

17 tips to help you have a joyful birth and beyond

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1. Work out what you already know about birth

Your thoughts about birth are affected by where and when you were born...

In our modern world, many of us have been exposed to images in movies, documentaries or the internet. Maybe you have read books or magazines or heard stories from other people. In a way, it's hard to escape the bombardment of information. Without even actively trying, you would have formed ideas.

When you hear the word 'childbirth'; what's the first thing that comes to mind? Maybe it's one word, maybe a few words, maybe you get images or a feeling of what childbirth involves.

Activity: Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and write down everything you know about birth...



2. Ask yourself a deep question

Pam England (author and founder of Birthing From Within™) encourages every woman to ask herself...

What do I need to know to give birth as a mother?

Birth is a mysterious experience that can only be truly understood 'through the heart' not the mind. Although one can 'know' about birth- real knowing comes through inner preparation. Uncovering your deepest question is central to birth preparation.

An example;

If your answer to the above question is 'I need to know how to trust my body' then you can bring this statement 'alive' by turning it into a question for TODAY.

Ask yourself, 'how am I trusting my body now (in this moment, today)'?

Start to bring awareness into your everyday life and look at ways that you can foster these qualities in yourself now.

3. Take time to emotionally prepare for birth

How do you prepare for something like giving birth? Some women feel comfort in reading lots of books or searching online, some delve into it by watching movies or films and others hear stories from friends and family.

It's a pretty important day in the life of a woman and her baby (and her partner, if she has one). Birth is something that will affect you for the rest of your life (not just you, but your baby and those people around you too).

I know the amount of time, energy and money that women can spend on planning their weddings. Compared to this, birth preparation probably looks easy!

Find a pregnancy group!

Look in your local newspaper or search online to see what pregnancy groups are meeting in your town. Connect with other pregnant women (ideally with a facilitator that knows about birth) and start to hear how others are preparing for their births. This may give you some ideas for what you would like for your birth, for example; having a water-birth, using a birth photographer or therapeutic uses for your placenta.

These prenatal groups can help you make new friends that may continue into parenthood (where more choices and options will arise that require discussion!).

Hire a doula!

Having a doula is a fantastic way to help you prepare for birth. Many offer several prenatal sessions to help you discover what it is you want for your birth, what options are available and generally helping you to feel better about birthing your baby. And, of course, they are advocates for you during the birth process. Whether you are planning to birth at home, birth center or hospital; they can be an incredible ally for you.

Join an independent antenatal class!

These can be an incredible eye-opening experience that can help you understand your options and prepare for how your birth may look. We can never know the details of how a birth will unfold but having some tools to help you along the way will make you feel a lot better about your experience. Women who take an active role in the decision making process generally feel better about their birth outcomes (even if this is different to what they envisioned).

The personal exploration gives you a wider perspective and helps you gain confidence in your birthing abilities. It can also give your partner (or birth companion) more confidence to know what to do in the midst of labour.

Let's face it, who wouldn't want to do all they can to make this journey as smooth as possible? Birth preparation is an essential part of being a responsible pregnant woman. You owe it yourself and your baby!

4. Learn how to make decisions using BRAIN

Despite where you plan to birth, becoming aware of the options available within our mainstream maternity care is a good idea. Women who are involved in the decision-making processes with their birth report greater satisfaction levels (despite the outcome).

Parents don't need to 'know everything' before labour. Learning communication skills and building a connection with everyone on your birth team is more likely to get you what you want.

If you need to make a decision about your care; consider using the acronym 'BRAIN' to help you.

B- (Benefits)...What are the benefits? How is this helpful?

R- (Risks)... What are the risks? Can anything go wrong?

A- (Alternatives)... Are there any alternatives? Can I try something else?

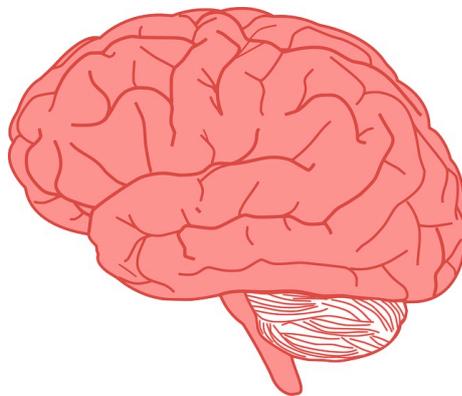
I- (Intuition)... What is my intuition telling me?

N- (Nothing)...What if I wait a bit longer to decide or do nothing?

Your intuition is strong!

Pregnant women often have heightened senses and intuition. You can encourage this sensitive side by taking time out each day to bring attention to how you are feeling and what you are telling yourself. Allowing yourself to connect deeply with your intuition can help you to begin living with greater awareness.

Focussing on your breath is amazing for quietening the 'thinking mind' and bringing greater awareness and relaxation to your body, mind and spirit. This increased focus, allows you to slow down and get in touch with your deeper intuitive knowing. Every support person can benefit from mindfulness practices too- to center themselves in labour.



5. Know the importance of birth support

Birth companions can play a significant role in the mothers experience of birth. Most women will go deep within themselves as they call on all their inner resources to birth their baby. Feeling safe and well supported enables this deepening and opening to be enriched and encourages the birthing journey to be as smooth as possible.

Men haven't always been involved in birth...

Up until the mid 1970's most fathers didn't attend the births of their children. Today, we are lucky that we have more options and choices and many fathers (and birth partners) do decide to be present and are welcomed into the birth space. However, being privileged to join in doesn't mean he is instantly 'equipped' and knows what to do. Just 'expecting' the father or partner to be wonderful (with little or no preparation) can lead to disappointment.

We don't send anyone on a big adventure without some skills or tools. For example; if someone was heading out to go bushwalking, we'd make sure they had a compass, some water, some food and some idea of where they were going. Boundaries and guidelines can help people accomplish what they set out to do.

Birthing From Within workshops help couples to understand birth from a deep level. They foster strong relationships and a belief in each others abilities. Partners learn to be present, guide visualisations and use touch and massage to help the labouring woman. Birth companions learn how to create a safe and loving space, read subtle cues and have confidence to help the mum if she starts to feel overwhelmed.

Fathers or birth companions come away from these workshops feeling that they have a purpose and can be intimately involved. The mothers find great relief knowing that her partner will be able to meet her needs and know how to be helpful.

Taking these antenatal classes together really helps to build a strong foundation.

6. Choose your care provider wisely

Just as there are many places to give birth, there are a many options for who can help you through pregnancy, birth and beyond. Obviously, having someone close to you like your partner or mother can be a blessing. Birth runs more smoothly when you feel safe and secure. Knowing your care providers and birth supporters will make a big difference to how relaxed you feel when you are birthing.

Many healthy women choose to have a midwife support them during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal time. There are options called 'case load' or 'continuity of care' where the woman can have the same midwife care for her through her pregnancy and birth. There are options to hire an independent midwife that can care for you at home or hospital or birth centre. And of course, if there are risks, or when complications arise or surgery is required, then obstetricians are the specialists.

There is a growing trend for women to also hire a doula. A doula provides emotional, physical and practical support as well as providing information/education (during pregnancy and birth). Having continual support from a trained doula can make labour shorter and easier whilst decreasing the likelihood of interventions.

Whoever you choose to support you, it's important to discuss what it is that you are wanting and make sure your supporters are 'on the same page' as you. If you are not happy with your care, or don't feel comfortable, try to find someone that you connect with.



7. Think about extra support or hiring a doula

In ancient times, women always attended other women through their labour's. This phenomenon is not new at all. Today, it is gaining popularity to seek assistance of doula's to help pregnant women (and their partner or families) during pregnancy, birth and beyond.

Just like people can hire tour guides for their trekking adventures, coaches for their sporting events and teachers for their studies, Doula's are the mentors and advocates of the birthing journey. Doula's can become like a caring friend who will journey beside you through the rite of passage of becoming a mother. She may give massages, help provide resources, be a listening ear and become a friend.

Doula's are non-medical people (often women), who understand the physical and emotional aspects of pregnancy and birth but do not have any clinical responsibilities. They are childbirth assistants that provide the woman and her partner with both emotional and physical support during pregnancy, the entire labour and birth and immediate postpartum period.



What do doula's do?

Given that there are many hopes and fears surrounding birth, all mothers and fathers can benefit from extra emotional support and help during pregnancy and labour. Having a nurturing and experienced doula can be a calming presence in the intensity of labour. Doula's complement the support given by husbands, partners or midwives. They are experienced in providing birth support and can focus on your emotional and physical needs (without being distracted by clinical duties). Doula's provide a precious and unique presence for women and families, in what ever setting they choose to birth.

Doula's believe it is the woman's right to birth where, how and with whom she wishes.

What are the benefits of having a doula?

Research done by Klaus et al (1993) and Hodnett et al (2011) concluded that support from a Doula enhances wellbeing of mothers and babies and leads to better outcomes.

Research* indicates that the presence of a Doula:

- Decreases the need for caesarean by 50%
- Increases the chances of unmedicated birth 30 - 60%
- Decreases the length of labour by 25%
- Decreases the need for other interventions with mother and baby
- Increases the mother's and father's satisfaction with the experience

* Mothering the Mother (Kennel, Kennel & Klaus 1993)

8. Give your birth support people some tips like...

1. DON'T treat birth like a party! Although you might want to invite lots of people and get 'first row seats' for yourself- birth is not a party. Some women like to have lots of support people around but for most, the birth journey is easier if the woman feels private and safe with dim lights and only people she truly trusts. Birth is an intimate affair.
2. DON'T talk loudly and ask lots of questions! For birth to proceed normally, the woman needs to engage her primal brain and she needs to quieten her 'thinking brain'. When you talk too much it stimulates the neo-cortex and inhibits the release of endorphins (her natural pain killers).
3. Don't tell the woman to RELAX! You might think you're being helpful but you just sound like a dictator telling her to do something that feels impossible. Instead try words like 'soften', 'release' and 'melt'. Find words that resonate with her.
4. Don't anxiously massage! If you're feeling nervous, don't touch a labouring woman. She needs slow movements and a calming touch.
5. Don't have a look of panic on your face! Always try and have a reassuring expression. Let your eyes be full of confidence and show that you really believe that she can do it.
6. Don't be self absorbed! This birth is about the woman and meeting her needs. Do whatever you can to make sure she gets what she wants. You are there as support and to advocate for her wishes.
7. Don't bring strong smelling things to the birth! Pregnant women usually have a strong sense of smell. Some annoying smells like strong coffee, smokey breath or perfumes can be too overwhelming and contribute to nausea or annoyance.
8. Don't take things too personally! Don't take it personally if the mother criticizes or tells you to stop doing something. Just say 'sorry' and stop doing it.
9. Don't announce the baby's sex! Unless you've discussed this beforehand, if the baby's gender is unknown, let the woman discover it for herself.
10. Don't ring people straight after the baby is born! Wait until the placenta is born, the mother is warm and the parents have had time to bond and be close. This time is precious.

9. Take a look at any worries you have

We all have things we are trying to avoid, things we are hoping won't happen. It's a normal part of facing the unknown, of preparing for a big event and transitioning. In fact, it is healthy and normal to feel afraid sometimes. It motivates us to learn new things and really prepare for all the changes and challenges that are coming our way.

When it comes to pregnancy and preparing for birth- it's the same! Birth is a big event and most people want to prepare as best as they know how. Usually a few worries or fears will pop up along the way.

In fact, pregnant women all over the world worry! They worry about pain, their babies health and how they will cope. Some other common worries include; feeling rushed or fear of taking too long, being judged for making noise, being separated from the baby and having medical interventions.

In the 'Birthing From Within' book (written by Pam England), there is a quote from a childbirth psychologist who says 'worry is the work of pregnancy'. This may come as a surprise to some because we often believe that the women who appear relaxed and confident are the ones that birth normally.

Pam England states that in all her years of midwifery practice, it's the "over-confident first time mother" that worries her the most now. She worries that this mother will not be truly prepared for what awaits her.

What effect does fear have on us?

Most of us would be familiar with what happens in our bodies when we feel fear. Our heartbeat quickens, our breath becomes shallow and our muscles tense. It's known as the fight-flight-freeze response and is combined with the release of adrenalin.

During pregnancy, repeatedly worrying can mean our muscles tighten and we may begin to hold tension in our hips, pelvic area and muscles surrounding the uterus. This can make it more difficult to open during labour.

During labour; fear will release adrenalin and this inhibits or slows the release of oxytocin (the hormone needed for birth). Labour can slow right down and even stop. Our bodies respond to adrenalin and will stop labour until it is safe to continue.

Imagined fears create the same response as real threats. We may not have actual tigers in our birth space- but the 'tigers' (worries) in our mind makes our body respond the same. If a woman approaches labour with unresolved fears, her body releases adrenalin and she may not easily go into labour or labour may be long and slow. Her muscles will hold more tension, and it will be harder for her uterus to contract effectively, making things more painful. A partner that is worried may not be able to give full attention and focus on what is happening in the moment. Tension in the birth space (even from supporters) can slow labour down.

Are you worrying?

- Are you trying to control everything, researching lots and creating a strict 'birth plan'?
- Are you avoiding 'reading that chapter' and/or avoiding listening to negative birth stories?
- Are you only listening to 'experts' and/or not wanting to have high expectations or hopes?

If you identified with any of the above behaviors, then it's likely you have some worries and it would be beneficial to explore them a little. Holistic preparation involves being ready for surprises and being brave enough to identify fears so that solutions can be found.

What can you do?

Move from fear to being free by examining your worries and finding some solutions.

Take time to do the following exercise

Write down all your secret worries and pay particular attention to the worries that create tension in your body.

Explore each worry by using the following questions (from Birthing From Within)

1. What would you do if this worry/fear actually happened?
2. What do you imagine your partner or birth attendant would do/say?
3. What would it mean about you as a mother if this happened?
4. How have you faced crisis in the past?
5. What can you do to prepare for or even prevent what you are worrying about?
6. If there's nothing you can do to prevent it, how would you like to handle the situation?

10. Practice deep breathing

Women all over the world use their breath to help them birth. They focus on their breath and tend to breathe deeply as a way of coping with the intensity of contractions (surges/expansions).

We always have our breath with us. We are constantly breathing. Women in labour instinctively know how to breathe. Pregnancy provides a wonderful time to take time out and practice some simple breath awareness. If you can incorporate it into your daily life, learning to let go will come easier in labour.

Start by taking a deep breath (do it now!). Notice how long your exhalation is. Is it long or short? Is it deep or shallow? If your mind wonders... that's ok... just come back to your next outward breath. Follow it and focus in on your breath.

Are you feeling better already?

Your breath will oxygenate you and your baby (twice the reason to breath deeply!).

By quietening your mind, it helps you be present on the here and now. Time can pass more quickly when you are focussed on the present and when you quieten your busy thoughts.

11. Vocalise

Many women find their voice in birth. Even previously quiet women find their inner tiger (and for good reason too)! There is a strong relationship to our mouth and our cervix/yoni. Having a loose jaw and mouth means we are more likely able to open in birth.

Try clenching your mouth and making a high-pitched sound... what just happened to your pelvic floor? Did you feel it tighten?

Now... feel what happens if you relax your jaw/mouth and make a deep sound or sigh. Did you feel your pelvic floor relax too? This is very important to remember in labour!

A loose mouth and deep sounds will help you open beautifully. Try it with movement and bring focus to your breath and you're well on your way to a more natural and enjoyable birthing experience!

12. Move your body

Keeping active in birth also comes instinctively to a lot of women. Movement helps to reduce pain. It gives the mind a focus and disperses pain in the body. By moving around, this also helps the baby to find the best position (to press against the cervix and help it dilate and also to make it's way into the pelvis and birth canal).

Try bouncing on a birth ball (yoga ball) or circling your hips. Belly dance is another great way to help your body open. Try large circles with your hips, figure eight movements or pelvic circling.

Walking and keeping upright are also great for helping labour establish and it keeps gravity on your side! Upright positions or hands and knees can increase the pelvis opening by up to 30% (compared to lying your back). Amazing hey?



Movement/dance for birth
Birth & Beyond Workshop

13. Eat nutrients for two

Nutrition is a very important aspect of pregnancy and affects both the mother and unborn child. It is important that the mother-to-be eats wholesome and nutrient-dense foods in order to provide the correct nourishment for her self and her growing baby (Haas, 2006). Organic produce is grown in healthy soils and often has higher nutritional value. Where possible, it is recommended to eat organically grown fruit and vegetables and free-range organic animal products. Naish (1999) states the popular myth of 'eating for two' is a misconception and rather that women really need to eat 'nutrients for two'.

Protein:

Pregnant women require about 70g of protein per day (whereas a non-pregnant woman requires about 46g/day). This increase is needed to support tissue growth of both the foetus and mother. Good sources of protein can be found in meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy foods. Legumes, grain, nuts and seeds are also important (Haas, 2006).

Energy:

During the first trimester, the energy levels only increase slightly because there is only little tissue growth. In the second and third trimesters a lot more growing is done and consequently energy requirements are increased. On average, pregnant women require an additional 1500kJ. This amount depends on how active the woman is or if she herself is still growing (adolescence).

Vitamin A:

Vitamin A is increased by 70 μ g/day to allow the foetus to store it and because it helps with maintaining healthy eyes, skin, bones and blood tissue. If a woman was to be consuming pre-formed vitamin A (retinol) found in animal foods (fish liver oils, butter, cream, liver, cheese, egg yolks and whole milk) then she would need to be careful of intake. Daily intakes above 3000mcg increase the risk of birth defects (Reavley, 1998).

Folate:

Folic acid is crucial during pregnancy. This nutrient is needed for the development of the nervous system, red blood cells and the growth and reproduction of other cells. It is wise to increase levels to at least 600mcg daily in order to help prevent congenital neurological defects. Folic acid can be found in leafy green vegetable, whole grains, yeast, fish, dairy foods and organ meats (Haas, 2006). If a woman's diet is not rich in folate, then it may

be wise to consider a supplement to keep folic acid levels at an optimum level (Reavley, 1998).

Calcium:

It is important to get at least 1000mg of calcium daily. Calcium is essential for building healthy bones and teeth. Good sources are; fish, milk, nuts, seeds, leafy greens, sea vegetables, whole grains and many vegetables (Haas, 2006).

Zinc:

Zinc is needed to help develop the immune system of the foetus. It is also essential for growth and enzymatic activity. It is found in the same foods that iron is in (see below).

Iron:

Due to the increase in maternal tissue, the need for iron also increases. The mother's blood volume has to increase by about 50% during pregnancy and therefore iron is needed to help build blood cells in both the mother and foetus. It can be difficult to obtain the 27mg of iron from diet alone, so a supplement is often prescribed. Foods that contain iron include; animal sources such as liver, red meats, eggs, chicken and salmon. The vegetable sources containing iron are; seaweed, brewer's yeast, molasses, millet, prunes, raisins, mushrooms, chard, spinach and many nuts and seeds (Haas, 2006). Iron obtained from plant sources may not be absorbed as well as that from meat. Vitamin C enhances iron absorption by converting iron from ferric to ferrous. Eating foods rich in vitamin C combined with iron-containing foods will help with maximum absorption (Rolfes et al, 2006).

Other important nutrients:

Vitamins D, E, K, C and all the B's are also very important during pregnancy. Also, the minerals iodine, magnesium, sodium and phosphorus are important to be aware of.

References

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Kowalewski, F (2008), "Nutrients application- USDA nutrition database".

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Reavley, N (1998), "Vitamin etc", Bookman Press Pty Ltd, Australia.

Rolfes et al (2006), "Understanding normal and clinical nutrition", Thomson Wadsworth, United States of America.

14. Understand your hormones

I want to introduce you to three incredible hormones that help with birth. For birth to proceed normally, the woman needs to activate the 'mammalian' part of her brain. For this part of the brain to effectively function; the birth space would ideally have dim lighting, quietness, warmth and privacy. This kind of environment is very conducive to labour flowing along nicely and all the right mix of hormones being released. So, what are these hormones that help with birth?

Oxytocin - the love hormone

Everyone loves a good hit of oxytocin! It makes us feel loved. It has an incredibly important role in love-making, birthing and breastfeeding.

What does it do?

Oxytocin helps the uterus to contract and dilate the cervix. Essentially this means opening to allow a baby to be birthed! It also plays an important role at birth, causing the uterus to continue contracting to release the placenta and decrease blood loss. With breastfeeding, oxytocin mediates the let-down reflex which helps release the milk when the baby suckles.

How you can you increase levels of oxytocin?

Soft touch, massage, nipple stimulation, dim lights and feeling secure all help oxytocin to be released. At birth skin-to-skin contact and looking at your baby will help more oxytocin to be released and help prevent post-partum hemorrhage.

Endorphins - hormones of pleasure and transcendence

Beta-endorphin is a naturally occurring opiate that has similar actions to morphine. Like oxytocin, high levels are present during pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding.

What does it do?

Endorphins are released as a response to pain or stress and they act as a pain killer and help us cope. They induce feelings of pleasure and are responsible for helping women feel 'spaced out' and to transcend or transform pain.

How can you help increase levels?

By talking quietly or not at all (don't engage her 'thinking brain'). Help the woman feel safe and secure and primal.

Adrenalin - hormone of excitement

Most people are familiar with this 'fight-or-flight' hormone. They are secreted in response to stress, fear or anxiety.

What does it do?

In the first stage of labour, adrenalin is NOT helpful to the birth process. It actually inhibits oxytocin release and it reduces blood flow to the uterus. The fight or flight response sends blood to the extremities (legs and arms) so that you can run away from danger or stay and fight. As you can imagine, this is not a helpful hormone to have when you're in early labour. However, in the second stage of labour, adrenalin gives a boost of energy and can help with the 'fetal ejection reflex' where the mother births her baby quickly.

How can you affect adrenalin levels?

In the first stage of labour, its important to keep adrenalin levels low. This is helped by creating a safe and nurturing birth space. It's a good idea to try and reduce anxiety and fears by talking through them or having flower essences to help with emotional wellbeing. In the second stage of labour, adrenalin usually kicks in to help the mother push. After the baby is birthed, it's important to help adrenalin levels decrease again by having a warm environment (this helps oxytocin increase).

It's easy to remember that 'what helps a baby be made' is what 'helps a baby be birthed'. If you think you could make love in a place then it is probably a good space to birth a baby there. Remember... dim lighting, quietness and privacy!



15. Drink red raspberry leaf tea

Pregnancy is a wonderful time to take extra care to nurture yourself. It's double the reason to be kind and healthy. Not only do *you* benefit, but your baby enjoys the rewards too.

How is red raspberry leaf tea useful?

Red raspberry leaf has a long history with some sources dating its use back thousands of years. Today, it is one of the most commonly sought after herbs for use in pregnancy and it is becoming more popular and mainstream.

It's main action is to strengthen, nourish and tone the uterine muscles. It is also rich in vitamins and minerals (including iron, calcium and magnesium). It is reputed to make labour shorter, more efficient and easier and reduce the chances of postpartum hemorrhage (excess blood loss).

It is also useful for women wishing to conceive. According to Susun Weed, It increases fertility in both men and women when combined with red clover.

Of course, the simple ritual of making and sitting down to drink tea has relaxation benefits in itself.

Are there precautions?

Aviva Romm, an experienced midwife and herbalist says that red raspberry leaf can be safely used throughout pregnancy. Herbalist Susun Weed states that red raspberry leaf is the best known, most widely used and safest of all pregnancy tonic herbs.

Like with anything in pregnancy, if you have any questions regarding your health, ask experienced practitioners like midwives, herbalists or naturopaths. I believe trusting your own intuition to know what is best for you is also key.

How is it used?

You should be able to find red raspberry leaf in most health food stores, organic shops or herbal dispensaries. I recommend seeking the dried herb to make an infusion with (or tea bags are an even easier option). This is the gentlest and safest way to ingest the herb.

Aviva Romm recommends 2 tablespoons of the dried herb per cup of boiling water and steeping for 20 mins. This is quite a strong brew. If you are in early pregnancy or don't like the strong taste, use less and steep for less time (e.g; 1 teaspoon and steep for 5 mins). If you would like to add more flavour (and other health benefits), try a special blend by mixing 2 parts raspberry leaf, 2 parts nettle, 1/2 part rosehips and 1/4 part spearmint to your teapot. Add sweetener (like honey) if this makes it more appetizing for you. You can drink it hot or cold, depending on the weather and what you feel like!

As your pregnancy progresses, you can enjoy raspberry leaf tea more frequently (up to 3 cups a day is good!).

References:

1. Romm, Aviva (2003) "The natural pregnancy book", Celestial Arts, New York.
2. Weed, Susun (1986), "Wise woman herbal for the childbearing yaer", Ash tree publishing, New York



16. Prepare for after your baby is born

The 'baby moon' is the time after your baby is born. Many cultures recommend 40 days of rest, where the mother is looked after by family. Dr Sarah Buckley recommends women stay in their pyjama's for two weeks! This time is crucial for new mothers to heal and bond with their baby.

Pre-make some meals

During the last few weeks of pregnancy, there is usually some heavy 'nesting' going on. Mums-to-be usually find an incredible urge to clean and get their space ready. Another very useful thing to do is freeze some meals. This makes dinner that bit easier when you are tired and/or breastfeeding. Popping some home-made soup in the saucepan will provide an easy and nutritious meal!

Stock up on supplies

Delay the need to go out shopping by stocking up on non-perishable items like toilet paper and soap.

Ask for help

Don't be shy! Most people are more than happy to cook a meal or help with cleaning or washing.

Acknowledge the incredible work your body has done to bring new life into this world. You don't 'get this time back' so make the most of it. Rest and allow proper healing time. This time after birth where new mothers rest and recuperate is often referred to as 'lying-in'. This time varies between cultures. Ideally, the new mother will have family or friends visit and cook, clean and help look after the baby. If family don't live close by, some women hire a 'post-partum doula' to help instead.

Honour this time

Only invite people into your space that you feel comfortable with. You are busy enough looking after your new baby without needing to feel like a 'host' for any guests.



Illustration by
Alija Craycroft

17. Know how placenta encapsulation helps you have an easier postpartum

Can you imagine those precious days as you fall in love with your baby? Wouldn't it be amazing if new motherhood meant you had plenty of milk, lots of energy and balanced emotions?

You could recover quicker from birth, focus on your new baby, feel balanced and happy, have plenty of milk to feed your baby and have energy to do the things you want to.

You might worry what motherhood will be really like. You've heard about the joys and the challenges and you want to make sure you're giving yourself the best possible start.

"Having already had one baby without the help of my "happy pills" and now being able to compare how I feel WITH them- the difference is truly amazing! My milk came in quickly and my baby is so healthy. My placenta capsules help me feel on top of the world!" (Sylvia)

You have the answer within you!

Your incredible placenta can help you have an enjoyable postpartum. Placenta encapsulation is for women wanting a natural supplement to help them feel energized and nourished in new motherhood, naturally.

Your placenta capsules can:

- Help you feel happier and more balanced
- Increase your milk supply
- Increase your iron and energy levels

My professional encapsulation services include:

- Being on-call for you 24/7 with back-up
- Safe handling of your placenta with reliable and fast turn-around time (24-48hrs)
- Photo documentation of your placenta, placenta capsules and bonus cord keepsake

You can have peace of mind knowing your precious placenta is in the hands of a professional. You only get one chance at processing your placenta. Leave it to me to take care of everything so you can take care of your new baby and enjoy new motherhood.

"The placenta capsules exceeded my expectations. I never got any of the post partum blues or even teariness. And even though I lost a lot of blood during the labour, my haemoglobin recovered very quickly. Also my energy levels were great. I will absolutely (without a doubt) take them again after my next baby!" Kylie E

Bookings are limited, so grab your spot in my calendar now!
Visit www.placentawisdom.com.au or phone 0429 308 851

My name is Kirrah Holborn and I am a doula who also offers holistic antenatal classes, Birthing From Within workshops, pregnancy massage, placenta encapsulation and Australian made bengkung belly binds.

Pregnant women (and their partners) often find it difficult to sift through all the information out there. I help them understand their options so they can feel more relaxed and positive in their pregnancy and really look forward to birthing and becoming a parent.

I believe...

I believe that pregnancy and birth can be the most amazing and beautiful experience of a woman's life. It is a huge time of transition and evolution and I believe that the more supported a woman feels, the easier this journey is.

The journey is more pleasant when a woman has taken time to become educated about birth but she also knows how to trust her intuition. We remember our births for the rest of our lives and the experience effects the way we feel about ourselves and the way we parent.

How it all began...

Since primary school I knew I wanted to 'help people'. Back then, I wasn't sure exactly what this meant. When I was 18, I started studying naturopathy at university and became confident in nature's healing ability and also in the power of individuals to take responsibility for their health.

In 2007 I had the privilege of witnessing my friend give birth to her daughter in her home. I saw the therapeutic benefits of natural therapies and the strength and beauty of a woman in her element. This experience propelled me on a journey to learn all I could about birth.

I became a doula in 2008 and two years later was honoured to be initiated into the Birthing From Within philosophy by Pam England when she visited Australia in 2010. This changed my life forever. I now knew how I could help women prepare for the profound rite of passage of giving birth.

In 2013, I felt honoured to learn the art and science of placenta encapsulation. I know this amazing service can help ease the incredible transition to motherhood.

My experience...

I have a bachelors degree in clinical science (majoring in complementary medicine).

I have been massaging for at least 10 years, working as a doula for 8 years and teaching Birthing From Within antenatal workshops for 6 years. I also run pregnancy groups in Lismore. I ran the Nimbin Birth and Beyond pregnancy group for 4 years (2010-2014).



Enough about me... I'd love to hear from you!

Make contact!

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