

Powerful Beginnings

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Where to Begin?

You are now home with your healthy baby after a labour that lasted all night. Where do you start?

While you are pregnant, speak to your partner, friends, and family about the support that is available. Ask someone to water the garden, do the dishes, and fold your laundry.

When people come to visit, don't feel like you need to play hostess. You are recovering from birth too and waking during the night. Let them know that they can help themselves to water/tea/coffee or food. They can also bring with them a meal for the new family. What better gift than nutritious food that doesn't come in a take-out box!

If you are like many who are living in Toronto and your family and friends are not able to help, contact a postpartum doula. Postpartum doula's are there to mother the mother. They can help with diaper changes, answer breastfeeding questions, give mom some time to nap or take a shower, and even do a few tasks around the house so you can do what is most important: bonding, loving, and taking care of your new baby.

Expecting multiples?

A postpartum doula can still be very helpful to help you balance all the different tasks.

Some helpful advice from those who have been there:

- sleep when the baby sleeps.
- Wear pajamas when others come to

visit—this is a hint that you are not going to serve them but they should help you.

- Freeze meals before the birth so they can be warmed up when you are ready.
- Don't take on new tasks in the first few weeks of being home. Allow yourself time to adjust to the new routine.
- Go for a walk—seeing the sunshine and other people can help reduce postpartum depression.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Having a new child means a lot of changes both physically and emotionally.
- Have others you can call if you are having a hard day (or night)!

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So You Are Having A Boy...

One of the decisions that parents often face when they find out they have a baby boy is the decision to circumcise or not.

In many countries around the world, circumcision is not routine and most of the population is not circumcised.

The current recommendation by the Canadian Pediatric Society is to not routinely circumcise male infants. The procedure is not covered by OHIP.

When caring for an intact (uncircumcised) penis, simply wash it as if you would a finger. Don't retract the foreskin as it will do so naturally as the boy grows older, usually during adolescence. When the foreskin does retract, a simple rinse with water is all the care it needs.

Prenatally, speak to your health care provider about circumcision. Don't forget to include it in your birth plan.

Advise health care providers after birth that your son is intact and that the foreskin should not be retracted. It can cause pain and open wounds that can lead to infections.

Educate yourself about circumcision. Get to know the differences and the risks involved.



Let Your Creative Side Speak Up!

Many expectant parents are expressing themselves through different art forms about their birth. This can be done before or after the baby is born and is known as "birth art". It is a great way to answer questions like: "What is your ideal birth?" or "What moment are you most looking forward to?"

Allowing the right brain (the

creative side) to let loose and express itself can reveal great joys but also fears and anxieties about birthing. Be sure to take note and to discuss these with your team (partner, doula, health care provider). Maintaining that open discussion will allow others to understand how to best support you, no matter what stage you might be in.

Some forms of birth art include paintings, clay, playdough, drawings, poetry, song, and even dance.

Give yourself the time to explore this wonderful tool—and of course, it gives you a beautiful treasure to keep that will always remind you of your baby.

Partner Pointer—Affirming Birth

Watching the woman you love go through labour can be challenging, especially if it is your first time.

One thing that every woman needs when she is birthing is someone to believe in her, and who best to do that than the person who loves her more than

anyone else in the world—YOU!

So here is the cheat sheet for some simple affirmations:

- Our baby feels your confidence
- Each contraction brings baby closer to us

- I believe in you
- Your body knows what to do
- You are beautiful and powerful



Community Highlight—ICAN

ICAN stands for the International Cesarean Awareness Network. It is an organization that educates about cesarean birth as well as VBAC (vaginal birth after c-section).

They provide reliable evidence-based information about c-sections, including choosing a health care provider, labour induction, uterine rupture, and recovery after a c-section. These are all topics that pregnant

women should know about and think about what decisions work for them at that moment.

ICAN advocates for women's rights to be informed decision-makers. In doing so, you can choose to change health care providers, find a birth setting that meets your needs and wants, and have the ability to ask questions, seek resources, and be supported.

There are ICAN meetings in Toronto and you are welcome to attend! They also have webinars, forums, and links to professionals who support VBACs.

For more information about ICAN, please visit their website: www.ican-online.org

Book Review—Healthy Beginnings

Healthy Beginnings is in its 4th edition and it has something special to add—it begins talking about pregnancy prior to conception all the way through the early weeks after baby arrives.

Healthy Beginnings is a great summary of the standpoint of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada. It covers many topics that women and their partners

would like to know, but not in enough depth that a prenatal class wouldn't be beneficial.

They have included different quizzes and points to reflect about pre-term labour, household chores, and even birth planning.

The book is not long and because of the way it is divided, it can be kept in a bag for a quick reference at any time.

Healthy Beginnings also emphasizes breastfeeding infants and has great pictures to describe latch techniques and positioning.

If you are looking for a short but comprehensive book about birthing, this would be one to take a look at. It would be well complimented with a book that focuses on comfort measures during birth.

Feature Food—Kale

Looking to add some extra calcium but not into dairy? Kale is a good food to add to your diet to add variety and a lot of

the nutrients in kale: vitamin C, vitamin K, and beta carotene.

Try adding some kale into your salads or have some steamed with some black-eyed peas. Have some fun and experiment in the kitchen with this very versatile green.

If you want more information about healthy eating, you can now contact a registered dietitian for free by telephone:

1-800-510-5102 or visit www.ontario.ca/eatright



Picture from Wikipedia

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We are on Twitter!
[@birthispowerful](https://twitter.com/birthispowerful)

We provide professional doula and childbirth education classes for growing families in Toronto and the GTA.

We believe that all women are birthing goddesses. We believe in their bodies ability to birth their babies in a way that works for their individual family.

No matter what your plans are for pregnancy or birthing, we are here to support and empower your birth experience.

Referral Program

If you refer someone to us for doula support or prenatal classes, we will make sure it benefits both you and them.

We will give both of you \$50 off!