

# Birthing in Awareness

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## Be Healthy whilst eating for two

Being pregnant may bring a lot of changes to your daily life. One of the most common and major changes are dietary habit changes.

Even if you had a healthy diet prior to becoming pregnant, you may begin to look at what you eat and how you eat different now that you're expecting. Here are some tips to ensuring your diet is what it needs to be during pregnancy.



Remember the food pyramid? It's a great place to start, eat more foods from the bottom (grains), then add vegetables and protein, fruits, dairy and

finally sparingly use fatty foods. Many places have free hand-outs.

It's a great tool to have for reference on the refrigerator.

Variety in your diet is very important.

It helps ensure that you're gathering the daily doses of recommended vitamins and minerals every day from the foods you eat.

It also helps prevent boredom with your diet which can lead to straying.

Bring on the water! Staying hydrated has many benefits for the healthy pregnancy, including avoidance of early labor, healthier skin (meaning more elastic), and general decrease in pregnancy symptoms that are annoying (constipation, swelling, etc.).

Juice has a time and a place

but the majority of your fluids should be water. Other "drinks" like soda, coffee, etc. should not be included in your daily count of 6-8 eight ounce glasses a day...

[Read more](#)



**!**  
*Eating for two doesn't mean to increase the quantity of your food but to increase the quality of it!*

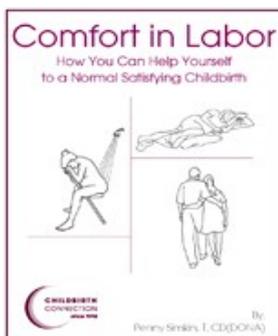
**Mary-Ann Shearer advises:**

### Eat raw

Try to have at least one meal a day that consist entirely of fruit and snack on fresh or dried fruit or raw vegetables during the day. Fruit helps to satisfy your needs for many essential nutrients and is very high in magnesium. This helps your muscle relax, which is important when giving birth. The women I know who have experienced the easiest and shortest labours are those who have eaten an abundance of raw and dried fruits throughout their pregnancies. Many choose to go on a totally raw food programme six weeks before their due date.

In this PDF Penny explains how women can use comfort measures, movement and positioning for a safe and satisfying labor, and also gives tips for labor companions. Open [here](#) for more information.

## Be Comforted in labour and birth with Penny Simkin



Penny Simkin, is a physical therapist who has specialized in childbirth education since 1968. She estimates she has prepared over 9,500 women, couples, and siblings for childbirth. She has assisted hundreds of women or couples through childbirth as a doula. She is the author of many

books on birth for both parents and professionals. Her latest products for birth educators and doulas are The Road Map of Labor, a birth video, titled The 3Rs: Relaxation, Rhythm, and Ritual, and her new DVD, Comfort Measures for Childbirth. In this PDF Penny explains how women

## *Be Healed by nature from perineal trauma*

### *Post-partum perineal healing*

Physicians commonly have women return for a checkup at six weeks post-partum to assess the healing of the perineum and to make recommendations for contraception, as appropriate.

But most women are told little or nothing about how to care for the perineum in the interim, or how to watch for warning signals of infection like swelling or inflammation.

Pain is an important signal of problems too, but it may go unnoticed if a woman is taking painkillers during the first few days, the most critical time for healing.

I suggest that women use ice packs for 24 hours to reduce swelling, and then switch to sitz baths several times daily using hot water with selected herbs. Nothing speeds healing faster than heat, and soaking is far superior to topical application as it more deeply stimulates circulation.

Fresh ginger is a good addition to the solution; it helps relieve the itching that often occurs as stitches dissolve and the skin heals.

Here is how I recommend women take a sitz bath: Grate a 3- to 4-inch piece of ginger root into a large pot of water; simmer twenty minutes; strain and divide into two portions. Save one for later in the day, and dilute the first with water in a sitz bath. After soaking for twenty

minutes, thoroughly dry the perineum and expose to air or sunlight for another 10 minutes before putting on a fresh pad (or use a hair dryer to speed the process). If the perineum feels at all sticky, use aloe vera gel to dry and soothe the tissues.



Avoid vitamin E or other oil-based ointments until the skin is healed over, as these tend to keep edges from closing.

The wall-like ridge characteristic of episiotomy can be softened and relaxed with thumb or finger pressure, using a little oil (just make sure to wash your hands before handling the baby or breastfeeding). When scarring is extensive, evening primrose oil (found in health food stores) may significantly help to reduce it.

If adequately repaired and cared for, the perineum should be fully healed at six weeks no matter how extensive the damage.

I recently saw a woman who was experiencing pain and bleeding with intercourse seven months after perineal repair!

She had been back to see her doctor, who offered little assistance. (Unfortunately, he was also a relative, so she hesitated to seek a second opinion.) As I suspected, she had been sewn up too tightly

with the "husband's knot." Even gentle pressure to the area caused bleeding, as the skin tore ever so slightly apart.

Both she and her partner were frustrated and miserable, and eventually, she had to have reconstructive surgery.

But other women who have seen me for this problem report spontaneous resolution with application of evening primrose oil to the perineum, massaged in thoroughly twice a day.

– Elizabeth Davis

Excerpted from "Sex after the Baby Comes," *Midwifery Today*, Issue 62



Raw honey is a great remedy for first-degree [perineal] tears. Read more about this [here](#)

"...a woman can give birth intact, uninjured, and unafraid."

– Ina May Gaskin

## *Be Nourished with accurate Breastfeeding information*

### *Breastfeeding a Toddler - Why on Earth?*

Because more and more women are now breastfeeding their babies, more and more are also finding that they enjoy breastfeeding enough to want to continue longer than the usual few months they initially thought they would do it. UNICEF has long encouraged breastfeeding for two years and longer, and the American Academy of Pediatrics is now on record as encouraging mothers to

nurse at least one year and as long after as both mother and baby desire.



Breastfeeding to 3 and 4 years of age has been common in much of the world until recently, and breastfeeding toddlers is still common in many societies.

Why should breastfeeding continue past six months?

Follow this [link](#) to the answer



*Read what UNICEF and WHO have to say about the breastfeeding guidelines in this [informative article](#)*

## *Be Informed about BPA, plastics and food containers*

Why are plastics and food containers harmful to us? What is in plastics and how do these toxins affect us? What exactly is Bisphenol-A (BPA)? How does it affect me my family? What products contain BPA and what should I throw out without going overboard? Let me assure you that by reading this article and making some simple changes in

your life you will provide a safer environment for your family, if only by educating yourself on this topic. I am not a professional doctor or scientist so what I have attempted to do is pull down relevant research from the internet and attempted to decipher the lingo and make it easier to for the non-scientist to evaluate. There are an extraordinary amount of products that contain BPA

at a variety of levels and it is up to you how far you want to go to remove BPA from your house. I will provide you with an idea of what BPA is and what affects it has on you and your family according to recent studies.



[Read further](#)

[Like Heaven into my hands](#)

A midwife Story  
By Tess Colwell

## *Be Connected with your baby and flower essences*

The last months of pregnancy and the first months following delivery are generally an exhausting and challenging time. Hopefully, they are also filled with anticipation, joy and the precious bonding between mother and child. The bonding connection (often unconscious) begins

before conception, becomes a more conscious connection in utero, and transitions to greater awareness following birth. Essences are very useful to help the bonding, awareness and adjustment process of being a parent. They are safe to use, even when nursing.

Discover which essences to use [here](#)



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## *Be Aware of effects of epidural analgesia*

**Epidural anesthesia** has become increasingly popular for childbirth. The popular book, *What to Expect when You're Expecting*, for example, portrays epidurals as perfectly safe. The risks, however, may be greatly underplayed.

### Epidurals and Pain Relief

For the most part, epidural analgesia does effectively relieve labor pain.<sup>1</sup> Obstetrical anesthesiologists continue to state that epidural analgesia has other, potentially catastrophic, adverse effects but, with safe clinical practice, these problems are extremely rare. We will suggest in the material that follows that these complications are not extremely rare, and that women are not receiving adequate informed consent about what these complications are and their accompanying frequency. Nor are they being offered any serious alternatives to epidural anesthesia. Despite this, anesthesiologists such as Eberle and Norris argue that specific anaesthetic techniques ... or obstetrical management can limit or eliminate these risks of epidural labour analgesia. What must be remembered for any technical procedure, is that it is studied in major academic centers where highly skilled professors supervise residents and all outcomes are monitored closely. The actual practice, however, takes place in smaller institutions by less qualified individuals so that the actual complication rates of any procedure (obstetric, cardiac, pulmonary) are always higher than what are found in studies.

### Overall Complications Rates for Epidural Anesthesia

A general estimate of the overall complication rate of epidural anesthesia is 23%...

Continue reading further about:

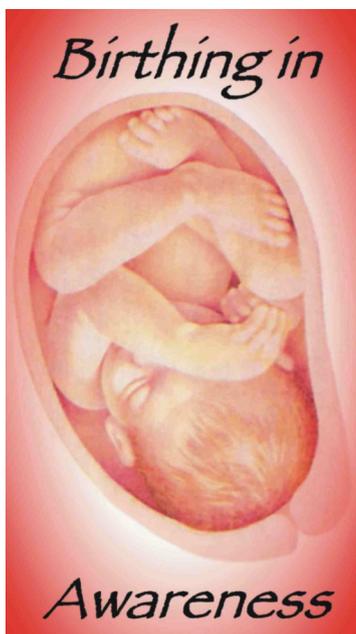
Effects of epidurals on caesarean rate

Significant low blood pressure (hypotension)

Fetal distress

And more [here](#)

Taking birth one  
breathe at a time.



## *Be Supported through your recovery from a caesarean birth*

VBAC-SA is a support group offering compassionate understanding to South African women who have had a caesarean section and nurturing support to SA women in their journey towards a vaginal birth after Caesarean birth.

South African women are finding accurate and empowering information amongst like minded women and professionals.

If you have had a caesarean birth and wish to connect, chat and support other women who have experienced similar situations to you or you would like to



have a VBAC (vaginal birth after caesarean) then sign up today to SA's first support group.

This is an online group that allows you to choose your

settings to receive mails directly to your inbox.

So be supported by emailing to [this address](#).