

Teratology Primer, 3rd Edition

<https://birthdefectsresearch.org/primer/>

Preface

The first edition of the *Teratology Primer* was published by the Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention in 2005 and a second edition was published in 2010. Thousands of paper copies were distributed to colleagues and trainees. We have now prepared a third edition, available electronically, to update and expand the discussions in the first two editions.

The goal of the *Primer* is to give you in a few short pages, a sense of what the field of teratology means to its practitioners. What is teratology anyway? Do I want to be a teratologist? How are chemicals evaluated for reproductive risk? What exposures should concern us? This *Teratology Primer* is meant to answer these questions and more. Topics range from how birth defects are diagnosed, to the impact of genes or environmental exposures, to ethical considerations, to the use of systems biology and computational approaches to predict teratogenic risk, and to how information is communicated.

The *Primer* was written by scientists who want to share their fascination for the development of complex organisms from a couple of microscopic cells, and for why and how things don't always go right in the process. Being a teratologist is having a front row seat for the most exciting and mysterious performances known to this planet. We hope that you will become as excited about working in this field as are the contributing authors. If you find yourself drawn to a topic and you want to learn more, please contact the Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. You are the future of this field.

It is our hope that this edition of the *Teratology Primer* lays the common foundation for basic scientists, clinician scientists, healthcare professionals, trainees, policy makers, and anyone who has an interest in the discipline to acquire the knowledge that they seek. We have tried to give a balanced presentation of different views but not every scientist whose name is listed as a contributor to this book will agree with every statement made in the *Primer*. Indeed, as in any field, ours has its controversies and highly qualified scientists will take opposite positions on topics of the day. Don't let disagreements in the field bother you. Science has always included different views, and amplification of these views is how the field moves forward.

If you find a topic that particularly interests you or if you have a question, feel free to contact individual chapter authors. Contact information is listed so you can get in touch with any of us. You will find that teratologists are always interested in talking about their work. Feel free also to look around the [Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention website](#).

We should like to acknowledge the dedicated support of headquarters staff for their roles in the production of this *Primer*. We thank all the contributors and members of the Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention for their valuable contributions and support in making this *Primer* possible.

Barbara Hales, Anthony Scialli, and Melissa Tassinari
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