

**United Press International**  
NEW HAVEN, Conn. — A three-year study at Yale University says even slight alcohol consumption by a pregnant woman may cause learning disabilities in her child.

After studying several hundred children over three years, Dr. Sally Shaywitz of Yale's Mental Health Clinical Research Center said Monday that significantly more mothers of children with learning disabilities drank than mothers of children without disabilities.

Learning disabilities can include lack of attention, language problems, or perception problems, but she said the inability to pay attention is the most prevalent problem.

"No one knows how little one can drink with no effects on the baby, but the studies suggest even small amounts can have a deleterious effect on the development of the fetus," she said.

Shaywitz said mothers were asked in a questionnaire if they had two or more drinks a day while carrying the child.

Shaywitz developed a method called the Yale Neuroeducational Assessment Scale for gathering data on the children. It examines every aspect of their life, from development, temperament and behavior, to activity level, school performance, family history and neurological functioning.

The study found children with learning disabilities usually were hyperactive, had poorer language skills than normal, and were unable to pay attention properly, even though some were very bright. Even in infancy, these children had been different and had more sleep and feeding problems, she said.

The children had no structural damage of the brain. But Shaywitz said there may be a deficiency in how their brains send messages. There is some indication

tion these children have an inadequate supply of Dopamine, a body chemical that transmits messages to and from the brain.

Shaywitz, an associate professor of pediatrics at Yale, said her team found that family history also seems to play a part in learning disabilities.

"A parent who had difficulties in school, attention problems, and hyperactivity was more likely to have children with these problems," she said.

But no one knows definitely whether the characteristic differences in behavior of a child with learning disabilities are due to heredity, environment, or both.

# Goodyear retires old blimp, then launches replacement

**United Press International**  
HOUSTON — Three months of testing and then destruction await the retired Goodyear blimp America, replaced by a new blimp bearing the same name.

The two 192-foot-long ships flew alternate 15-minute flights over Houston Monday and then completed a formation

flight. Before the flights, a longtime airship fan christened the new America with a bottle of champagne.

"It was gorgeous," said Goodyear spokesman Al Wasilewski of the ceremonial flight viewed by Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay, six city councilmen, state Sen. Walter Mengden and state Rep. Don

Henderson at the blimp base north of the city.

While the new America is embarking on a tour of duty spreading the Goodyear name, the old blimp will be stripped of its twin 210-horsepower engines immediately, Wasilewski said. They can be used as spares for the new blimp.

Then the old 202,000-cubic-foot ship will be used for some ground tests.

"We're going to be doing some experiment testing on how to improve the new blimps in the next three months at the blimp base," Wasilewski said. "After the tests are completed, we'll take it apart."



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# Meter thief baffles cops in Austin

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — Police say they are frustrated by an elusive thief who for the last month and a half regularly has been emptying city parking meters — many of them surrounding the county courthouse.

"It's starting to get embarrassing," said Sgt. Joe Morales of the Austin Police Department. The thief empties between 150 and 170 meters, walking off within between \$2,500 and \$3,000 each time.

Morales said the latest theft occurred Friday when 166 parking meters near the courthouse were found empty.

"Over the past month and a half it's been occurring almost weekly," Morales said. "They've hit the same route."

The thief, or thieves, have a knack for raiding the machines right before regular collection times, prompting city transportation officials to abandon twice weekly collections and begin picking the money up nearly every day.

Police have been unable to find any witnesses to the illegal collections and fingerprint tests have turned up negative.

# Retarded to be jailed separately

**United Press International**  
HUNTSVILLE — The Texas Board of Corrections has unanimously rejected housing mentally retarded inmates in the general prison population.

The board made its decision Monday despite the recommendation of TDC mental health staffers who said all but the most seriously retarded inmates should be housed with other inmates.

However, board member Harry Whittington of Austin rejected the staff's recommendation, and said that mixing retarded people in the general population was appropriate in free communities, but inappropriate for prison life.