

REPORT

- A recent study of over 40,000 women in Norway found that those who took folic acid from four weeks before pregnancy were less likely to have children with severe language delays. Folic acid is already known to reduce the risk of birth defects but, as stated by Dr Ezra Susser from Columbia University, US, 'What you do during pregnancy is not only important for birth but for subsequent development.'
- According to researchers in Europe, infants born to women who consume too much or too little sodium during pregnancy can end up with poorly developed kidneys, which can cause lifelong heart problems. While pregnant, a woman's metabolism is altered. As a result, her sodium needs are slightly higher. The suggested intake is 2,400mg a day.



5 tips for managing your expectations of motherhood

THE BIG QUESTION

WHAT IS HYPNOBIRTHING?

Hypnobirthing teaches women to trust their body's birthing instinct and empowers them to feel calm and confident about giving birth naturally, without the use of painkillers.

A philosophy, as well as a technique, it teaches that in the absence of panic, severe pain does not have to be experienced during labour. Learning relaxation and selfhypnosis techniques will help you to eliminate the concerns that can lead to pain and a long labour. Feeling anxious about pain can cause your body to tense and go into a fight or flight response. The sympathetic nervous system is turned on and pain chemicals are released.

Hypnobirthing allows mothers-to-be to produce the natural endorphins that reduce pain and inflammation. As a result, it eliminates or greatly reduces the need for chemical painkillers. It is also said to shorten the first stage of labour by several hours.

According to the International Hypnobirthing Institute in the US, Caesarean rates are 50 percent lower in women who use this technique. In the classes you will gain an understanding of how the birthing muscles work in perfect harmony – as they were designed to – when your body is sufficiently relaxed and you trust the birthing process. Practising deep relaxation and visualisation will allow you to remain calm and work with your body and your baby to birth easily.

Communication is pivotal during pregnancy and birth, so in hypnobirthing classes you will create a plan of birth preferences. This will help you to communicate your birthing intentions and goals to your doctor or midwife. However, if your birth does not go as planned, skills learned in these classes will help you and your baby to bond, regardless of whether you have a Caesarean or any other delivery experience.

For more information by naturopathic expert Emma Sutherland, go to emmasutherland.com.au.

41%

OF WOMEN WITH GESTATIONAL DIABETES WERE SHOWN TO BE VITAMIN D DEFICIENT

- 1 FLEXIBILITY** It is common for mums to struggle with coming to terms with what they have planned for versus what reality serves up. For example, you may have planned to return to work when your baby is three months but things can change after their birth.
- 2 PREPARATION** Life with a baby does not look like a Huggies ad! There are amazing moments of joy, yet this huge transition is mixed with plenty of hard work.
- 3 BONDING** This may not happen immediately. It is normal for bonding to occur over a period of weeks to months. If a baby has a medical illness, bonding may take longer. This may not be in line with your expectations but it's OK.
- 4 LOSSES** There are often losses associated with motherhood, including loss of body shape, freedom and finances. Acknowledging the losses will help you move forward.
- 5 UNIQUENESS** No one piece of advice or parenting book will have all the magic answers. You and your baby are a unique pair to be understood in your own right. You can see more information by Dr Melanie Strang at wellmumwellbaby.net.au.



MC LOVES

What a softie! This Sweet Doudous by French brand Kayatine is perfect for cuddling up to. Made from 100 percent cotton and featuring a polyester, hypo-allergenic filling, it is ideal for babies and children. Priced at US\$26, this loveable, offbeat plush friend is available in a range of stylish colours and patterns. Check out minibulles.com for more information.



DID YOU KNOW?

WEARING A COMPRESSION GARMENT MAY HELP YOU TO AVOID A NUMBER OF PREGNANCY AILMENTS

Pregnancy creates extra demands on your body, particularly your hips, back and pelvis, and may lead to back and pelvic pain. Many women also experience vein and circulation-related problems, incontinence and decreased energy levels.

Complaints such as these can be alleviated by wearing a medically-approved compression garment, which provides the necessary support to lessen the impact on your body. Look for a compression garment that provides firmness to the perineum, pelvic floor and thighs, delivering comfort, stability and mobility during and post pregnancy. This is also important for those who want to be in the best shape possible before delivery and regain their pre-baby shape afterwards.

For more information go to recoveryshorts.com.

ASK THE EXPERTS

WENDY HAWKE IS AN OBSTETRICIAN GYNAECOLOGIST WORKING IN THE EASTERN SUBURBS OF SYDNEY

Q I am 28-weeks pregnant and have been diagnosed with an irritable uterus and advised to stop work and rest. Will the contractions continue and will I have a premature baby?

A The uterus (womb) contracts during labour. Some women may experience "practise" contractions while pregnant. These are termed Braxton Hicks contractions, or "irritable uterus", and are generally mild and sporadic. Most women will not be aware of them until their third trimester (if at all).

True Braxton Hicks contractions are not dangerous and do not mean you are going into premature labour. They are a normal part of pregnancy. Resting may reduce the frequency of them but will not alter the outcome of when you deliver.

Premature labour is characterised by contractions becoming stronger and more regular in association with changes in the cervix. Visual or digital inspection of your cervix by ultrasound and/or with tests, such as foetal fibronectin, is essential to make a diagnosis of premature labour. If all these findings are normal then you are probably experiencing Braxton Hicks contractions. If, however, your cervix is showing signs of change then you may be at an increased risk of premature labour. In this circumstance you may be advised to reduce activity and commence medication to help lower the chance of having a premature labour. You also may be given steroid injections to mature the baby's lungs and transferred to a hospital that can manage premature deliveries and babies.

Need some expert advice? Email editorial@poppetgroup.com. au or go to the pregnancy tab at mychildmagazine.com.au.



Pregnant? Tired? Low Iron Levels?

Get your energy back with Floradix!

Iron supplementation during pregnancy is often recommended. During pregnancy your baby relies on all of its nutrients from the nutrients available in your blood. It is important that you ensure these essential nutrient levels are maintained. Floradix Herbal Iron Extract can help maintain your health and vitality.

Floradix is a special formula that:

- Contains iron in a soluble form
- Contains natural herbal extracts
- Contains Vitamin C
- Contains Vitamins B1, B2, B6 and B12

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