

childbearing

The newsletter of the Lower Mainland Childbearing Society

Pregnancy Wellness


For many of us, pregnancy is a time when we take a closer look at our states of health.

After all, it's not just us anymore – there are passengers involved, whose healths suddenly seem more important than – yet entirely dependant on -- ours. We make changes and sacrifices, perhaps giving up alcohol, sushi, snowboarding and cleaning the cat box (okay, that last one's no sacrifice, but you get the idea).

As if that weren't enough, in return for our abstinence we're often rewarded by a host of niggling, minor, or sometime not-so-minor aches, pains, and discomforts, from the misnamed morning sickness to back pain, heartburn and full body hives. Since we're in a self-sacrificial mode, we often tend to ignore or suffer through these complaints in silence. And yet there are a host of treatments available, many of them safe and non-invasive.

To give you a small window into what's available, this issue contains articles about acupuncture, chiropractic treatment, and homeopathy, which are just three of the many therapeutic modalities available. Contact information for the authors is provided at the end of each article: please feel free to get in touch with authors directly if you have questions. In future issues we hope to bring you our "Practitioner's Corner" section, where we can feature articles from a variety of other therapeutic practitioners as well.

When choosing a practitioner, use the same criteria you would when choosing any other health-care provider: credentials, word of mouth, a careful interview, and above all, your own instincts.

All of us at Childbearing wish you a Healthy Pregnancy and a Happy New Year! 

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Class of Winter 2006

Lower Mainland Childbearing is: Aleksandra Henderson, *President, Doula Rep.*; Jennifer Landels, *Registrar, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor*; Stephanie Ondrack, *Assistant Registrar, Secretary, Marketing Director*; Mary Coll, *Teacher-at-large, Volunteer Coordinator*; Susan Woodhouse, *Packages*; Diane Donaldson, *Past President*
Instructors: Mary Coll, Aleksandra Henderson, Stephanie Ondrack, Susan Woodhouse.

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Welcome Babies!

These are some of the new faces we met at postpartum classes this Spring and Summer, and their birthdates:

<i>Cameron</i>	<i>29 Sep 06</i>
<i>Cleopatra</i>	<i>Aug 06</i>
<i>Daniel</i>	<i>18 Sep 06</i>
<i>Dominic</i>	<i>6 Sep 06</i>
<i>Eleanor</i>	<i>20 Sep 06</i>
<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>16 Sep 06</i>
<i>Ellie</i>	<i>?</i>
<i>Ellis</i>	<i>1 Aug 06</i>
<i>Finn</i>	<i>24 Sep 06</i>
<i>Francesca</i>	<i>30 Sep 06</i>
<i>Helena</i>	<i>Jul 06</i>
<i>Hudson</i>	<i>29 May 06</i>
<i>Isabella</i>	<i>22 Jun 06</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>20 Jul 06</i>
<i>Jasper</i>	<i>8 Sep 06</i>
<i>Jonathon</i>	<i>23 Oct 06</i>
<i>Kayla</i>	<i>16 Oct 06</i>
<i>Kayna</i>	<i>8 Jun 06</i>
<i>Koah</i>	<i>Sep 06</i>
<i>Mackenzie</i>	<i>28 Jun 06</i>
<i>Madeleine</i>	<i>22 Jul 06</i>
<i>MaLee</i>	<i>6 Sep 06</i>
<i>Mia</i>	<i>4 Aug 06</i>
<i>Nicholas</i>	<i>28 Sep 06</i>
<i>Noah</i>	<i>Nov 06</i>
<i>Olive</i>	<i>21 Jul 06</i>
<i>Oliver</i>	<i>6 Jul 06</i>
<i>Olivia</i>	<i>6 Sep 06</i>
<i>River</i>	<i>20 Oct 06</i>
<i>Sarah</i>	<i>Apr 06</i>
<i>Satjeevan</i>	<i>Sep 06</i>
<i>Sophia</i>	<i>29 Jul 06</i>
<i>Zach</i>	<i>Jun 06</i>
<i>Zoë</i>	<i>12 Sep 06</i>
<i>Zofia</i>	<i>1 May 06</i>

If you attended postpartum classes during September through November and your babies are not here we apologize. Just send us their names and birthdays and we'll add them next issue. (And please forgive us if we've got the spelling or date wrong!)



Rachel & Amelia, Spring 2006 Class



Class of Summer 2006



Congratulations!

On September 19th our own **Mary Coll** gave birth to her second baby, **Finn**. Congratulations to Mary, Steve, and big sister Chloe!

Letters & Announcements

We love to hear from you! Keep sending your comments on our newsletter, our classes, our doulas, your birth and parenting experiences, and anything else related to the childbearing year that you'd like to get off your chest to: registrar@childbearing.org or 8540 Elsmore Road, Richmond BC, V7C 2A1

Hi Stephanie,

It's a girl. Came a couple of weeks early but healthy as can be. It was a natural delivery but there were times where we thought about the epidural. The breathing and the shower really helped especially near the end. Baby appears to be feeding better than initially and despite being a cranky sleeper, we couldn't be happier. The time she first slept on our belly was so blissful. Baby slept so well. Thanks for helping us prepare for this moment.

Cecilia Ting

PS: you may have noticed I called her baby. Haven't settled on a name yet. Think we may call her Abby.



Introducing Sidney Wanita Soon-hee Kim: 6 lbs 6 ounces ... daddy's little princess.



Sidnev

Here goes the version of events as I remember them now!!

My labour began at 6:30am on Saturday July 1 and I had contractions every 3-5 minutes from the first

contraction until I delivered her Sunday at 5:00pm.

I first went to the hospital on Saturday at 1:00pm after calling the hospital. When we went I was 2 cm, so I was sent home. I returned at 1:00pm that night ... exhausted, but coping, to have the doctor check me at 4 cm. He gave me the option to stay or go. I decided to go. He told me to return when my water broke, or when I was just not coping. My labour was very painful in my back through the night and I returned at 11:30 the next morning crying, "my water hasn't broken but I'm not coping"!!! It turns out my doctor was about to call me in to break my water because it had gone on too long. After he checked me, it turns out the baby was facing the wrong way. Not breech but backward and forehead first. I remembered Stephanie talking about that and understanding why I had the back pain and a long labour from the baby pushing on the nerves of my pelvis.

As I contemplated the epidural, the doctor recommended it since if she came out forehead first, the diameter would be much greater so I got it. I think I would have anyway, as I was exhausted. It was a walking epidural so I could labour on all fours to try and turn the baby. The rest happened so fast. The doctor went home (I was 7cm). After 3 hours I turned to the nurse and told her I was ready to push. She said "no, no it's too soon", I said NO, I feel my baby, the baby is right down there, I am ready to push. She protested again, I asked her to check me, but she didn't want to since my water had broken, for fear of infection if I was checked too much. I asked her again, saying I know what I feel. So, she checked. Turns out "surprise" the baby was right there. She had to put in an emergency call to the doctor, and get the resident on call to come. I pushed for 15 minutes and there

she was!! The doctor came tearing in the room just as she was crowning!! She has turned, so it was a very smooth fast delivery.

I hope everyone is healing, resting, and enjoying new parenthood!!

Shiela, Hyun-chul & Sidney!!



Hi all -

Stephanie was right about the "birth month" - Noah decided to arrive 12 days before the due date not the 12 days after that I had been expecting! The birth was a great experience overall - my waters broke in the middle of Friday night, contractions started 30 minutes later, and within nine hours we had a baby - we even had an unplanned home birth as things were progressing too quickly to get to the hospital. No pain meds or interventions were needed and thanks to Mark, our great set of midwives and doula, and my father who happened to be visiting last weekend it was a very peaceful and healthy birth experience. I also want to credit Lesley's prenatal yoga the day before the birth and in the previous months which I feel really helped my body prepare for the labour.



Noah

Best wishes to you all and we look forward to meeting all the babies in January!

Hannah and Mark

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No. 12, Winter 2007

A picture of our new baby boy who came into this world Sept 11th at 1:50 am at St. Pauls. We're still trying to decide on names. Jeff likes the name Jayden Indiana Lytle (I like Indiana Jones!). Hope you are all keeping well, and the new babies are happy & healthy. If you know anyone who wants a Doula, Michelle MacLean totally helped me and Jeff throughout our entire labour process (all the way into the delivery room!). She can be contacted at

michellelynnmaclean@hotmail.com

Love Jill & Jeff



Jayden? Indiana? Or ?

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Thanks Aleksandra. It was a great weekend! We are still thinking, talking and absorbing. It was especially great for me to see how Colin's awareness grew and how he became even more in awe of our baby. It was amazing to lie in bed last night and have him look at my belly and see in him that something has shifted or changed with his understanding and appreciation of what is evolving for us ... thanks again.

Karen



Focus on:

Pregnancy Wellness

Question of the Quarter:

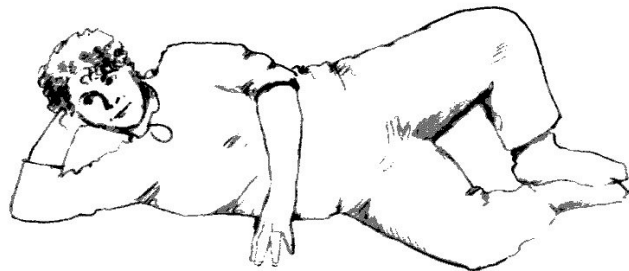
Q: During this pregnancy I've been experiencing pain on one side of my lower back, between the hip and spine. It makes walking quite painful. What's causing it and what can I do about it?

A: It sounds as if you have a misalignment of the sacroiliac(SI) joint. This is the place where the "wing" of the pelvis (Ilium) meets the lower spine (sacrum). As your body prepares for birth the hormones progesterone and relaxin loosen the ligaments of the pelvis to allow the baby to pass through. Unfortunately this makes the pelvis more prone to dislocation. Massage, acupuncture or acupressure and chiropractic techniques can be very useful in relieving the immediate pain and adjusting the alignment of the pelvis. However, once you have found a treatment that alleviates the pain, you need to help prevent recurrence.

The way to compensate for relaxed ligaments is by increasing your muscular strength in the pelvic girdle area: the abdominals, buttocks, and pelvic floor muscles. Strengthening these key muscles will help keep your pelvis and spine in good alignment and prevent further dislocation. Good posture both standing and sitting will also help. Many of the exercises in the Healthy Pregnancy Course target these muscles, and you can refer to page 13 of our Parents' Handbook for illustrations. (If you missed the Healthy Pregnancy Classes ask your instructor during the Labour, Birth and Postpartum Classes).

For an assessment of your muscle strength and pelvic alignment you can see a physiotherapist, who can also recommend exercises to improve muscle strength and posture. The physio may also suggest an elastic brace worn around the hips to help support your SI joint. You can reach the physiotherapists at BC Women's Hospital at 604 875 2126. For chiropractors, TCM practitioners and massage therapists who specialize in pregnancy, see our Business directory at the back of the newsletter. JL

The "clamshell" exercise is excellent for promoting strength and stability in the pelvic girdle region



Acupuncture for Pregnancy Discomforts

Pregnancy is a joyous and exciting time but the enormous physical and emotional changes your body is undergoing can create uncomfortable symptoms ranging from nausea to back pain. Western medicine has little relief to offer for these common conditions of pregnancy, as many women are reluctant to take Western drugs due to the unknown effects they may have on the baby. Traditional Chinese Medicine,

by Lorne Browne and Raeghan Siemans

with its long history of treating pregnancy and postpartum conditions with acupuncture, offers a safe, effective alternative for treatment of pain and discomfort during pregnancy. Moreover, it provides an excellent complement to midwifery, doula, and obstetrical care.

Traditional Chinese Medicine is a holistic medical system that treats the root causes of dysfunction or disease. It has been practiced for over 2000 years,

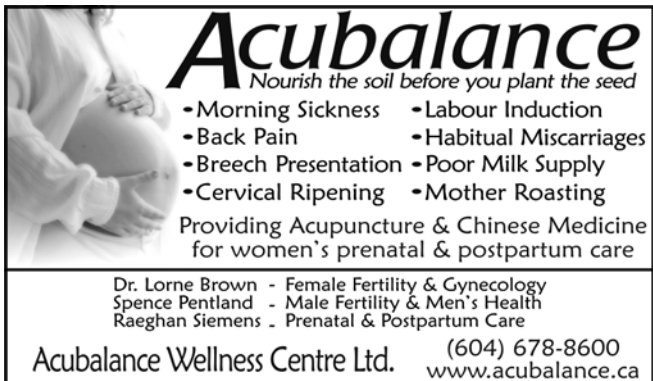
making it one of the oldest and most widely used systems of medicine in the world. In Chinese medicine health is the result of balance and the free flow of energy or Qi (chee). Many things can disrupt this balance including environmental changes, poor diet, improper exercise, heightened emotional experiences and stress, and especially physical changes such as pregnancy. Acupuncture, the practice of inserting hair thin needles into certain anatomical points in the body, restores balance and relieves specific symptoms.

Current medical research suggests that acupuncture's pain and stress-relieving effects may be based on the fact that it releases endorphins -- the body's own natural painkillers.

Acupuncture has been shown to safely alleviate conditions associated with pregnancy including:

- Nausea & vomiting
- Threatened miscarriage
- Insomnia & anxiety
- Back pain & sciatica
- Premature labour
- Breech presentations
- Cervical ripening to prepare for delivery
- Overdue pregnancies

Advanced Chinese medical texts contain detailed descriptions on how and when pregnant woman can be treated. According to Dr Bob Flaws, one of North America's



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Nourish the soil before you plant the seed

- Morning Sickness
- Back Pain
- Breech Presentation
- Cervical Ripening
- Labour Induction
- Habitual Miscarriages
- Poor Milk Supply
- Mother Roasting

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foremost experts on Chinese Medicine Obstetrics and Gynaecology, practitioners who receive post-graduate, professional training in Chinese Medicine ObGyn can learn to treat problems in pregnancy safely, effectively and with confidence. When looking for a practitioner in British Columbia it is important to find a qualified and regulated practitioner of acupuncture who not only has experience but additional "acupuncture in pregnancy" training.

Under the care of an experienced and qualified practitioner, acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine provides a gentle, safe way to support your body during pregnancy. Not only does it help alleviate many common symptoms and prevent illness and complications, but also it can enhance your overall health and sense of wellbeing during this special time.

Acubalance Wellness Centre (www.acubalance.ca) is the first Traditional Chinese Medicine & Acupuncture clinic in Canada to exclusively treat reproductive health and obstetrics.

Acubalance Clinical director, Dr. Lorne Brown (Dr.TCM) and practitioner Raeghan Siemens (R.Ac) have completed advanced professional development studies in obstetrics and gynaecology under Dr. Randine Lewis, infertility expert and author of the Infertility Cure, notable Doctor of Chinese medicine and midwife Raven Lang, and Chinese medicine gynaecology experts Bob Flaws and Jean Levesque.

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Prenatal Chiropractic Wellness

Yay, you are pregnant! For the next nine months your body will go through many incredible physical and emotional changes. As your baby and belly grow, you will be amazed by the first flutter of movement in the early months to the somersaults of the third trimester. Not so amazing are the aches, pains and strains that commonly occur in pregnancy. But there is help through prenatal chiropractic care.

As a chiropractor and mom myself, I see and have experienced many of the common symptoms of pregnancy: low back pain, headaches, nausea, pelvic & pubic discomfort, rib strain, fatigue and carpal tunnel syndrome. Everyday wear and tear such as sitting in front of a computer or catching up with your active toddler can cause subtle imbalances in the spine and pelvis even before pregnancy. Once pregnant, your

body may not be able to compensate for the imbalances and the above symptoms may occur from the stresses on your nervous system.

This imbalance may also torque the uterus (called intrauterine constraint) and prevent the baby from moving into the best position for labour (head down occiput anterior). Dr. Larry Webster, founder of the International Chiropractic Paediatric Association (www.icpa4kids.org), developed a specific chiropractic adjustment to balance the pelvis and assist in the prevention and removal of intrauterine constraint. A recent study by the Journal of Manipulative & Physiological Therapeutics reported its high rate of success (82%) in encouraging breech and posterior

by Stephanie Bonn

positions to turn prior to the onset of labour.

Prenatal chiropractic adjustments are gentle and safe. It is a natural way to restore balance to your nervous system to decrease pain and stress and help with the growth and development of your baby. Your chiropractor can advise you on optimal nutrition, restorative sleep techniques and specific exercises to contribute to your prenatal wellness. The best time to first see a chiropractor is before you are pregnant, as the pelvis will maintain balance more easily without the weight of the baby on your spine. However, it is never too late to seek chiropractic care for a healthy and happy pregnancy and birth.

For more information on prenatal chiropractic care contact Dr. Stephanie Bonn at 604.688.1500 or drbonn@telus.net.

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Anrig C, Plaughter G. "Chiropractic management of intrauterine constraint", *Paediatric Chiropractic*, 1998, Ch. 5 p.102.
Arcadia C et al. "Birth induced TMJ dysfunction – the most common cause of breastfeeding difficulties", *National Conference on Chiropractic and Paediatrics*, October 1993.

Homeopathy in Pregnancy

by Stephanie Peltz

Overall wellness is one of the most important factors to maintaining a healthy pregnancy and having a positive child birthing experience. Ideally, when you begin your pregnancy you are in fairly good health. If so, you may still encounter some minor health obstacles along the way. This is natural and it accompanies all the myriad of changes going on in your body. If your pregnancy is considered high risk, you should always consult your primary health care provider when experiencing discomfort or sickness during pregnancy.

One safe and gentle way to address minor problems during an otherwise normal pregnancy is through homeopathic medicine. Homeopathic medicine is a gentle and natural medicine that is totally safe during pregnancy. It was formulated in Germany several hundred years ago. The remedies work on an energetic level to stimulate your 'vital force'. This helps your body achieve a better state of balance and reduce any undesirable symptoms you may be experiencing. Homeopathy works on the principle that 'like can cure like' That is, an illness can be treated by a substance capable of producing similar symptoms to those the patient is experiencing. Therefore, in order to find a suitable remedy, the approach is to find one that has qualities similar to your symptoms. Each remedy has a specific character. Examples include:

that is better from fresh air. Also Pulsatilla is related to frequent urination due to weakened pelvic floor muscles that comes on while coughing/passing gas.

- **Capsicum** is useful for heartburn that is felt behind the breastbone and is worse after eating.
- **Veratrum Album** corresponds to cramps that are relieved by walking and come on during the day.
- **Bryonia's** qualities include breast discomfort caused by the hormonal changes associated with late pregnancy.
- **Sepia's** qualities include a combination of symptoms that involves nausea, fatigue, and constipation.

These are simply a few of the numerous remedies that may prove useful during a woman's pregnancy.

This article is for educational purposes, and is not intended to replace diagnosis or treatment by a health care practitioner licensed to practice homeopathy. Please consult a Naturopathic doctor or Homeopath for a more complete picture.

Stephanie Peltz is a Doula, pre-natal yoga instructor and a Naturopathic doctoral candidate for 2008. She is a third year student at the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine. She can be contacted at speltz@binm.org

- **Nux Vomica (aka Colubrina)** corresponds to the nausea with irritability that comes on in the morning.
- **Pulsatilla** corresponds to nausea with tearfulness

Violet's Birth

by Zoë Flower

I spent Thursday November 23rd – my official due date – wondering just how overdue I was going to be, since I felt no symptoms of labour of any kind. I was convinced I would be a week late and decided not to think too hard on the question of when. Instead, I busied myself with a massive amount of filing and the baking of loaves of banana bread. In hindsight, I should have realized that labour was

close!

I awoke on Friday morning around 7am and realized that I was slightly wet. Not bed-soaking wet. Not even enough moisture to make me think I had a sudden incontinence issue. But enough to excite me into wondering if my water might be in the process of breaking. So naturally I picked up the phone! After all, I was supposed to be meeting my mom at 9am for a trip to



IKEA. She called from outside asking if I was ready to go and I said that I was except I wasn't sure if I should go as my water might have broke. Her experience in childbirth involved later water breaking so she didn't know. I decided to make some more calls.

First I called Anna since she is my go-to source of info after spending many hours of false labour in the assessment room. Alas, she suggested I call our doctor's group and then call her back. I paged the doc and while waiting for his call back decided to check my other "reliable" resource known to most as The Internet. I found a site that suggested I lie down for half an hour and then stand up again to see if the water would pool and then gush out. Since I was waiting for the phone I decided to try this experiment. The doctor said that it was hard to say if the water was broken but that it did sound promising and that I could expect labour to begin within 24 hours and that we would have to discuss induction after 12 hours for fear of infection. I quickly phoned Anna back to relay this information and as I began to tell her the details, I stood up off the couch, took 2 steps and suddenly felt a large warm (and dare I say pleasant!) gush of liquid. It

was the funniest thing to be on the phone with my fellow pregnant friend as my water broke. I was ecstatic and running about the house although to do what I had no idea since my jeans were absolutely soaked. We laughed and got all excited, knowing that labour would be coming soon.

Oh yeah. I finally called Drew and let him know too! He was so thrilled and said he would come home from work by lunch to get ready for the impending delivery. I spent the morning calling friends and family to let them know things had kicked off. My mom and Anna came to share the time with me and, when Drew got home we all decided to go get a meal since prenatal classes had taught me the importance of being fed and hydrated for labour. Something that we never really covered in class is the interesting (and now obvious) fact that your water can "break" *multiple* times. As the amniotic fluid continues to replenish itself every 2 hours (something I learned in class), it will continue to release itself after the initial break. I happened to learn this through experience as I stepped out of the car and, as I took my first steps towards Earl's, had a sudden deja-vu experience of wetting my pants. I

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began to laugh and Drew was great. He grabbed his hoodie from the backseat, wrapped it around my waist and off we went to eat lunch. The phone never stopped ringing with friends and family wondering if we were in hospital – to which we responded, "No! We're at Earl's".

This was about 2pm when we enjoyed our meal. I was feeling a bit crampy and my mom kept asking if I was having contractions. Never having a contraction makes it hard to know when you are, but all I was feeling was mild discomfort at that point. Drew and I decided to head home and rent a couple movies to pass the time until contractions started. With so much lead time after the initial water breaking, we were able to slowly pack our hospital bags without too much stress over forgetting the frozen water bottles or car seat or bags of almonds, oranges and the aforementioned banana bread baked pre-labour. While picking out movies in the video store I began to notice that my cramps were making me a bit more uncomfortable. It was 5pm, halfway through the movie that I noticed the cramping fading in and out in a pattern. A slow pattern, but a pattern nonetheless. As the movie ended, I was feeling very

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tired and wanted a nap. I was also feeling a sense of euphoria at the end of each wave of gentle cramps. I suppose this was the first shot of endorphins I would release throughout the evening.

Around 7:30pm, swaying in the doula hula in the kitchen and eating a sandwich, I began squeezing Drew's hands to signal a cramp coming on. We would slowly rock as he timed the duration and pattern. It took me a long time to eat half the sandwich as the 'contractions' ranged from 30 seconds

to a minute and were anywhere from 3-7 minutes apart. By 8pm I was feeling extremely nauseous and wishing I could just go to sleep. We tried lying down in bed and listening to music while I continued to squeeze his hand when I felt pain. I found that staying on my left side and not moving too much was the best way to keep the nausea at bay. Recalling classes, I decided to get into the bathtub and I can honestly say that the bath had the most calming effect on contractions.

Unfortunately, I continued to feel progressively more flush as time went on. By 10pm, I was suffering from all the symptoms of a major flu and just waiting for the nausea to escalate into vomiting. I was determined to throw up at home and not at the hospital! This one fact kept me at home for much longer than I would have stayed otherwise. Oh, and also the fact that our doctor called to say that Women's Hospital was diverting people to St. Paul's if labour wasn't

far enough along! That stressed us out quite a bit!

At 10:30pm, I remember saying that I couldn't handle feeling so sick and that I wanted to go. But actually getting out of bed was another story and it was closing in on 11:30pm when I dry heaved into a bowl, got up to use the bathroom and realized I just NEEDED to be at the hospital immediately. Poor Drew went into panic mode and started asking me if I had all of my things. I must have

grunted out some noises that made him realize that it no longer mattered and whatever was packed earlier was what we would leave with. I stood near the front door rocking and grasping two soft pillows, moaning and thinking I was going to be sick any second. I barely remember walking out to the car, only that there was a sudden crunch beneath me as the frost broke beneath my slippers. I didn't bother to put on shoes. I was way past that!

I must admit that the car ride might have been the hardest part of my night. Sitting upright while having contractions and getting slowed down by massive construction zones on King Edward turned me slightly insane. But Drew stayed focused on driving safely. I recall flashing lights and then the Women's Hospital Admitting sign flashing by. I wondered where we would park. So did Drew but he dare not ask me. He found a spot that, to me, felt like 7 miles from anywhere. I found out later that it was about 15 steps from the door. Taking these steps in my slippers, pillows gripped to my chest, we entered the admitting room. I recall the strong lights above me and being ushered into a chair that was just as uncomfortable as the car ride. I was at this point moaning out loud through contractions and thinking, 'I wasn't going to be noisy! I must sound ridiculous!' But it sure felt good to let out the noise over and over again. Part of me also (being the drama queen) wanted to convince the admitting nurse that I should not be sent to St Paul's!

It was obviously busy in the hospital since it took what felt like eternity just to get behind an assessment curtain (actual time, 5 minutes). I was desperate to be on a bed on my left side and still felt like I would throw up any second. I was offered a birthing ball and the opportunity to move around freely, but I was fixated on being on my left side. In this position, the doctor arrived to assess my status. I recall hearing the words '5 to 6 centimetres' but I was more concerned with being left alone

to deal with contractions. My doctor then brought up the big question: 'What would you like to do for pain?' I found myself revisiting our classes and going through the options of gas and analgesics. I couldn't image putting a mask on my face, feeling so sick. And I recalled a side effect of the Morphine could include nausea. Before I said anything, Drew just stated that my preference would be to avoid interventions although he was concerned about my nausea. The doctor suggested a shot of Gravol to which I eagerly shook my head and moaned out a big yes. I don't recall getting the shot, only that it seemed to help me focus on the task at hand. It seemed to take the edge off of my pain as well. The nurse informed us that it would a 45 minute wait to get a delivery room and that she would return to check on us at that time.

The next 40 minutes are hazy in my mind. I was feeling stronger and stronger contractions and I begged Drew to apply more and more counterpressure to my back. I was on a gurney so it made it hard for him to find a position for his own comfort and I recall worrying about his pain. Funny! He was the only person there for me as the assessment room had gone completely empty and quiet. But he was adamant that I drink water between contractions and without asking, he made me drink. I was so proud of his confidence! I fell into my own trance like state of awaiting each wave of pain and attempting to ride it out through moans and deep breaths. Finally, after 40 minutes, the waves seemed to culminate in a massive tremor through my whole body and I moaned out 'I need to push'. Drew's

pupils nearly dilated out of his head and he said, 'No, no, you can't!! I will get a nurse'. I begged him not to get the nurse because the thought of another internal exam was too much to consider. I had another 2 contractions and again, I felt the need to push. This time, he just walked out and got a nurse to come in. She asked me if I needed to push and I wanted to punch her. I didn't know, having never given birth before! She seemed hesitant to assess me but luckily the same nurse who admitted us suggested she do the exam. A few seconds later, all I heard was 'I can see the head. She is fully dilated!' and the next moment was filled with bright lights flashing as Drew and a nurse were running my gurney through the halls of the hospital, our jackets piled up on top of me!

The delivery room was dim and comforting as I was asked to roll off the gurney and into the bed. It took awhile but as long as I stayed focus on finding my left side, I seemed to be able to move. Once there, I was told that I could go ahead and push from any position I liked. I didn't know what to do with myself until a contraction hit and I find myself pushing on my left side. The nurse told me it was gravity neutral and perfectly fine for delivery and so I continued to work from here, Drew having to take a much larger role in the delivery than he ever expected. He held my leg up and also pulled back on my hand with which I was yanking on him with all my might. At one point he said that I nearly overpowered him and that, in that moment, I would have easily beat him in an arm wrestle. Holding on with all

childbearing

his might, he kept me steady as the contractions came. The nurse was busy trying to get a foetal heart rate, which was difficult for her. I decided to move to my hands and knees, holding the back of the bed and Drew's arms. I didn't find this position any more productive or comfortable, and the nurse just couldn't get the heart rate. The doctor had just come in the door and suggested I get back on my side to see if we could pick up the heartbeat. As soon as I lay back down, the heartbeat was loud and clear.

The doctor took one look at my status and told me that I was a mere few contractions away from delivering! It was so surreal to me as I felt I had only been there for a minute or two. He told me that longer pushes would help me get there a bit faster if I wanted to try that, and I'm not one to turn down a challenge. He also let me touch the baby's head- something I didn't think I would ever do. The next push, he asked me to pant and the very next one, I felt her head come out. It was incredible how determined I was to get the baby out and another contraction brought her completely out and on to my lap. We were in total shock - no noise, no tears, and just me asking over and over again, 'Is it a girl????' because I had a huge wardrobe of lovely pink clothing waiting for her at home. Drew then took the doctor up on his offer to cut the cord. Again, something he never thought he would do! But since he was pretty much a nurse and midwife through the night, I thought it was highly appropriate!

A few minutes later, as the doctor gave me two stitches despite my



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trembling limbs, the nurse helped bring Violet up to feed. She was very tired but managed to latch on after a short time without problems. At this point, we realized that Drew had never made it out of the admitting area to get our bags from the car or even call our family. So he ran out to call grandparents and family with the news. It was such a strange call for many to receive for the last they had heard, I was still at home at 11pm. My mom rushed to the hospital and was the first to arrive to hold on to the new bundle. We had to wait an hour for a recovery room, getting the last private room in the hospital. I spent the whole time staring in awe at the shock of sandy blonde hair on her head, small curls forming over her ears and the softness of baby lanugo hair down her back.

The nurses at Women's Hospital really made the immediate recovery process very comfortable. I can tell you that I had some concerns over modesty prior to labour. But it all goes out the window! It is the furthest thing from your mind during labour and even after when you get some clarity about your surroundings. I could never have picked out the assessment room nurse in a line up, save her voice. It was incredible to sit up after labour and officially meet the people who had been in the room. It made me realize just how far away inside myself I had been for the previous hour. The poor assessment room nurse was so apologetic for leaving us unattended behind a curtain: 'You're not supposed to labour in there!' I don't think it mattered too much though. That 45 minutes with just Drew helping me was quite ideal when I think about it.

Later, I saw the doctor's form on my labour. First stage was listed as beginning at 6pm (when my contractions became noticeable) and ending at 2:15am. We checked into the hospital close to midnight at 5-6cm so the final few centimetres happened quite quickly and it was good that we had left home when we did. Second stage was only 51 minutes! However, this surprised me

because in my mind it was only 5 minutes or so. Time falls away!

It was such a great experience and the doctors and nurses kept complimenting me and calling me a champion. I actually agreed with them and felt very proud of myself too. I laugh now when people say I had an 'easy labour'. I correct them and say it was 'a fast labour'. There is a big difference in my mind! It is not easy but it is totally manageable, particularly with the knowledge we all have from our classes. It will keep you



calm and focused in times when you might otherwise panic. I found myself thinking about the ice cube test quite often when my contractions became intolerable. I thought about vocal toning when I started to feel myself moaning. I thought about breathing into the pain when I started to panic or feel frustrated by my discomfort and nausea. And Drew said it gave him the confidence to talk to the nurses as well as understand where I was in labour when we found ourselves alone behind a curtain all alone.

It is Thursday morning now and we have been home since Saturday afternoon. We decided to check out early because we really wanted to be at home in our own space with the baby. The recovery room was too small to hold the constant flow of visitors and I didn't want Drew to spend a night on the mat on the floor after the night we had just completed

childbearing

together. So at 3pm on Saturday, we loaded up our car seat for the first time and walked into an incredibly transformed landscape of winter beauty. It was the perfect metaphor for how I was feeling about life at that moment and I already know that every snowfall from here on out will remind me of when Violet came into our lives.

The first night home is sheer panic and fear that the baby won't survive the night. We gave up thinking we might get some sleep and when we

realized we had another all-nighter ahead, it made it easier to get through. She slept in our bed with us as I lay as still as a statue for fear I might roll on to her. She had a lot of leftover mucus in her and it seemed to upset her every time we tried to put her on her back.

By the next day, she was all cleared out. The public health nurse visited and made us feel so much more at ease with everything. Breastfeeding was going well and we were still in a haze of euphoria.

For us, having visitors during the first 48 hours was ideal. There was no way we could sleep and we couldn't wait to show off our bundle. People came with food and gifts. My mom has been such an incredible resource, calling everyday for a grocery list, making dinners to ensure we eat since being awake for 3 days straight makes you hungrier! She even does the laundry while we wrestle with the

many diapers, feedings and occasional inconsolable gassy baby.

By day four, I was very sleep deprived with a bit of nipple trauma from the constant feedings. It turns out that, despite a great latch and position, our baby is known as 'a lazy feeder'. She falls asleep at the breast constantly so she must be tickled or blown on or moved around to get her to keep going. This took a bit of a toll on my body but I knew (from class!) that my determination in the early days would pay off when my milk

came in. And it has! We are feeding very well and even scored a couple of four-hour straight sleeps in the night!! My sanity comes from having a husband who is determined to care for Violet and me with all tasks outside of feeding. When a feeding is done, I fall asleep as he deals with burping, diapering, rocking and comforting the little one. Then he sleeps during the 45 minutes / hour of feeding time. This seems to work well. Sometimes, during the day, it is like we never had a baby at all when she is fast asleep

childbearing

for a few hours and we're enjoying alone time, making lunch or visiting with friends. I find it impossible to take naps but I'm sure the deprivation will catch up and I'll find ways to sleep in the day. I am taking ibuprofen still, and lots of hot baths to help with the sore and aching muscles in my shoulders and back as well as the labour recovery.

I hope you all have such positive experiences!

✉ Zoë Flower

Business Directory

Baby & Maternity Wear

Wee Ones Reruns Consignment

612 Kingsway, Vancouver
604 708 0956

Room For Two Maternity

1409 Commercial Drive, Vancouver
604-255-0508

Köhlrbaby Sleepsack

604-317-5705
www.kohlrbaby.com

Bamboletta Dolls

www.bamboletta.com

Pregnancy & Birth Services

Belly Bonding

604 -219-7379
bellybonding@telus.net

Birthing Buddies TENS & Pool Rental

604-928-2334
www.birthingbuddies.com

Health Care

Abrams, Caroline, Family Osteopath

604-730-5950
info@vancouverosteopath.com

Acubalance Wellness Centre

604-678-8600
www.acubalance.ca

Aurora Massage Therapy

210 - 2233 Burrard, Vancouver
604 734 4030

Lalande, Linda RMT

3623 W 4th Ave, Vancouver
604 562 0612

Kalef, Dr Mia, Craniosacral Therapist

604-908-1214
www.emergingfamilies.com

Soma Studio Massage

213 / 303, 1529 W 6th Ave, Vancouver
604-738-1502

Yaletown Chiropractic

604-688-1500
www.yaletownchiropractic.com

Photography

Michael Ford Photography

604-730-6170
www.michaelfordphotography.com

Yoga

Balance Healing Yoga Studio

390 Howard Ave. Burnaby BC
604 298-0600

Lyne Lantaigne Yoga

604-767-6242
ekavoga@creativite.com

Urban Yoga, Janice Clarfield

604-739-6664
urbanyoga@uniserve.com

Yoga West of Vancouver

2662 W 4th Ave
604-732-9642

Community Resources

Information and Counselling

BCW Breastfeeding Clinic 604-875-2424
BCWLactation Consultants 604-875-2282
Breast Milk Bank 604-875-2345 Ext 7607
Dial-a-Dietician 604-732-9191
Family Place (Westside) 604-738-2819
Family Place (Eastside) 604-872-6757
Family Services of Vancouver
1616 West 7th Ave 604-731-4951
202-1193 Kingsway 604-874-2938
Infant and Child Seat Information
BCAA Consumer Service 604-298-2122

Safe Start Programme 604-298-2755
ICAN Vancouver 604-734-4226
Post Caesarean Birth Support 604-433-5827
La Leche League 604-736-3244
Newborn Hotline 604-737-3737
Pacific Postpartum Support 604-255-7999
Parents in Crisis Line 604-669-1616

Support for Grieving Parents

Rob & Jill Mullen 604-986-5012
BC Children's Social Work 604-875-2345
Ext 7358

BC Women's Social Work 604-875-2424
Ext 6161

Twins and More Club

www.vancouvertwins.com

Vancouver Breastfeeding Clinic 604-738-1912
Volunteer Grandparents Assn. 604-736-8271
Westcoast Family Resource 604-255-9568

Prenatal Classes

Lower Mainland Childbearing 604-878-1031

Doula Referrals

Doula Services Association 604-515-5588
Lower Mainland Childbearing 604-878-1031

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Health Department 604-875-6381
Evergreen Health Centre 604-872-2511
North Community Health Office 604-253-3575
Pacific Spirit Health Centre 604-261-6366
Raven Song Health Centre 604-709-6400
South Health Office 604-321-6151
Three Bridges Health Centre 604-736-9844

Note: Your Community Health Nurse has further information on local resource



Christina Sofikitis (2yrs – Class of Autumn 2004) & her new sister Stephanie (8months).

Prenatal Class Schedule (updated January 2007)

<p>Healthy Pregnancy Classes Content: <i>Mums only class.</i> Covers nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle choices for pregnancy; screening & diagnostic tests; foetal development; pregnancy discomforts & remedies</p>	<p>2 sessions 2 hours each Cost: \$75* *Included free of charge with weekly series or weekend workshops. Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway March T 13 & 20 Mar May Th 3 & 10 May June W 20 & 27 Jun</p>
<p>Weekly Series Content: Normal labour & birth; relaxation, positions & coping skills for labour; medical pain relief, interventions & procedures; postpartum; breastfeeding; early parenthood; newborn care. Includes handbook and CD .</p>	<p>14 sessions: 7 Evening classes (2hrs ea) 2 Healthy Pregnancy sessions 1 Postpartum Reunion 4 Postpartum Classes (option: 8 additional postpartum classes for \$60 more) Cost: \$220 (\$280 includes full PP series) Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway Late Winter* Th 18 Jan – 22 Feb Early Spring Th 15 Feb – 29 Mar Spring W 21 Mar – 2 May Late Spring T 24 Apr - 5 Jun Early Summer Th 31 May – 12 Jul * Late Winter series held at 3285 Victoria</p>
<p>Weekend Workshops Content: Same as for weekly series; slightly condensed format: breastfeeding not covered, but cost includes Friday night breastfeeding class. Handbook & CD included.</p>	<p>10 sessions: 2 Weekend days (5hrs ea) 1 Breastfeeding Night 2 Healthy Pregnancy sessions 1 Postpartum Reunion 4 Postpartum Classes (option: 8 additional postpartum classes for \$60 more)</p>	<p>Cost: \$220 (\$280 includes full PP series) Time: 9:00am - 2:00pm Location: <i>3285 Victoria (at 16th)</i> March 3 & 4 Mar April 14 & 15 Apr May 5 & 6 May June 2 & 3 Jun</p>
<p>Breastfeeding Nights Content: <i>Mums only class.</i> Partners welcome if space permits. Covers breastfeeding basics; troubleshooting; breastpumps & returning to work; special needs; colic</p>	<p>1 session: Friday Night 2 hours Cost: \$40* *Included free of charge with weekend workshop Time: 7:00-9:00pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>3285 Victoria (at 16th)</i> March 2 Mar April 13 Apr May 4 May June 1 Jun</p>
<p>Another Birth: refresher class Content: finding ways to honour this pregnancy and celebrate its distinctness; what worked last time... and what didn't; recalling old birthing techniques and learning new ones; how to prepare your first baby for sibling-hood; connecting with your new baby while maintaining the bond with your first; and much, much more.</p>	<p>1 session: Saturday Afternoon 4 hours Cost: \$75* \$65 for Childbearing Grads Time: noon – 4pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway March 3 Mar June 9 Jun</p>
<p>Postpartum Classes Content: <i>For parents with babies who are not yet walking.</i> Covers infant feeding, sleep, safety, colic & crying, attachment, and infant development, and many other topics.</p>	<p>12 sessions: 1 ½ hours each Cost: \$150* *Free for expectant parents; 4 sessions included free with prenatal class series. Time: 12:30 - 2 pm</p>	<p>Location: <i>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House</i> 800 East Broadway February W 7-28 Feb March W 7-28 Mar April W 4-25 Apr May W 2 – 23 May* *note: no class 30th May June W 6-27 Jun</p>
<p>Doula Services We will refer you to several doulas whom you can interview. Service includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 prenatal home visits • continuous labour support • immediate postpartum support • 2 postpartum visits Cost: prices are set by individual doulas</p>	<p>Private Classes Cost: \$20 + \$50/hour Minimum 2 hours. Does not include materials (optional: \$25) To register, or for more information: (604) 878-1031 www.childbearing.org Low income rates available.</p>	<p>Our Instructors, all health professionals and parents, add their extensive training and reading on subjects related to pregnancy, birth and parenting to their personal experience. All instructors hold Childbirth Education Certificates from VCC / Douglas College, and are members of ICEA, the International Childbirth Education Association. All have a love and passion for the childbearing year.</p>

Note that schedule changes may occur. See our website for the most up-to-date class schedules.