

BIRTHINGS

A HOMEBIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



Complementary Practices

Plus all our regular features, birth notices, letters, birth stories, pictures and updates on our community activities.

www.homebirthsydney.org.au

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HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS
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The views expressed in this magazine are those of the named contributors only and are not necessarily shared by Homebirth Access Sydney, its Committee or the Editors or Editorial Board of Birthings.

CONTRIBUTIONS, PHOTOS, CORRESPONDENCE

Please send to Virginia Maddock at editor@homebirthsydney.org.au
Photos and written submissions must be emailed. Prior notice to the Editors of your intention to submit work.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Autumn 2013	No. 117	1 February 2013
Winter 2013	No. 118	1 May 2013
Spring 2013	No. 119	1 August 2013
Summer 2013	No. 120	1 November 2013

BACK ISSUES Back issues of Birthings are like hen's teeth! But we will try to accommodate requests. Back issues cost \$4.00 – \$7.00 per issue. Postage is \$3.00 per single copy. A price for multiple copies can be arranged. The magazine is very valuable in that it contains many birth stories and information, plus give an insight into the homebirth movement and HAS activities.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify any change of address to HAS, PO Box 66, Broadway, NSW 2007 or by email to the Memberships Coordinator at: member@homebirthsydney.org.au

CONTRIBUTING TO BIRTHINGS

The strength of Birthings is all the thought provoking, inspiring and challenging writing from members of our community. To ensure that the magazine is balanced, responsive to our audience's interests and needs, and reflects the priorities of HAS, we have developed a set of contribution guidelines. We also work with an editorial board, selected by the HAS executive, to reflect the range of people in our community. The founding board members are Maggie Lecky-Thompson, Adrienne Abulhawa, Jo Hunter, Sarah McLean and the current editor, Virginia Maddock. The role of the editorial board is outlined in the guidelines below.

CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

Here are some guidelines for how to write your story, and what happens once you have submitted it for our consideration.

WHAT TO SUBMIT Submissions are sought on the theme of the issue as stated on the back cover of the previous issue. Your response to the theme may be in a range of formats: poetry, opinion, artistic, personal or factual.

We also welcome birth stories from members. Your birth story is a special part of your family's journey and the story of homebirth in Sydney. It is also a great gift to share with other parents, especially those preparing for the birth of their own babies.

Other submissions apart from those outlined above are also very welcome, though we may not always be able to publish them, as we often receive more submissions than we have space to print. We will get back to you as soon as possible with a response and discuss the possibilities. If you have an idea for a submission that you would like to discuss before writing fully, please feel free to send us an email with an outline. We love a good idea!

STYLE Your submission should be written in your own style. You do not need to be a professional writer or have a poetic style to give a moving and interesting account of your own experience.

Your submitted writing should be all your own work – you must not borrow or copy words written by someone else, unless they are attributed quotes of a reasonable length.

LENGTH Please write your story in the amount of words you think you need. As a guideline, most birth stories work best when they are under 1200 words. Submissions on the theme should be under 1800 words.

We may edit for length and style and so may cut your story to ensure it is appropriate for use in BIRTHINGS.

EDITING Your story will be checked by our team of editors. The intention is to retain your voice, while ensuring that grammar, spelling and other style issues are correct and of a high quality. Your story may also be cut for length (see above).

Your story may not defame any person. If the editorial team is concerned that an issue of defamation may exist, we may decline to publish your work or require the defamatory material to be removed prior to publication.

If any major editing is recommended by our editors, we will contact you for permission and return a copy of the edited material for your approval. If our standard editing procedure is applied, we will not send it for your approval.

PICTURES We encourage you to submit some high-resolution digital images with your story, especially with birth stories. We will include as many as we can to illustrate your story.

TERMS OF USE Please note that by submitting your story to Birthings you warrant that the content is not confidential and that you have the right to offer it for publication. You also agree that you grant Birthings the copyright permission for the purposes of publication in this magazine and on the Homebirth Access Sydney website.

EDITORIAL BOARD All stories will be put before the editorial board before publication. The board's duties include:

- Reviewing copy to ensure it reflects the priorities of HAS and the interests and needs of its members and the community,
- Supporting the editors to make editorial decisions,
- Providing a guide for the future direction of the magazine.

PROCEDURES Please provide your story as a Microsoft Word or equivalent document attached to an email and sent to Virginia Maddock at: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

You will be notified immediately of receipt and contacted before publication. There is often more material than we can publish submitted for each issue of Birthings. If your story cannot be published due to space limitations we will contact you. In some cases we will ask your permission to hold a story over for a future issue.

Thank you so much for considering a contribution to Birthings. Your experiences and insights are what makes the magazine so rich and interesting, and such a valuable resource for the homebirth community.

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Photo of Aleks Kucharski in the Natural Beginnings clinic taken by Virginia Maddock.

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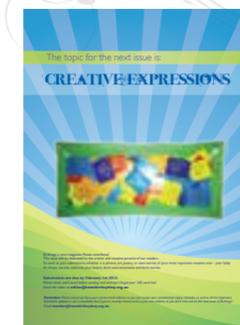


Photo taken by Virginia Maddock.

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Editorial



Welcome to the Summer edition of Birthings 'Complementary Practices'. As usual our members have stepped up to the plate and written us some great feature articles. You will find herein a lovely broad spectrum of complementary practices from natural healing modalities that can be used during pregnancy, birth and postpartum, to other practices that complement the journey. We have information on acupuncture, chiropractic, shiatsu and reflexology, yoga, Calmbirth®, placenta encapsulation (See our new placenta services directory on page 55), homeopathy, lotus birth, craniosacral therapy, herbal medicine, nutrition and flower essences. We also have nine lovely birth stories – one of which uses the modality of aura soma throughout the journey!

If you knew me at all, you would know that this theme is one that is close to my own heart. I feel like I have had a long journey with natural therapies which has got me to where I am today, and I know this passion will continue throughout the rest of my life. This journey started with my first calling to work with plants...

I started off my career evolution by studying first year of floristry, but my interest soon turned to live plants and I ended up studying horticulture and worked as a gardener, on and off for about 10 years. During this time I started becoming more and more interested in natural medicine, especially because I had been a sickly child that suffered from chronic asthma and bronchitis, which allopathic medicine did not offer any lasting solutions, as well as ADHD (diagnosed retrospectively, fortunately AFTER leaving school or no doubt I would've ended up on Ritalin for sure!). And so it was that my love for plants took a new turn, from 'helping' the plants themselves, to using plants to help others. I studied a Diploma in Botanical Medicine, which led to an Advanced Diploma in Western Herbal Medicine, which then led to Iridology, Nutrition and finally Reiki from a master teacher in India.

My first clinic space was shared with an acupuncturist in 2006, in the same building as Birthing Rites Australia in Bondi Junction, which just happened to train doulas. I had never heard of the word doula, but as soon as I learnt what it meant, I knew it was to be my next calling. So three years before I had been through the birth process myself, I trained to be a doula. It must have been a blessing sent from above that Homebirth Access Sydney were doing monthly information nights just around the corner from my clinic, so I went along a few times to find out more about this homebirth business, and I hoped to pick up a homebirth client who might want a doula! I also attended my first Homebirth Australia conference in Geelong that year and met the wonderful Ina May Gaskin who demonstrated her 'shaking the apples' method of loosening up a tight bum during labour, up on stage on my very own derriere in front of 300+ people! But now I am digressing...

Two years later I started my own journey towards homebirth with numerous natural therapies - natural fertility (encompassing herbal medicine and nutrition), acupuncture, hypnotherapy, yoga, Calmbirth® and chiropractic. Then in 2009 I birthed my own bubba Jetsun at home, and soon after I volunteered for HAS in the Memberships department, then took on this Editor's job and then swapped the Memberships role for the Coordinator's.

So to get back to my subject, my love affair with plants has led me on an amazing journey that brings me to right here, right now – a happy herbalist, homebirth-loving hippy!

This brings me to some sad news (for me anyway!)...After almost ten years together, my lovely kiwi man Dan and I are getting married in March (no that's not the sad news); so I have made the extremely difficult decision to step down from being the managing editor for Birthings as of now, as I just cannot see how I will have time to organise our wedding and edit Birthings the previous month. I will still be HAS Coordinator (you can't get rid of me THAT easily!), and will still be super keen to do some proof reading and contributions to this publication that I love. But hopefully someone else with the passion and vision to keep Birthings going strong can take over.

I can't tell you how hard it is to let what has become my (other) baby go, but I suppose after 11 issues it is my time to hand the reigns over, if someone will volunteer. I was starting to run out of theme ideas anyway so perhaps that is a sign! Please email me at: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au to register your interest and I will send you a job description. Experience preferred but not essential – having good attention to detail and being an obsessive compulsive wordsmith does help!

Big thanks to our designer Jacqui Fae who has made the last few issues look so amazing. Each one she has done has improved on the past. Jacqui has also indicated that she will be moving on next year due to travel, so please contact her if you are a graphic designer who would like to volunteer or find out more about the job: jaxtc@yahoo.com. It will be a shame to see her go as she is a big asset to the magazine. Also a big thanks to the editorial team – the editorial board of midwives who check that no story will get their author's midwives into trouble, and our sub editors who proof read and polish all the articles and stories that come in. Perhaps I shall just demote myself and join their ranks!

Speaking of theme ideas, I put it out there on the HAS Facebook page asking for suggestions for future topics and was given quite a list of possible themes for future editions. Thanks to everyone for their suggestions on Facebook and to those who I talked to privately. And the winning idea for the Autumn edition is... Creative expressions.

This topic covers creativity in all its forms during the fertility, pregnancy, birth and postnatal journey/s. As we had no art or poetry submissions for the Heart to Heart page for this edition, I thought we could make up for it by devoting a whole issue to the artistic endeavours. Write us a poem, send us your art, photos and/or stories of what inspires you (or your little ones) to get creative. You could even write about how you went about creating your baby – natural fertility, IVF or a welcome surprise! I look forward to seeing the finished product of the next issue of Birthings with a new editor and/or designer. (Submissions deadline is February 1st 2013).

With much love (mixed with a tinge of sadness)...

VIRGINIA MADDOCK

Letters to the editor

Dear HAS
Sonja Macgregor was the gracious midwife who helped us transition for hospital birth model, to a home one. She answered all my questions, listened to me and respected my desires during birth. She supported and encouraged my husband to be my greatest source of comfort and support during the birth of our second child - which was an experience a world away from my first birth in hospital, and really, helped him have the confidence to be exactly what I needed. About to have my third homebirth and I am loving how much my marriage and family have been strengthened through walking through these journeys together. I am so encouraged that HAS, & the homebirth community, have jumped in to support her. As one who has supported and enabled so many to appreciate a wonderful element of being human and the relationships that are forged and built during birth, it is fitting that we now get to honour her with similar compassionate support. Thank you Sonja. Thank you HAS.
Many kind regards,
Naomi [Green]

1/11/2012 Hi Virginia, I just wanted to say that when I received this season's Birthings and tore open the envelope, I was blown away by the gorgeous picture on the cover! The perfect portrait of motherhood, a big round gorgeous pregnant mama, looking divine, relaxed and pampered, nourishing another child at her breast. I just loved it!!! The inside was equally as wonderful with the many awesome boobies and belly stories and birth stories. I really enjoyed the whole magazine and thanks to all those who work so hard to put it together! Luv Donna [Edwards]



To encourage readers to write in, we now have a prize each issue for the best letter.

This issue, our best letter prize goes to Naomi Green. Naomi has won an 8-10kg Himalayan Rock Salt lamp from Wholistic Natural Therapies and Products (www.wholisticnature.com.au).

Send your letters to: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

3/11/2012 Dear Virginia, I wanted to say thank you to you for all the effort and work you put into each season's Birthings magazine. Your commitment is greatly appreciated and without the continued dedication of yourself and others we would miss out on this valuable forum to share information, give each other support and be inspired by stories of amazing entries into the world. Kia Ora. Regards Yvette Larkin

5/11/2012 Hi Virginia, I did want to thank you for all your hard effort and countless hours for Birthings & for HAS, you do a fabulous job. I love receiving and reading my Birthings in my spare minutes, and every story makes me want to read more! It's my "don't disturb the midwife/mummy time!!" Lisa [Richards] x

Birthings Designer WANTED

Requirements are:

- *own computer with software Adobe Indesign, Photoshop and Illustrator.
- *internet connection.

The designer role involves being able to commit two weeks of work per quarter and includes:

- *liaising with editor and printer.
- *taking direction from Editor.
- *attention to detail a must.

If you are interested in this volunteer position, great for experience and building a portfolio, please contact Jacqui ASAP:

jaxtc@yahoo.com.

The position will begin February 15th 2013, with personal handover required beforehand.

HAS 'Events & Fundraising Coordinator' WANTED

We require someone who is motivated to organise events to raise the public profile of homebirth and fundraise for HAS such as film screenings, HAS presence at expos, markets etc.

It would be a great opportunity for a student studying events management to gain some valuable practice and further the cause for homebirth, or just someone who is willing and keen to have a go.

The role can be shared amongst two.

Successful applicant/s will get free HAS membership and Birthings subscription.

Please email: info@homebirthsydney.org.au.

Birth

Announcements

Send your birth announcements with a photograph to editor@homebirthsydney.org.au



Ana and Benedict would like to belatedly announce the birth of **Sophie Matilda Cullen**, born at home on the 9th of October 2011. Our beautiful girl arrived with the help of her grandma Toni and aunty Isa. A very special thank you to our wonderful midwives Jane and Robyn for providing such great care and support throughout the pregnancy, for making our homebirth possible and for helping us to welcome Sophie into the world.



Gerri & Rob Wolfe were delighted to welcome their 9th child, **Archie McGuire Wolfe**, into their family at 1.55am on 6th August 2012. Born at home after a surprisingly long 22 hour labour and weighing in at a healthy 12lb 4oz (5.56kg) and 57cm long. Our sincerest and loving thanks must go to our amazing Doula Emma Peric, Midwife Lisa Richards for her unwavering support of a HBA4C & also to Sonja MacGregor for lending her expertise at very short notice. Siblings Mitchell, Nathan, Jasmine, Ella, Bailey, Eden, Sean & Jamie are thrilled to have another brother.



Zenn Fox Torrance-Jenkins was born at home much to the delight of her two mamas Sam and Kel. It was a wonderful journey for all with Zenn arriving in water by candlelight at 4:40am on 6th August 2012, measuring 3.61kg and 58cm. Much thanks and appreciation to the A-Team: Jo Hunter... our midnight midwife, and Nat Dash... our derby doula. Thank you Zenn Fox for choosing us. You bring us so much joy. We are so blessed to have you and hope we can fill your life with as much beautiful light as you have filled ours.



Stuart and Stephanie Naylor are proud to announce our baby boy, **Eli Ashley Naylor**, born on Sunday night the 12th of August - 3.7kg and 54cm. A gorgeous blue-eyed, and oh-so-soft haired brother for his sister Jessica Rose. A quarter strike before midnight, Eli emerged in the water, his head shrouded in his intact waters, born with a beautiful caul. We couldn't ask more for our Jessica who stayed up watchful and alert in her grandmother's arms, and then held her brother's tiny hand. Thanks to our Sage-like help: Jo, Natalie, Julia, Margaret and Louise. Their skilful support and presence was a precious gift to our family and son



Scott, Kathryn, Liam and Lillian are overjoyed to announce the birth of **Levi Max Hyland**, born at home into water on 29th August 2012 at 02:18 hours, weighing a squishy 4.270g. We would like to thank our doula Keira and midwife Jacqui for holding the space and bringing such calm to our birth. Many thanks ladies.



We're excited to announce that **Parker Quinn Kypriotis** was born 3rd September 2012 at 9.32pm. I delivered him at home catching him by myself in water with my gorgeous husband, kidlets and midwives by my side. Total bliss and we're all so in love.



Keira and Gary and big sisters Tia and Lola are overjoyed to announce the arrival our gorgeous little man **Charlie John McEvoy-Vales** born into his daddy's open arms on Sunday September 23rd at 9.42am 2012. Thank you to our amazing circle of support: our midwife Jo Hunter who we can never express our gratitude, our loving sisters Ashleigh and Taylor, and our parents Deb & Geoff, Libby & John. Brad,



Brad, Laura and Leighton are very happy to announce the birth of their beautiful son/ brother **Max Leslie Gauslaa!** Born at home into the loving hands of his Daddy on the 27th September 2012 at 3:22pm, weighing 3.6kg and length 56 cm. Would love to thank my wonderful sister, Belinda for supporting us during this special time and a massive thanks to Jo Hunter for all the love and support you showed me and my family... Thank you for becoming a midwife... If only all women could have the experience I had by having an awesome midwife like you!!
Emma



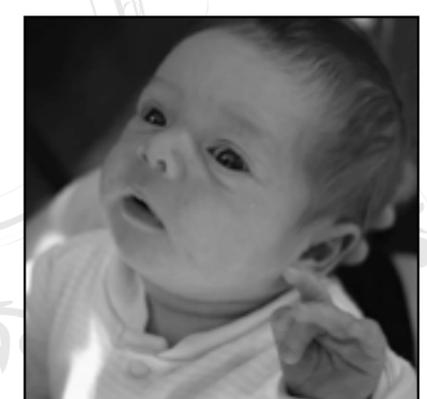
Emma and Gary Beddall are pleased to announce the birth of **Alice Grace Beddall**, birthed safely at home in water, into her Dad's waiting hands. Born 30th September 2012, a new little sister for Charlotte (2), Angus (9) and Caitlin (13). We are forever grateful to our Midwife and birth photographer Holly, for protecting our birth space and providing us with lifelong memories.



Anna and Marc Russell are thrilled to welcome **Jacob Ellis Russell** on 12th October 2012 - baby brother to Samuel, Leah and Benjamin who were all asleep at the time of his birth. Jacob was welcomed at home, born in water after a quick and intense labour at 10.03pm on Friday 12 October. Much love and gratitude to our midwives Jane Palmer and Melanie Jackson who have now supported us through two home waterbirths, and to Jane McCrae for her amazing photos which I cherish dearly. Sarah &



Sarah & Luke are very happy to announce the arrival of their second daughter **Milla Ruby Marnie Harris**. Born at home in the water on 15th October 2012 at 1.55 am, weighing 3.4 kg and 50cm long. Big sister Madison is over the moon! Thank you so much for the amazing love and support from my beautiful mum Janet and my amazing midwives Robyn and Jane.



Early on Thursday morning October 25, and in a great flurry of excitement, Anna and Luke Buckle welcomed a new daughter into the world. **Azalea (Zali) Buckle** weighed in at a healthy 3.9kg, 51 cm long and a dainty 36cm head circumference! She was caught by Daddy who was assisted by our birth support friend, Bek Kovacs. Anna's Mum and Gracie (4) watched by the side of the birth pool and Darcy (2) joined us just after. Azalea is a perfect addition to our family and we all adore her.

Coordinator's Report

I feel like HAS has been quite busy in the last quarter (or was that just me?). First off, I applied for and was accepted into the Privately Practising Midwives Advisory Committee (PPMAC) for the Australian College of Midwives as a consumer. The role of this committee is as follows:

- Provide expert advice to the Board of Directors (the Board) and Branch Presidents on matters related to midwifery private practice

- Provide expert advice and support to the Board and the Branch Presidents on ways in which to utilise national/international policies and evidence to assist with the ongoing development of private practice in Australia

- Make recommendations about ways in which the College can effectively contribute to the ongoing development of private practice in Australia

- Undertake specified tasks or projects as requested by the Board from time to time relating to private practice

- Represent the College as either individuals or as a group when requested to do so by the Board in matters of relevance for private practice and as resources permit

- Liaise with various relevant stakeholder organisations and individuals on behalf of the College when requested to do so by the Board

- Provide input to the Board on the selection of experts to represent the College on national/international committees relating to private practice as necessary

- Comply with the ACM Governance Policy.

Obviously the College didn't mind too much, of my involvement in organising last year's protest rally against their Homebirth Position Statement at their AGM! Or perhaps that went in my favour in becoming accepted. Anyway we have already had one teleconference and will be having another one soon. I hope as a consumer I am able to represent the interests of home birthing women who use privately practicing midwives, and give input that will help keep our rights intact in direct relation to theirs!

Despite having no Events Coordinator for about 2 years now (volunteer/s still needed!), I took it upon myself to unofficially take on that role, as I saw the opportunity to get the homebirth message out there by way of getting some new homebirth documentary films shown to the public. We co-hosted ten preview screenings of the 'Freedom For Birth' documentary via the homebirth support groups that we are affiliated with. We also celebrated Homebirth Awareness Week from October 22 – 28 with our HAS annual picnic kicking off the week, and another film screening five days later – this time a single preview screening of the documentary 'Birth Story' about Ina May Gaskin and The Farm midwives in Tennessee USA. See the HAS In The Community page for more details about those events.

This week I participated in a teleconference to contribute to research on Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) for privately practising midwives (PPMs) in Australia. Fortunately I was identified as a key consumer and was approached to take part. Initially I wasn't sure how much information I would be able to relay on such matters but I was able to give much more info than I thought and our 30 minute consultation blew out to 50 minutes. The survey was done by independent firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia (National Board) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This research is in response to the National Board's revision of the Board-approved PII arrangements registration standard for nurses and midwives to help bring better understanding of: international PII models operating, specifically for privately practicing midwives (PPM) and whether there are transferrable lessons to the national model · the outcomes relating to homebirth in PPMs · claims and court cases in relation to PPMs · models of reimbursement for

PPMs. During initial stages of this research project, their aim is to: · establish current context in which PPMs operate within Australia or other selected countries · key drivers of outcomes relating to homebirth · needs surrounding PII, gaps that exist and quantum of cover · key drivers which impact upon PPMs being able to access PII.

I look forward to contributing further in the coming months to fight for better conditions and outcomes for privately practicing midwives so that all women can benefit without having restricted access.

So what else has HAS been up to? Our committee seems to have remained unchanged since last quarter – thankfully no one else has left and all our committee members have the drive and enthusiasm to do their jobs better than they've been done in a long time. This is despite the majority of our committee members being either in the nauseating early months, or the tiring late stages of pregnancy. Our Secretary Nadine Fragosa is due this month and we have two new pregnancies to announce: our Advertising Coordinator Laurel Cook, and our Merchandise Coordinator Veronica Cerbelli. I am so impressed with how hard everyone is working to keep this organisation running, especially with bellybabes!

Laurel has been hard at work catching up with old advertising accounts that were left for too long before she took over, and generating some new business by sourcing some new advertisers. Thanks to those advertisers who have been understanding and paid their outstanding debts and to those who have continued to advertise with us, and welcome to the new businesses who have come aboard.

We have been getting more merchandise to sell so please check out what is available on the Merchandise page and support us by buying from us via the website or by calling Veronica. There is some really cool new stuff which Veronica has sourced that includes books, DVDs, bibs, homebirth certificates and our brand new retro ¾ baseball Tee.

We have also been giving back to the homebirth community by way of donations. Firstly we gave a \$100 donation to the family of Lynette Grech who lost their home born son Bodhi at 4 days old. Lynette told us that she was putting that money towards finger print jewellery to help preserve his memory. Our sincerest condolences go to Lynette and her family and we wish them peace and strength at such a difficult time. If you would like to donate some money in Bodhi's honour, please donate to their chosen charity 'Heartfelt' who are a volunteer organisation of professional photographers from all over Australia dedicated to giving the gift of photographic memories to families that have experienced stillbirths, premature births, or have children with serious and terminal illnesses. Their website is www.heartfelt.org.au. \$40 buys one photographic session for a bereaved family.

We have also donated \$500 towards the \$6000 of course fees that independent midwife Sonja MacGregor has been forced to pay for since having a vexatious complaint made about her from a hospital midwife after a homebirth transfer. (This is completely unrelated to the above case!!!). As she has been a popular midwife on our list for over a decade and is now no longer allowed to work until these courses have been completed, it is only fitting we chip in to help get her back on her feet to support women in their pregnancies and to birth at home. If you would like to donate, the Paypal address is Sonjacoursefees@gmail.com.

Speaking of midwives, this quarter sees us adding two more to our list. Welcome to the HAS community Katie Sullivan of Acorn Midwifery and Megan Barker who has joined Bella Birthing, alongside Lisa Richards. All three of these midwives cover the Newcastle, Hunter Valley and Central Coast regions, with Katie also covering Sydney's Northern Beaches. How fortunate our northern families are to have increasing choice for home-based midwifery care!

I think that covers everything. Wishing you a wonderful Christmas, Hannukah, Id al-Adha, Summer solstice, New Years, Festivus, or whatever you celebrate at this time of year.

VIRGINIA MADDOCK

Workshops with

Jane Hardwicke Collings Midwife, Author of Ten Moons - the Inner Journey of Pregnancy

Exploring, Honouring, Celebrating & Healing Our Sacred Feminine Path

Moonsong

is a two day workshop for women from menarche onward, sitting together in a circle, reconnecting with feminine knowledge and remembering the wisdom of the cycles. Using the circle and the ever repeating cycle of menstruation, moon phases, life and Earth seasons, participants reconnect to a wisdom and inner knowing that forms the basis of the experience of being female. Practical information and creative and transformational processes over the weekend reconnect us to our inner wisdom and the magic that is the essence of female-ness - the blood mysteries, the spiritual practice of menstruation, the rites of passage of the menarche, childbirth, and menopause. Each woman receives a copy of Herstory, Thirteen Moons and Spinning Wheels.

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey

is a three day workshop for women - pregnant, planning to be pregnant, midwives and doulas. Using ritual and art to compliment information sharing we delve into understanding our fears and why we think and act the way we do. We explore the inner journey of pregnancy and come to know ourselves more fully through this process, preparing for birth and mothering from our most in-tune and empowered centre. We look deeply at the sexuality and spirituality of pregnancy, birth and mothering, learning meditation, tools for labour and beautiful rituals to perform to honour pregnancy, birth and mothering. We invoke the ancient Birth Goddesses as our foremothers did, for their guidance, nurturance, protection and support. We do what women have been doing together longer than we haven't – sit together in support of each other sharing our innate wisdom focussing on the beauty and strength of Mother. Each woman receives a copy of Ten Moons.

Contact me janecollings@bigpond.com if you would like to receive my seasonal newsletter.

To book for a workshop or for further information email: bookings@moonsong.com.au

BirthKeeper Intensive Workshop →New←

BKI is an experiential workshop for BirthKeepers - doulas, midwives, doctors, folk who have made it their work to be a birth activist and a holder of the sacred wisdom of birth. BKI has been designed to help you understand your hidden agenda, the unique gifts you bring to your work and to teach you shamanic tools and processes to add to your own medicine bundle in serving and facilitating the transformation possible around birth. We will do shamanic drum journeys, rituals, ceremonies and craft. We will sit in circle, BirthKeepers united on a mission – “to heal the Earth, one birth at a time.”

2012 workshops

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop
Wednesday March 28th – Friday March 30th 2012
Venue: Jane's place, 331 Kirkland Road, East Kangaloon, Southern Highlands, NSW
9:30am – 5pm daily
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong Workshop
Saturday March 31st - Sunday April 1st 2012
Venue: Jane's Place, 331 Kirkland Road, East Kangaloon, Southern Highlands, NSW
9:30am – 5pm daily
Fully catered, non-residential \$350 or \$250 per person for two family members

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop
Wednesday April 18th – Friday April 20th 2012
Venue: Lower Plenty, Melbourne, VIC
9:30am – 5pm daily
Fully catered, non-residential \$550

Moonsong Workshop
Saturday April 21st – Sunday April 22nd 2012
Venue: Lower Plenty, Melbourne, VIC
9:30am – 5pm daily
Fully catered, non residential \$400 or \$300 per person for two family members

BirthKeeper Intensive Workshop
Thursday May 10th - Friday May 11th 2012
Samford, Brisbane, Queensland
9pm - 5pm daily
\$400 Teas catered BYO lunch

Connecting With The Shamanic Dimensions of Pregnancy →New←

One day workshop.

Pregnancy is a portal into the sacred, spiritual and shamanic dimensions of womanhood. Using shamanic processes and ritual we will access information, insights, life lessons and healing. We will connect with Power Animals, let go of fears, up date our belief systems, access the power of our voice, connect with our baby inside and establish our Birth Temple in preparation for our birth.

BirthKeeper Intensive Workshop
Thursday August 23rd - Friday August 24th 2012
Marrickville, Sydney, NSW
9pm - 5pm daily
\$400 Teas catered BYO lunch

Connecting With The Shamanic Dimensions of Pregnancy
Friday November 4th 2012
Forestville, Sydney, NSW
930am - 430pm
\$160 fully catered

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop
Wednesday 7th – Friday 9th November 2012
Venue: Jane's Place, 331 Kirkland Road, East Kangaloon, Southern Highlands, NSW
9:30am – 5pm daily
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong Workshop
Saturday 10th November – Sunday 11th November 2012
Venue: Jane's Place, 331 Kirkland Road, East Kangaloon, Southern Highlands, NSW
9:30am – 5pm daily
Fully catered, non-residential \$350 or \$250 per person for two family members



Committee Member Profile

Jennifer Lorance:
HAS Website Admin



Joined HAS: Mid 2011 (pregnant with number two)

Family: Partner Anthony, coming up to 13 years together, Lucy aged six and Hannah aged 10 months

Life before birthing: Self employed, consultant in corporate affairs (now sustainability), studying my Masters at the time and oops! We're pregnant.

Why homebirth? Lucy was born via scheduled caesarean section due to a risk-averse obstetrician's recommendation (low lying placenta that I now am sure would have not caused any problems during the birth, or at the very least, would not have impacted labour starting on its own and being allowed to progress with a wait and see approach). Through my commitment to breastfeeding (from which Lucy had four years of Mumma's milk) and attachment parenting I came across natural views on birth and homebirth became a consideration. When we finally decided to have another baby, the hospital restrictions and terrible record for VBAC led us to our midwife and homebirth. Best. Decision. Ever

New and Renewed Members

HAS would like to thank the following new and renewed Members for their support:

Sarah Stanford	Jahmacah Duncan-Dean
Lucy Penhallow	Vita Morgan
Claire Hickson	Jude Belnick
Katie Sullivan	Christy Rojas
Anna Smethurst	Penny Bayl
Nerida Hopkins	Jocelyn Spak
Kathryn O'Riley	Kathrin Burns
Katrina Katliakas	Korena Vumbaca
Sarah Alston	Vanessa Harrington
Amanda Furber	Lisa Coker
Danielle Carey	Serene Johnson
Lynette Grech	Megan Barker
Anna Johnston-Buckle	Dana Mrkich
Marcelle Jane Cole	Robyn Stephenson
Lisa Richards	Meagan Genovese
Brooke H	Keenan
Rebecca Connolly	Tara Clarke
Miriam Delacy	Rebecca Coddington
Zoe Agnew	Janiqua Dawes
Jenni Pritchett	Sarah Davies
Carolyn Casali	Louise Young
Carolin Skipka	Kelleigh Lowrie
Venetia Napoli	Melanie Williams
Rebecca Fraser	Esther Hughes

Membership

Homebirth Access Sydney is the only group of its kind in Sydney. It fills an extremely important function in providing a centrally organised group of caring people, gathering information and making it available to everyone who is interested in childbirth alternatives and the myriad related issues.

Please support this vital work by subscribing to birthings

- 3 year membership: \$90
- 1 year membership: \$40
- Midwives subscribing clients: \$20 per client

Membership entitles you to receive Birthings four times a year and satisfaction in knowing that your money is being used to keep the group alive in order to make it easier for families to birth at home.

Please deposit correct money into our bank account:
Homebirth Access Sydney, BSB: 062 257, Acc #: 1017 2779
and email your details (as below) with receipt number to
member@homebirthsydney.org.au, or send your completed form with cheque or money order to HAS, PO Box 66, Broadway, NSW 2007

*Name _____

*Address _____

*Telephone: _____

*Email: _____

Occupation: _____

Can you volunteer help?
(Typing, fundraising, emailing, events, organising etc.)

Please tick: New member Renewal Email receipt required

Please enclose: \$90 for 3-year membership
 \$40 for 1-year membership
 \$20 for midwife client membership (1-year)

Midwife's name: _____

*NOTE: REQUIRED ENTRY FOR OUR DATABASE.
For receipt request and enquiries: member@homebirthsydney.org.au

Back to Basics

I am mother of Lachlan Noah, born at home on May 24, 2012 in the presence of our most amazing midwife Sonja MacGregor. I have not seen a medical doctor for years; my entire antenatal, birth and postnatal care were provided by Sonja and with a few visits to my natural health practitioner. So I thought I would share some of the complementary practices I used from preconception to now. Some of these practices are my own ideas others from extensive reading and research and others from Sonja and my natural health practitioner. I hope you find some of these practices useful on your own journey.

Diet

Eliminate all sugar and artificial sweeteners from your diet six months before planning to conceive. Sugar has been said to be a class five narcotic and MRI scans on the immediate effects of sugar on the brain are equivalent to those of cocaine.

Educate yourself

Read as much as you can on pregnancy and birth. Have a good understanding of how the body works and know what to expect during labour and birth. This will help to eliminate anxieties and fears about the birth process. Books I found especially useful were Everywoman by Derek Llewellyn-Jones, Well Adjusted Babies by Dr. Jennifer Barham-Floreni and Cheers to Childbirth by Lucy Perry (a must for dads-to-be).

Eliminate emotional baggage

Use therapies like kinesiology to release any subconscious or conscious fears and anxieties you may have about the impending birth. May also be good if you are having trouble conceiving.

Prenatal yoga

Attend a class at least once a week. Yoga is great for learning some breathing techniques useful for birthing, helping your body become stronger and more flexible, providing regular and much needed time out and for developing friendships with like-minded expectant mothers.

Positive affirmations

Affirm daily how wonderful your body is at adjusting to the pregnancy and in the later stages, preparing for the birth. Also affirm how perfect the baby growing inside you is. For example, 'I have a beautiful, healthy, intelligent, content and perfect baby growing inside me' (and I ended up with just that).

Visualisation

As often as possible in the weeks leading up to the birth, visualise it exactly as you would like it to be.

Time out

Before the birth take a couple of days to spend some quiet time out in nature. Use this time to rejuvenate the soul and be mindful of Mother Earth and all the women who have birthed before you.

Essential oils

Rub a few drops of neroli on your belly during pregnancy to help prevent stretch marks. Clary sage and lavender added to almond oil are great for a warm compress or as a massage oil for pain relief during labour. Rose oil is good to vaporise during the birth and in the days and weeks after the birth to foster emotional calm.

Let go of your ideologies

Like me, you probably have high expectations of yourself as a mother and beat yourself up when you don't conform to these ideologies. Learn to let them go and don't try to be a mother; just be yourself. Babies pick up on the discrepancy when you are not being you.

Coconut oil

Fantastic for nappy rash and dry skin.

Bath time

Wait until a week or so after birth to bathe your newborn (when the umbilicus is dry) and leave the vernix to soak in to the skin; it's nature's best moisturiser. Bathe with your baby and enjoy this time for bonding.

Clothes

It didn't feel right to us to put clothes on our newborn so for the first six weeks or so, our baby was only in a nappy and a wrap, except for the few occasions when we ventured out of the house. This enables



[Photo by Stephanie Powell Photography.]

mother and baby to have skin on skin contact while breastfeeding and therefore strengthens a secure bond between mother and baby.

Sleeping

If your baby seems to have their days and nights mixed up take them outside to watch the sun rise and set for three consecutive days. This affects the levels of melatonin (the hormone that regulates sleep) that the brain produces. This is so simple and yet so very effective.

Core strength

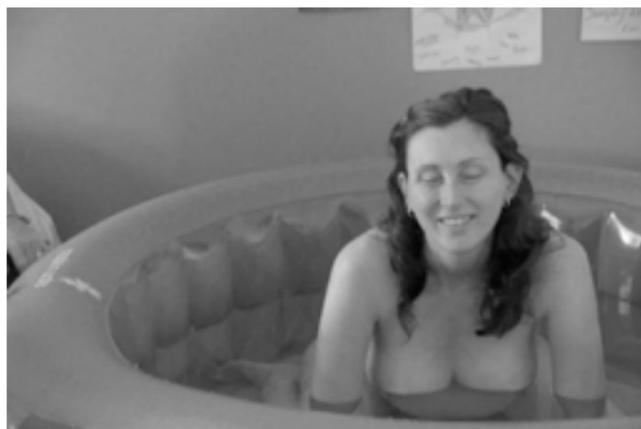
Just as you need to develop your core strength so too does baby. From about three months place them in an old style bouncer (the wire frame ones with the cotton mesh) every day. Baby can kick about and develop their core strength for future sitting, crawling and standing.

Language

Talk to your baby as much as possible and describe what you are doing. Teaching sign language to baby is also very effective in emphasising key words, which baby can easily associate with an activity or object (e.g. change nappy, milk, bath). Baby then knows what is going to happen. Baby sign language is easy to learn (start with just a few words) from a book and you can increase your vocabulary from a website such as www.signingsavvy.com.

Rebecca Zuchetti, PhD, is now a stay at home mum to Lachlan, 6 months old. She lives in south west Sydney with her partner Matt Borg, and is an advocate of healthy living, natural remedies, homebirth, and positive parenting.

How Calmbirth®



My journey with birth started the way most women in today's modern society experience birth, through the stories of our mothers and grandmothers. But in my case, it was also the story of my grandfather and two of my aunts that made me question natural versus medical approaches to birth.

My grandfather, Dr. Michael Santer, was a small town G.P. in Vienna, West Virginia. Over the course of his career, he attended over 10,000 births and was well respected by his colleagues and patients. As you can imagine, he was rarely home, so it was the stories about him and his work that filtered back to his family and gave us a glimpse of a different man to the tired, reserved and quiet Grandad we saw otherwise. His birth philosophy was to use instruments, only when it was absolutely necessary and he was known to be extremely good with difficult birth. He rarely performed caesarean surgery, but like most doctors practicing obstetrics in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, birth was seen as medical event.

As a young girl, I remember being given the impression that you needed a doctor to accompany you at birth and that hospital was the place where babies were born. As I grew older, other stories came through - my mother telling me how she had been sedated at my birth, and when she awoken, she was told by the nursing staff that she had a baby girl, to which her reply was, "What baby?" Then, in complete contrast, the stories of my aunts filtered through and they were painted as superhuman for the fact that they gave birth naturally and without any drugs. My mother couldn't believe how well they looked and that Aunt Pam was just up walking around shortly after the births of her children, and Aunt Kate would just come home after only a few hours. They both breastfed for years and yet my mother said of herself, "I was not a very good cow."

By the time I was a teenager, birth and breastfeeding for me looked like potluck, and I wondered secretly if I would be able to give birth with the ease of my aunts or if I would need to be out of it like my mother? Would I be able to breastfeed? Did my biology work? And then, I walked into the rooms of Peter Jackson in Bowral with a friend of mine who was 32 weeks pregnant with her second child. I thought how fortunate it was that there was a cancellation, and my friend could attend the Calmbirth® program that weekend, but little did I know, the luck was also mine.

The transformation that occurred for both of us was profound, my friend ended up walking out of Peter's course on the final day and decided that she was going to hire a homebirth midwife and have a VBAC at home, and I WAS FREE. Free of the fear that I had been carrying around for a lifetime from the moment of my birth. I had no idea it was there until it lifted and it was GONE! Finally, I learned that my biology did work and that I had resources within myself to work with it. I was taught how my hormones were superbly designed to accompany me through the birthing process and what conditions I needed to surround myself with to optimise their release. The amazing imprint of birthing knowledge I carried within myself ignited like a bonfire never to be extinguished again. I was empowered to see the birthing mother in me and I wanted to share this knowledge with other women and their partners. For the first time, I realized that birth was not a potluck, women's bodies worked and the knowledge that had been hidden under the fear and lack of confidence of my own mother, was unveiled, and I would no longer have to physically shake again through another birth video.

The next gift came when I attended my friend's VBAC at home. She gave birth to her son with her arms around my neck in a mere two hours. I was honoured and moved to see such beauty. At that time, I was in the middle of my doula training program, and I decided that the best work I could do to empower couples was to teach them what I had learned in the Calmbirth® program that weekend. And so I began my study with Peter Jackson in 2006, and qualified as a Calmbirth® educator. By December of that year my next gift came... I was pregnant, hired the lovely Betty Vella as our homebirth midwife, and we welcomed our daughter Maia into the world after a short seven hour labour at home on September 8, 2007.

I have to say that I don't believe I could have given birth with such calm confidence had I not been given the opportunity to release the pain and fear of my own birth trauma. Birth is as much a physiological, as well as a psychological event for human beings, and so the Calmbirth® course educated me how to work with my psychology and my biology so that both could work in harmony to allow my body to open with ease. I remember visualizing my cervix opening during the birth of Maia as I sat straddling a chair, and I could feel myself opening with every surge. Body and mind were working together in harmony.

Changed My Life



The second stage, I found satisfying and challenging, but I had the strength and resources within myself to birth Maia, standing with my arms around my dear husband David, our midwife, Betty catching from behind. Two years later on January 7, 2010, our son Kiran was born into water with his big sister present, his Dad, and a beautiful circle of women friends surrounding us. Calmbirth® not only helped me heal, but I honestly feel it has released the painful birth experiences of my grandmothers and my own mother, so that on a deep cellular level, there is a different imprint for birth, and that my own daughter and son do not have to carry the pain of the past. They know and understand that women's bodies do work... beautifully.

Calmbirth® is an Australian childbirth preparation programme which was developed by Peter Jackson in 2004. Peter has worked in General, Psychiatric and Midwifery disciplines of nursing since 1970. During the greater part of this time, Peter worked as a registered midwife assisting hundreds of birthing mothers. Many of these mother's experiences were one of fear and anxiety. As a result of his desire to help such mothers, he undertook study as a Private Subconscious Mind Therapist and discovered the important mind-body connection. He has developed Calmbirth® from his years of research, study and experience in these fields.

The Calmbirth® programme has been written not only with the emphasis on helping couples experience a fear-free birth, but incorporates life changing elements that can be used for the whole of one's life. The program draws on the works of Dr Joe Dispenza and Dr Bruce Lipton, and uses the extensive understanding of cardiologist Dr Herbert Benson's work on the Relaxation Response, to assist couples attending the classes.

In my work, I feel privileged to educate couples with the information provided in the Calmbirth® program. Couple after couple, story after story, confirms what I know to be true, that birthing instincts are within all women. As Sally Kirkman, a birth educator and midwife in the U.K. with over 40 years experience, has found in her research that eight-five percent of women will be able to give birth naturally if they receive good preparation beforehand, and can birth in an environment where they are comfortable and well-supported.

Calmbirth® gives women back their power to realize how beautifully they are designed to birth and how to work with their psychology and biology to achieve a rewarding and stress-free birthing experience. It is so nice to see the transformation that occurs over the weekend and by the time couples leave the course on the Sunday, they are looking forward to birthing their babies. Birth becomes once again a celebration of life, and couples are empowered to take control of their own birthing experiences as they welcome their babies into the world with a sense of calm, confidence and joy. What better start could a family ask for in the beginning of such an amazing journey?

Reference: Jackson, Peter from <http://www.calmbirth.com.au/hypnobirthing-hypnobirth>

Regina Power has a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology, is a certified doula and Calmbirth® practitioner. She runs weekend classes in Berry, NSW just an hour and a half south of Sydney. (<http://www.southcoastcalmbirth.com.au>) For other certified practitioners around Australia and New Zealand, you can search by postcode on the Calmbirth® register. (<http://www.calmbirthregister.com.au>)



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A Chiropractic

Every mother wants to have a healthy, safe and natural pregnancy. A birthing mother who is deeply connected to her own body, who looks deep within herself, trusting her own body to do what it is hardwired to do, is much more likely to experience a natural birth process than someone who is fearful. Unfortunately, fear can become a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' because the brain responds to fearful emotions by releasing hormones throughout the body that can slow labour and dilation.

When it comes to pregnancy and birth the most ideal experience is a natural and complication-free birth, one that is peaceful, joyful and safe for mother and baby. Naturally, this is what every pregnant mother wants. So why doesn't it happen more often?

One of the primary causes is something called dystocia, which is defined as abnormal progress in birth. Dystocia often results in a chain reaction of medical interventions that are theoretically designed to help the labour proceed. However, these interventions often inadvertently add layers of complexity and stress to the birth process, causing the labour to be less and less natural.

While it is difficult to identify exactly what causes dystocia there are three main reasons why births fail to progress and often lead to medical intervention. Broadly speaking, dystocia is caused a combination of physical, emotional and medical/technical causes.

While mothers have been birthing naturally for millennia, one of the greatest challenges in the West is restoring an innate trust in a woman's ability to birth in a natural way. Many social and medical pressures can insidiously increase fear and anxiety around the birthing process. But pregnancy isn't an illness or a disease so we believe that it shouldn't be treated like one. To do so only adds emotional stress to women when they should be feeling peaceful, joyful and well connected to their world, friends, family, baby and themselves.

A natural birth without excessive stress or complications is obviously always preferable to a birth that involves interventions of any kind because all human interventions inevitably disrupt the body's expression of inborn intelligence. In a paradigm shift that emphasises trust in the body's innate birthing potential, many women are learning to trust their natural instincts. Many couples today are taking a stand against the controlling and fear-inducing methods that have become so common in Western societies and are instead seeking professionals who will support their decision to birth naturally.

In order to maximise the natural birthing instincts and support the development of a healthy, vibrant baby, it is important to understand that the mother's body has certain genetic requirements for optimal health expression. Providing the body with the ingredients necessary for healthy function means a natural birth is more likely. After all, a healthy mother is far more likely to have a vital, natural pregnancy and birth than one who says she wants a great birth but does nothing to support her body in realising that goal.

So what can be done during pregnancy to best prepare the mother's body for a naturally healthy birth? What does the body require to function at its highest potential, giving you the best chance of a wonderfully natural pregnancy and birth? Research across a multitude of scientific disciplines such as physiology, anatomy, cellular biology and the genetic study of our ancient Palaeolithic human ancestors strongly suggests the following



essential elements for a naturally healthy, vital pregnancy and birth:

- A fully functioning nervous system: the role of this system in the body is to coordinate healing, assist adaptation to stressors associated with pregnancy and support development of the growing baby.
- Genetically congruent dietary intake: to provide the fuel required for healthy cell function and optimal foetal development.
- Genetically congruent movement and exercise: to stimulate optimal brain and cell function, circulation, hormonal balance, strength, flexibility and mobility.
- Positive thoughts and emotions: these powerfully influence the hormones in the uterus and affect baby's development as well as the way they learn to perceive the outside world.
- A nurturing environment and loving relationships: these will create an optimal atmosphere for a low-stress and relaxed pregnancy and birth.
- A vital birth support team that consists of loved ones and health professionals that understand the importance of each of these elements.

In our practice we provide our clients with practical help, knowledge and skills that support the desire to birth naturally and have a great pregnancy.

Here's how chiropractic care works during pregnancy to assist the normal physiological function of both mother and baby in pregnancy and birth:

- Reducing interference to the mother's nervous system, which co-ordinates all of the systems and functions in her body
- Helping to create a state of balance in the pelvic muscles, ligaments and bony structures, thereby preparing the pelvis for an easier pregnancy and birth
- Reducing torsion to the woman's uterus (also known as intrauterine constraint) by removing tension of the ligaments that support the uterus
- Allowing a safer and easier birth for the mother, thereby decreasing the potential for intervention

Chiropractic care also supports vital physiological functions for the infant by:

- Encouraging better baby development by removing interference to the mother's nervous system

Pregnancy

- Helping to create more room in the uterus for the baby to develop without restrictions to its forming skeletal structures, spine and cranium
- Thereby allowing the baby room to move into the best possible position for birth
- Significantly reducing the possibility of dystocia (delayed birth) and the resulting birth trauma that can be caused by intervention

In summary, there are three main reasons why chiropractic should be a part of every pregnancy:

1. Chiropractic helps provide structural balance and stability for the mother, resulting in a more comfortable pregnancy.
2. Research has shown pregnant mothers who receive chiropractic care during their pregnancy tend to have a shorter labour with less medical intervention.
3. By supporting better function in the mother's body, chiropractic care during pregnancy can help to create a healthier and more comfortable in-utero environment for the newborn, helping them to get a better start to life. In fact, research suggests there is a strong link between the baby's experience in the in-utero environment and their lifelong health potential.

Most chiropractors are equipped to help women have a healthier pregnancy with specific, safe and gentle chiropractic adjustments. Because preconception, pregnancy and birth are particular areas of interest in our practice we also seek to equip our pregnant

clients with a holistic approach to ensure they give themselves and their babies the best chance at having a healthy and natural birth. We seek to work cooperatively with midwives, doulas or obstetricians to help ensure there is a great around mothers. Ask your chiropractor or visit icpa4kids.org to find out how a chiropractor can support you through your pregnancy.

We believe it is time to reconnect women with their natural birthing instincts and potential. It is important to recreate that sense of inner trust in the healing and birthing power of the body as well as develop a strong mother-baby bond that lays the foundation for a naturally empowered birth experience. Establishing a supportive and cooperative team and a loving and peaceful home environment are also incredibly important ingredients. By ensuring the body is functioning, adapting and healing at its greatest potential with chiropractic care women who are (or wish to be) pregnant can support their innate desire for a healthy, vital pregnancy and birth.

© 2012, Ryan and Julie Day / Holistic Health Chiropractic Pty Ltd

Julie Day and her husband Ryan are both Chiropractors in Sydney's Sutherland Shire. They have two beautiful sons aged 6 and 2. The first, Joshua, was born in a hospital, which fuelled Julie's passion for normalising the natural birth process. Their second son, Caleb, was born unassisted at home into his Dad's hands. Julie is passionate about helping women have a healthy pregnancy and a natural birth. www.naturalcareclinic.com.au



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Homeopathy for Bumps,

Homeopathy has been used for hundreds of years to treat both acute and chronic conditions. It was created by a German physician who was dissatisfied with orthodox medicine and its horrendous side effects. Instead of suppressing symptoms like most allopathic medicine does; he created 'Homeopathy' which is based on the principle that 'like cures like', i.e. What can cause a set of symptoms in a healthy person, can be used by a sick person to relieve those same symptoms through stimulating the body to heal itself.

During pregnancy, birth and in babies, homeopathy is an ideal medicine to assist with any complications or conditions that may arise. Pregnancy is also an ideal time to treat conditions that have been passed down through generations and can strengthen the constitution of both the mother and baby.

Acute treatment usually consists of using 6c, 12c or 30c remedies and it is recommended that two pillules be taken every 15mins until the symptoms start to subside. The remedy can then be taken less frequently until the symptoms are relieved.

During Pregnancy

Pregnancy can put a large amount of stress on the body and immune system, and rather than suppressing the symptoms some women experience during this time, homeopathy works with the body to change the imbalances that have triggered them to start with.

Nausea and morning sickness are probably the biggest complaint during pregnancy. The following remedies are fantastic to overcome this sometimes debilitating issue.

Arsenicum album – This mother has excessive vomiting, especially after eating or drinking and is thirsty for icy cold water.

Ipecac – Nausea and vomiting are usually made worse by smelling of food or eating.

Nux vomica – For nausea and vomiting especially in the morning, whilst eating or immediately after. The mother usually suffers from constipation alongside their nausea.

Pulsatilla – Nausea, vomiting and heartburn after eating, acidic belching and thirstless. The mother is weepy and sensitive.

Sepia – The thought of foods the mother would normally like to eat intensifies the nausea but it is alleviated by eating even the smallest amount of food. Patients may feel ambivalent toward their loved ones including their partner and children.

Heartburn is usually caused by the backup of stomach contents into the oesophagus. During pregnancy this is caused by two things; firstly the increased progesterone levels have a relaxing effect on smooth muscles causing the valve between the stomach and the oesophagus to become weak and allow acid to seep up and cause a burning sensation, secondly in the latter part of pregnancy the increase in size of uterus takes up more space in the abdominal cavity and puts pressure onto the stomach causing the contents to be pushed back up into the oesophagus. Common remedies which may be helpful include:

Apis – Belching with the taste of the food they have just eaten. Mother is worse for drinking water.

Capsakin – Eructation's of acidic gastric contents into the mouth, accompanied by a burning sensation felt behind the breast bone.

Carbo veg – Patients experience distress from eating the simplest of foods. Belching is rancid or sour with nausea in the morning and the mother loathing even the thought of food.



Breech babies are babies that are positioned in the womb with either their feet or bottoms first. Homeopathy has an amazing ability to help turn the baby around in the womb. The two most common remedies for this are:

Pulsatilla – the most commonly used remedy for turning babies in the womb. It can either be given as one dose of 200c or as no more than six doses of 30c. The women may show classic signs of a pulsatilla patient who has a tendency towards weeping and crying openly, they may also desire company and sympathy from those around them.

Nat-mur – has also been indicated as a good remedy for turning the baby, however the patients temperament is the opposite of the pulsatilla patient with the mother feeling like she wants to be alone and is worse for any company. Dosing would be the same as pulsatilla.

As a new practitioner, the use of homeopathy helped to turn a breech baby and ensured one of my clients was able to birth her child naturally without intervention. After taking six doses of Pulsatilla 30c over two days her baby then turned and got into position, ready for his impending birth.

Birth

The two most used remedies in the initial stages of labour are:

Pulsatilla – Can be used in the early stages of labour, when contractions come and go. Pulsatilla 200c may help to get labour going properly.

Caulophyllum – Is a commonly used remedy to induce labour or to strengthen contractions during labour. Symptoms indicating this remedy are erratic pains flying from place to place, lack of tone in the uterus and labour pains that are erratic. The mother will be exhausted but fretful and will desire company, yet not feel like talking.

Once labour has been established chamomilla, sepia and belladonna may be indicated.

Chamomilla – is fantastic for painful contractions, the mother will be irritable, cross and abusive and will ask for things then push them away. This is the picture of the women ready to kill her partner for her pregnancy.

Sepia – The sepia mother will have bearing down pains extending down her thighs; she may describe them as being unbearable. Her body will be flushed with heat but she will feel chilly and want to be covered. She will be irritated by company yet won't want to be alone and will be worse for any form of consolation

Birth and Bubs.

Belladonna – is useful when the mother is delirious, hot and thirstless, her pains will be bearing down and she may describe them as being hot and throbbing.

After-birth pains can occur while women are breastfeeding and are part of the body returning to its natural state. They are vital to clamp off open blood vessels at the placental site, minimising blood loss after birth.

Arnica – soothes the muscles of the vagina and uterus and gives a great sense of comfort and relief after birth. Arnica will help absorb the blood and induce maximum recovery.

Seeing how quickly the use of even one homeopathic remedy can aid in the recovery after childbirth never ceases to amaze me. Arnica should be a vital part of every woman's preparation for birth.

Post-natal depression is also commonly experienced in mothers and homeopathy can be fantastic in helping a mother settle and to cope with the new pressures of motherhood.

Sepia – The sepia mother may reject her baby and not want to nurse, she is exhausted and emotional and may not be able to express her true feelings. She may seem tearful, snappy, joyless and grumpy. She will desire to be alone and is worse for any consolation.

Nat-mur – Is emotional, introverted and wants to be alone, she may even be remorseful rather than being depressed. She has trouble expressing her feelings and will weep when alone. She will feel worse from heat.

Pulsatilla – This mother is changeable and will weep easily when in company, she will crave fresh air and have no thirst.

Platina – Is aloof and will feel alone in the world, she wants the best of everything, and may have a feeling of being constricted.

For Babies

Homeopathy is the perfect medicine for babies and children because it is gentle yet highly effective and easily administered via liquid for babies or pillules that older children can enjoy. Because it is gentle nature, homeopathy is considered safe for even the newest of babies and will help stimulate their immune systems and support them as they grow. Some of the most commonly experienced conditions in children are easily relieved by homeopathic remedies and babies respond very quickly to treatment.

Colic is the term given to babies who often fuss and cry for no obvious reason. They often look uncomfortable and will draw their legs into their tummies to try and help with the pain. There are often dietary reasons causing pain in the child so it would be wise to contact a natural health practitioner who can discuss the possible causes with you such lactose intolerance or irritating foods you may be eating.

Chamomilla – is great for babies who seem irritable and want to be carried, they may get relief from something warm being placed on their tummies.

Colocynthis – can be used when your baby's pain is relieved by laying them on their tummy.

Teething is uncomfortable for most babies but can be quite painful and cause a lot of misery for others.

Chamomilla – is the most commonly used remedy for teething. The child is irritable and clingy and the pain is quite unbearable. The gums are tender to touch and they want to be carried all the time.

Calc-carb – Is a fantastic remedy for teething that was slow to begin and painful. These babies are often chubby and slow to learn to walk and talk.

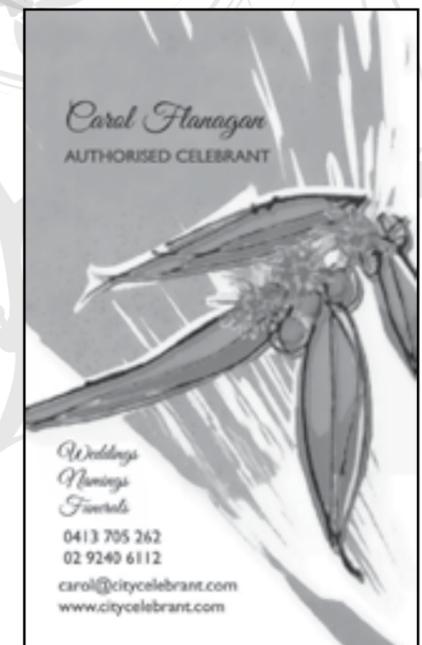
Belladonna – the gums are inflamed and painful and their faces are flushed and hot to touch. They are restless and easily startled and may often cry out in their sleep.

Nappy Rash for some babies can be sore, painful and sometimes hard to heal.

Calendula – can be used both internally and topically for the relief of nappy rash. Calendula is a miracle skin healer and can reduce inflammation and soreness quickly by healing and restoring the skin.

While homeopathy for acute illnesses/conditions is safe and easily managed by the home prescriber, there are certain conditions that need to be treated by an experienced Homeopath who will be able to look at the individual expression of the illness in the child/mother and prescribe the best treatment based on their individual needs. They will also be able to create a birthing kit or first aid kit that is individualised and takes into account the unique needs of you and your family.

Kylie Poole is a Sydney based Homeopath/ Nutritionist who is Director of Naturally Pure Medicine and The Kids Clinic. Her practise is dedicated to the treatment of adults and children through the use of Homeopathy and Nutrition. She saw a specific need for the treatment of children who are so easily over medication by today's physicians that she opened The Kids Clinic to provide, safe, gentle and effective treatment of children's mental, emotional and physical conditions. As a former disability worker and mother of two boisterous boys (plus one in the belly), she is well aware of the need for a practise dedicated to the treatment of children.



Herbs, Nutrition and for the



sign of hypoglycaemia. Eating small frequent meals containing protein can help as well as supplementation with Ginger, Peppermint, Vitamin B6, magnesium, chromium and probiotics. I found sucking on ice blocks made from ginger tincture in water was a huge help when I had morning sickness.

Heartburn and Reflux: This is caused by the growing uterus increasing its pressure on the stomach, and the relaxation of the stomach sphincters. Relief can be found by avoiding fatty and spicy foods, eating some yoghurt containing acidophilus, and herbs such as Slippery Elm bark, Marshmallow, Chamomile, and Meadowsweet.

Varicose Veins and Haemorrhoids: These are caused by the relaxation of blood vessel valves from the hormones progesterone and relaxin, as well as by weight gain and pressure from the baby. Horsechestnut, Gingko, Bilberry and Butcher's Broom can be taken for this internally as well as Witchhazel or a compress of cold grated potato topically. Also make sure to increase your intake of citrus fruits and berries (especially blueberries) which have substances that strengthen the capillaries. Silica is also a good supplement to strengthen the connective tissue of blood vessels, making them more elastic.

Constipation can be relieved by increasing your intake of water, fibre, fruit and veges, freshly ground nuts and seeds, bitter foods, and taking gentle laxatives such as Psyllium husks, Slippery Elm powder, or Dandelion Root which can be brewed and drunk instead of coffee.

Fluid Retention: This is characterized by swollen ankles in the later stages of pregnancy, caused by hormonal changes and bad circulation or protein deficiency. It is beneficial to increase protein, cut down on excess salt intake, increase your potassium levels from fruit, veges and whole grains. Vitamin B6 is a good supplement for this as well as diuretic herbal teas such as Nettles and Dandelion leaf. Lying with your feet going vertically up the wall is another technique from yoga (called Viparita Karani) which is very helpful to allow the blood to circulate back to the kidneys.

Stretch Marks are a good indication that you may be zinc deficient. But prevention is the best cure so take a Zinc supplement as well as Vitamin E and Omega 3 Essential Fatty Acids. Topically you can use Jojoba oil, Rosehip oil, and Wheatgerm oil which contains Vitamin E.

Gestational Diabetes: From 3 to 8% of pregnant women will develop higher than normal blood glucose levels, usually around the 24th to 28th week of pregnancy. A whole-foods, sugar-free diet with low GI foods and sufficient protein is essential. Some good herbs to decrease blood sugar levels are: the herbs Gymnema and Goat's Rue, and the mineral supplements Chromium and Magnesium.

Hypertension: This can be caused by nutritional deficiencies such as Magnesium, Calcium, Omega 3s, Vitamin E and B vitamins such as Thiamin (B1). Herbs that can help include: Hawthorn and Olive leaf.

Partus Preparator Tonics are said to increase the tone of your uterus, shorten labour time, assist in commencing labour and coordinating uterine contractions, help prevent haemorrhage, tonify the uterus after delivery, prevent or reduce after-pains and assist with milk supply.

Raspberry Leaf is the most well known herb and can be taken increasingly throughout pregnancy. Traditionally women started with one cup of tea per day in the first trimester, two in the second and

Plant based medicines have been used successfully for thousands of years for many illnesses and was the principal form of medicine up until last century, when allopathic medicine took over because scientists discovered ways to chemically synthesise certain active parts of the plant which become stronger, faster-acting drugs. However these substances have no life force and are used to mask symptoms instead of treating causes which always come with side effects that can cause other imbalances. So this is not a wholistic way to treat the body.

On the other hand plants are very much like us. They are complex living substances that grow, live, breathe and die, just like you and I, and they have personalities that are as different as you and I. So it makes sense to treat ourselves with these natural substances.

Each plant in the form of herbal medicine has an affinity with certain organs in our bodies that give energy to them so that the organ is stronger to overcome whatever imbalance is in the system, leading the body back to a state of health and equilibrium. And the effects of plants can go beyond the physical, as they can affect us on a vibrational level also. Using plants in the form of flower essences can help to heal any vibrational disturbances which will affect our emotional wellbeing, and they are completely safe and gentle to use at any stage of the life cycle. I use the Australian Bush Flower Essences as they are native to our country and have a closer affinity with Australians who live here.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of huge change and upheaval to your body. As the baby grows and develops there are so many processes that are going on in your own body to feed the baby, prepare for the birth and breastfeeding. Hopefully everything goes well, but problems can occur. However these problems can be helped by supporting your body with the right nutrition and herbal medicine. There are many herbs that are unsafe to use in different stages of pregnancy, but there are also many safe herbs that have been used traditionally to support pregnancy and labour since time began.

So here are some more common conditions and some helpful remedies, but please bear in mind that it is best to see a qualified practitioner who has experience in pregnancy to tailor a treatment program for your individual needs:

Morning sickness: This is caused by hormonal changes such as an increase in HCG and oestrogen, and can also be a

Flower Essences Childbearing Year

three in the third. Another way to take raspberry leaf (especially if you're not much of a tea drinker, such as myself) is in tincture form which is concentrated, so the only preparation is to add a small amount of water and it is just like downing a shot. Other herbs such as False Unicorn Root, Black Cohosh, Squaw Vine, and Beth Root in a formula can be started from 34 weeks on.

Birth

As a herbalist and doula, I have used numerous herbs and flower essences in the labour and birth process which I believe have reduced the need for medical interventions.

Preterm labour: Magnesium and the herbs Cramp Bark, Black Haw and Skullcap possess the abilities to relax the uterus so if you think you're going into early labour, or if your Braxton Hicks are feeling too painful, then I would recommend these remedies ASAP.

Herbal induction: I am a huge believer that the baby comes when it is ready, especially as it is now known that the baby releases a hormone from its lungs which lets the mother's body know that its lungs are mature enough for the outside world, (unless it is preterm and the mother's body has gone into premature labour). However when a mother is being threatened with medical induction simply for being "overdue" (hopefully not so much an issue with homebirthers!), there are herbs which can help the cervix ripen, stimulate oxytocin and facilitate the uterus to contract. Some of the partus prep herbs listed above can be used in this way as well as the addition of others which should not be used in pregnancy except to facilitate the start of labour such as Blue Cohosh and Adhatoda. This should only be done if the cervix is ripe (semen and Evening Primrose Oil – internally and topically on the cervix can help here) and under the guidance of a herbalist who is experienced with this. Having used herbs successfully with a number of women (one who went into immediate labour on the first dose), there are also times that it doesn't work because the woman has not given it enough time to help the process along, or the baby is simply not ready to come! These same herbs can also be used successfully in the event of a stalled labour (making sure that any physical or psychological factors have also been addressed!). Emotional causes can be addressed with the appropriate flower essences such as Dog Rose for fear.

Fatigue: Siberian Ginseng is a fantastic herb which can renew the birthing mother's energy. Having used it on some doula clients, they have told me that it has helped boost their stamina to keep going when they have felt exhausted. Macrocarpa is a flower essence for exhaustion which is also indicated.

Haemorrhage: The best way to stop bleeding is to consume the placenta or place it under the tongue or in the cheek, however some women may find this unpalatable. The main herbs for haemorrhage have actions that will stimulate the uterus to contract and thus seal off the open blood vessels such as Blue Cohosh, Black Cohosh and Adhatoda, and/or are uterine styptics (anti-haemorrhagic), such as Shepherd's Purse, Squaw Vine and Beth Root. My very first doula job, the midwife used cord traction which I believe caused her to bleed. Fortunately I had some herbs ready and after a couple of doses the bleeding stopped within a couple of minutes, and the need for syntocinon was averted.

Postnatal

Once the baby is born you may be feeling run-down and vulnerable, both physically and emotionally. But there are plenty of natural things to help boost, tonify and heal the post birth body and mind.

Perineal tears: Calendula and Gotu Kola are perfect for healing your delicate perineum after birth, particularly if there are stitches.

After birth pains: These can be very painful, particularly with subsequent babies, as the uterus contracts when oxytocin is released during breastfeeding. Magnesium can help, and the herbs Black Haw and Cramp Bark are wonderful herbs that are specific for relaxing the uterus.

Low milk supply: Galactagogue herbs help boost milk supply and I make a great tonic with Fennel, Nettles, Shatavari and Goat's Rue that has helped many women make more milk when other solutions have not worked!

Low energy: Siberian Ginseng and Withania can really help give Mums more energy, particularly when they are having subsequent nights of broken sleep. The flower essences Alpine Mint Bush (for mental and emotional exhaustion) and Macrocarpa can also work on the emotional body.

Post natal depression: Consuming the placenta is very beneficial in preventing this but this service is not available or perhaps desirable for all women. The herbs St John's Wort, Rhodiola, Vervain, Damiana, Lemon Balm and Withania can give the depressed mother an emotional lift. There are many flower essences which can assist with these emotions. Sunshine Wattle is for stuck in the past and expectation of a grim future. Waratah is specific for despair, hopelessness and inability to respond to a crisis. Dog Rose of the Wild Forces is for feeling that you're about to lose control. Alpine Mint Bush is not only for mental and emotional exhaustion, but for care givers feeling the heavy weight of responsibility. Bottlebrush is for helping you adjust to the overwhelming life change that has occurred and to help you bond with the new baby.

For Dad

Some flower essences that he can take for his emotional needs include Little Flannel Flower: if he is too serious and needs to become more playful, Red Helmet Orchid: for father/child bonding, and Tall Yellow Top: in case he is feeling lonely or left out by all the attention Mum is giving to the baby.

For Baby When babies get sick, it can be really distressing, not being able to know exactly how they're feeling or how to help them get better. But babies have a really pure energy because they haven't had a lifetime of polluting themselves with stress and bad food, so treating their illnesses is often just a matter of correcting a simple imbalance that may be due to what the mother is eating, the effects of birth trauma, vaccination, or being in contact with other children or adults that have passed on an illness. It is important to help them overcome this so that it doesn't perpetuate into a long term chronic illness that becomes more difficult to treat later on down the track. The three main problems that face a newborn baby are: digesting food, keeping warm and breathing. Before birth babies do not have these problems

because they've just spent 9 months in the warmth and security of the womb, then suddenly they have to eat, breathe and stay warm. So they have three main systems that are interrelated: their digestion, skin and lungs, and if one of these systems becomes disturbed, the other two can also become imbalanced. So in treating a baby, these are the three areas that are treated. When they are young, their stomachs are still really delicate so the best way to treat them with herbal medicine is to treat the mother so that what is given to her will be infused through the breastmilk, and/or to use small drop doses given to the baby which are much gentler than a pharmaceutical that a paediatrician may prescribe. Another way is to rub it into the skin externally by way of a cream, so that the medicinal qualities are absorbed. Here are some examples of childhood illnesses and plant remedies that treat them.

Post birth

If the baby is born quite flat and slow to respond Emergency Essence rubbed onto its pulse points can help to bring it's spirit earthside. The flower essence Fringed Violet can be rubbed on the baby's fontanel to protect it from negative psychological influences or damage to the aura – perfect for bub and Mum to take after a traumatic birth! Boab can also be given to release family patterns and negative karmic connections.

Rashes: Rashes can be caused by food sensitivities, so once these have been ruled out (and in the meantime) herbal creams can be used to quickly heal up irritated skin. If it's nappy rash then nappy free time should be implemented as much as possible to dry out the skin. The best herbal ingredients for healing and to soothe irritation include calendula, chick weed, lavender and chamomile, as well as jojoba, rose hip and coconut oils. Zinc is also a great skin healer that can be added to creams. I make up a lovely cream with all of the above which helps skin heal quickly, smells lovely and has been used successfully for nappy rash and eczema.

Fever: Lime flowers, Elder flowers, Catmint and Yarrow help to bring a fever down by opening up the blood vessels to release the heat. A few drops of peppermint oil in a tepid bath can also help (never a cold bath as this can close the blood vessels which will trap the heat inside, causing the temperature to rise).

Colic & reflux: Fennel, Chamomile, Marshmallow, Meadosweet and Slippery Elm can soothe the tummy, reduce acid and help prevent the upward passage of stomach acid. It is important to first rule out any underlying food allergies or sensitivities which may be passed through the breastmilk from what the mother is eating. An elimination diet under the guidance of a nutritionist or dietician should also be undertaken.

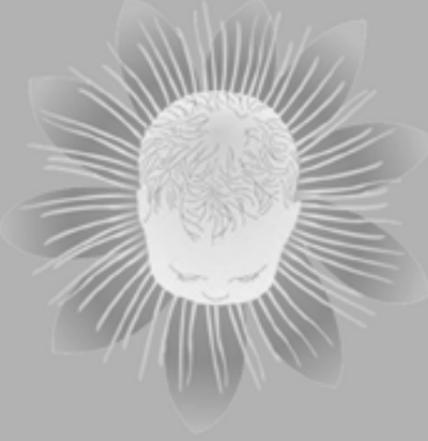
Lung infections and coughs: Echinacea, Elecampagne, White Horehound, Mullein, Licorice, Wild Cherry bark and Thyme can fight infection, reduce coughing and/or help thin the mucus.

Sleeping problems: Chamomile and Passionflower are gentle sedative herbs that can help bubbas sleep once their tummies are happily full. Food allergies/sensitivities or physical problems such as reflux or birth trauma injuries should also be investigated and dealt with first.

Each prescription however would depend on each individual case and their causes, so it is important to seek professional advice with a qualified herbalist/nutritionist or naturopath.

*Disclaimer: This information is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical diagnosis, advice or treatment. Always seek the advice of your own qualified healthcare provider before starting any new treatment or discontinuing an existing treatment.

Virginia Maddock is the Coordinator for Homebirth Access Sydney and the outgoing editor of Birthings magazine. She has 2 home born, breastfed boys – 14 month old Keanu and almost 4 year old Jetsun; and not forgetting her almost 15 year old Lilac Burmese furry child Yin Yin (who was quite likely born at someone else's home in a multiples birth). She will be joyfully marrying her kiwi man Dan in March after almost ten years together, with some help from some special people in the homebirth community. Virginia teaches Beer + Bubs classes, is a doula, herbalist, nutritionist, flower essence practitioner and placenta encapsulator for her business Natural Beginnings, and is quite obsessed with natural health, birth, and parenting! www.naturalbeginnings.com.au



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Yoga for Pregnancy

For the past 15 years I have been teaching Yoga. It is over this time as teacher, mother and doula, I have grown to comprehend, understand and observe the profound benefits of Yoga during pregnancy, birthing and mothering.

Yoga means union of body, mind, soul and spirit. When we are pregnant Yoga helps us to connect with our whole being, our self, as well as our growing baby. The unity of our whole being, with baby and spirit is profoundly supportive of developing self-assurance in our abilities to birth our baby.

Shakti

"The power who is Consciousness in all beings

Reverence to Her, Reverence to Her, Reverence to Her

The force that exists as Shakti in all beings

Reverence to Her, Reverence to Her, Reverence to Her"

- Devi Mahatmya

Female teacher Swami Mayatitananda notes that at the beginning of Creation, as it is written in the Shakta Advaita, the Divine Mother took form and set in motion the wheel of manifestation. She bestowed her healing spirit into the womb and regenerative energy of every female of every species of the earth. According to the Vedas (as written or sung by the rishika), a woman's femininity cannot exist apart from her Shakti, and Shakti is a metaphor for womanhood.

Yoga is helping us to tap into and connect to our womanhood and our power, that which is our natural self. There is much that inhibits the flow of this feminine power, our mind and its conditionings, beliefs, ego, attitudes, opinions and all the sensitive causes for stress relating to our own fears as well as those around us. This in turn creates tensions psychically, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Yoga helps us to become more conscious and understanding of what our own stressors and fears may be, tapping into our truth, our self and is an ongoing practice. Therefore Yoga is not a quick fix for an easier birth. I've had so many young mums hearing that Yoga is good for their birth and rocking up at 38 weeks to get in some Yoga sessions to help with their birth. While it may help at this stage to relax and feel reassured, the work goes much deeper and to truly appreciate the connection with childbirth and motherhood, this is what Yoga really is about.

So in order that we can work on understanding what may inhibit our birth, we need to be open to truly working on our self each Yoga session we do. Like a birth itself being patient, one step at a time without force or pressure on us to do anything well, achieve something or know straight away, Yoga is teaching us to respect nature and have trust and faith in ourselves and to be in union with the feminine Shakti.

This is all done with Asanas (postures), Breathing (Pranayama's), Deep relaxations (Yoga Nidra) and Self Enquiry Meditations.

Here are some main benefits

Yoga encourages better breathing: With the Yoga asana practice the breath is naturally deepened which helps increase a better oxygen supply not only to improve the mother's circulatory system but will also be flowing through to her baby. As we exhale naturally we will release carbon dioxides and toxins away from our body and baby.

Yoga encourages relaxation and release of tensions and discomforts: With the ability to relax tired muscles and release tensions from the body the pregnant women not only feels renewed energy and



relief in the body, but will be developing a deeper awareness of the ability to let go, an important aspect of birthing and mothering.

Yoga increases flexibility and strength: Increased flexibility and strength will help to ensure the mother's body is comfortably balanced and prepared for an active birth.

Yoga can encourage baby into the optimal birthing position: As the pregnancy progresses, and the weight of the baby places pressure on the spine, yoga will help to support these changes helping to improve the women's posture. With this she is able to then carry the baby correctly, which will support optimum positioning of baby ready for the birthing process. There has been evidence of babies turning into optimum birthing positions with some Yoga postures and that Yoga postures have been seen to be used instinctively by the women during her labour.

Yoga can help influence the natural flow of important birth hormones: It is well documented that birthing can be stalled or prolonged by fear, tensions and anxiety and increases the flow of stress hormones into the body which can inhibit the natural flow of hormones required to keep labour progressing and with breastfeeding. Relieving and calming benefits of Yoga can allow the mother's ability to remain calm during birth to allow her body's natural flow of hormones to operate as they should and to vastly improve and lessen the length of her labour.

Going inward: When practising Yoga there are many opportunities through working with a meditative focus similar to that of the birthing process. A woman can conserve much energy by going inward and remaining focused and centred. These skills are developed through Asanas, Yoga Nidras (Guided Relaxations) and Meditation practices. This is also a natural and instinctive space a woman goes through the birthing process, so the more she can practise Yoga in this way, trusting this inner space and tapping into her inner strength, the more natural it will feel for her to trust in her self through birthing and her mothering journey.

Jenny Schellhorn is a busy mother of two beautiful children aged 13 and 15 years. She is a qualified Doula and Childbirth Educator, and a yoga teacher passionate about sharing the wondrous health-giving benefits of yoga, meditation, breathing and relaxation with pregnant women and mothers. For the past 15 years she has taught Pregnancy Yoga for the Australian Association of Yoga in Daily Life in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and, more recently, her own business Simply Birthing Yoga, Education and Support Services.



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ONCE UPON A TIME, BUT NOT SO VERY LONG AGO,
WHAT WE CALL SHAMANIC MIDWIFERY
WAS JUST A WAY OF LIFE.... *A way of life that all women
knew inherently from their own birth.*

As babies and children we watched our mothers and the women of our tribe facilitate transformation daily within community life – holding space for each other in Moonlodge, birthing their babies with instinct and knowing, honouring their Elders, attending to their rich spiritual practice and walking a way of wisdom, sovereignty and beauty in their expression of being a Woman.

At our time of Menarche we were honoured and initiated as women and welcomed to join the Motherline, ready to receive into our own hearts, the ancient ancestral women's wisdom of all those who had walked before us. As we lived our lives through Mother, Maga and Crone, the voices of our Ancestors called to us often, whispering wisdoms of Knowing, Truth, Intuition, Psychic ability, Healing prowess and the Midwifery that comes from being a Shamaness who walks between the worlds.

Whilst the time we live in now is different, the women's hearts and bodies we bring to this life are still the same perfect, precious instruments finely tuned to hear and receive the wisdom of our Ancestry as it calls.

The opportunity to find our way back to the Motherline is always there.
We are the sacred vessels we have always been.

FOUR SEASONS JOURNEY Spring 2013 - Spring 2014

A year long earth based spiritual experience creating and maintaining a deep connection with the Earth and the Divine Feminine. 4SJ is for all women and focuses on the shamanic perspective of cycles of the Earth, life, the moon, and menstruation, preparing women to be shamanic midwives for their community and beyond.

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for more information and registrations go to
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Natural Birth Preparation with Gentle Acupuncture



Emotional Support “The most important thing is to protect the emotional state of a labouring women” Dr Michel Odent

Equally important as the physical side, acupuncture assists with mental and emotional preparation, offering a nurturing approach to birth preparation. Treatments are a time to let go and relax, mentally as well as physically. The acupuncture points used, as well as the overall time-out of a treatment, help to calm your mind, soothe any niggling nerves and anxieties, and reduce and manage stress levels.

Reducing your stress levels with this simple therapy provides emotional support for you which flows onto your baby in-utero and can affect his or her long-term health. The wonderful work of modern day researchers, such as Michel Odent with his book ‘Primal Health’ and Thomas R. Verny in his book ‘The Secret Life of the Unborn Child’, is proving what Traditional Chinese Medicine has always recognised.

Building a connection with your acupuncturist during pregnancy can provide specialist support and care in the postnatal period. Your acupuncturist can prescribe easy to take herbal formulas and supplements to support your energy during this time, as well as nourishing and nurturing acupuncture sessions. This is known in some clinics as a ‘Mother Warming Treatment’.

Acupressure - A Self Help Tool

The benefits of acupuncture don't just end on the treatment table – they can be carried into labour and birth through the use of acupressure. Acupressure offers a safe, effective self-help tool for labour and birth through the application of physical pressure on specific points in the body. “Acupressure for Labour Workshops” give you and your support people knowledge of points to stimulate during labour and birth, augmenting labour, creating more regular and effective contractions, naturally relieving pain, or encouraging movement in a slow second stage.

Our client Angela used a combination of yoga and acupressure during the birth of her second son, and tells us

“I know that my labour wouldn't have been as amazing as it was without having done yoga and acupuncture/acupressure... After about 4 or 5 hours of early morning mild contractions we came to the hospital - and I was already 6 cm dilated... Acupuncture had obviously helped things soften up. Things started moving but I felt totally in control, used a mix of yoga, active birth techniques and acupressure to get through the rest of stage 1... Lachlan took only 3 ¼ hours to be born from the time my waters broke. My midwife was intrigued by my use of the combs during the contractions, I seriously didn't let go of them from the time I got in the car to the time I had to push, they made me feel so in control”

Prue Tsewang has a passion for women's health, in particular pregnancy, childbirth, and supporting women through preconception care and the IVF journey. Prue has been studying and practicing Eastern medicine for over 9 years, having completed her degree in Health Science and Traditional Chinese Medicine at the University of Technology Sydney. As a mother herself, Prue understands the overwhelming privilege of being a parent as well as the joy of carrying and birthing a baby. This understanding brings a personal feeling to each treatment. Prue is the founder of Olive Tree Acupuncture, which practices within the Sydney Pregnancy Centre to offer specialised support for women through fertility, pregnancy, birth, and beyond.

As a complementary therapy, acupuncture is widely recognised. It is a wonderful treatment for supporting the emotional, mental and spiritual journey of pregnancy and this flows through to our physical wellbeing.

In relation to pregnancy, acupuncture is most commonly known for its effectiveness as a “natural induction” of labour and turning breech or posterior babies.

Some less commonly known successes include reducing morning sickness, heartburn and constipation, relieving pubis symphysis pain and fluid retention, shortening the length of labour, supporting uterine prolapse recovery, improving milk supplies, and treatment for post natal depression.

Each of these symptoms is seen as an imbalance of some sort and/or a lack of energy that can be corrected. It involves a process of applying thin needles to certain naturally occurring points on the body to move blood flow and energy, or ‘Qi’ as it is known. This activates the innate healing abilities of the body and mind, and helps to restore balance.

Natural Induction - Prevention is Better Than Cure

Research shows that the most effective way to use acupuncture to reduce the likelihood of “going over your due date” is to follow a “Pre-Birth Acupuncture Treatment” plan. This involves a series of weekly treatments during your third trimester – usually from about 37 weeks onwards.

Physically, this works on the cervix and ligaments – through a combination of specific acupuncture points, the treatments help to soften and ripen the cervix, and relax the pelvic ligaments. This helps to ease tension and tightness, making labour itself more efficient.

Hormonally, it helps to balance and boost all those amazing hormones that orchestrate the labour and birth process such as oxytocin, prostaglandins and endorphins. It can reduce stress and anxiety thereby decreasing high levels of stress hormones such as adrenaline, which can inhibit the release of the above hormones and therefore preventing the onset of labour.

It is this combination of effects that can help to naturally induce labour and promote effectiveness and comfort of contractions during labour.

One of our beautiful clients, Sarah, shares her preparation and birth story:

“Four weeks prior to my due date I had my first acupuncture session to help prepare for my labour naturally. I was preparing and hoping for a VBAC. The weekly sessions really helped calm my nerves and I started to feel in control and ready. On the 39th week we followed more an induction style of acupuncture and 2 days before my due date I went into spontaneous labour. I laboured beautifully through the night using the acupressure techniques. My baby girl was born the following morning and I feel I achieved the birth I always dreamed of”

Turning Babies - Most Effective Around 34 Weeks Gestation

If you find your baby is breech, posterior or in another position of malpresentation, it is best not to wait till the last minute to correct it, especially if this is impinging on your choice of care for labour. No physical manipulation is involved – the needling of certain points and moxibustion therapy helps to move energy and in turn correct the baby's position. A 1998 study by Cardini and Weixin showed that 75% of breech babies turned when this therapy was used.



Shorter, Easier Labor -

My first pregnancy was wonderful. I can honestly say it was the best I've ever felt in my life. My husband and I had attended the antenatal classes, read lots of books and we'd prepared a birth plan as instructed. We were planning for a nice water birth, and having had such a great pregnancy there was no reason to think that the birth wouldn't be a wonderful experience too.

We were prepared.

Things started off ok and when the contractions started to get stronger I got in the nice, warm birth pool. Then my waters broke, and that's when things started to go wrong. Within a few minutes I was out of the pool and lying on a bed, on my back with lots of bleeding and a very concerned midwife, and not much later I was in an ambulance, on my way to hospital. Cutting a long and painful story short, I ended up in an operating theatre surrounded by complete strangers in surgical gowns and masks, and my husband was as white as the paper our birth plan was printed on. Luckily I managed to birth my daughter naturally just as the obstetrician was taking the ventouse out of its sterilized packet, but she was whisked away from us, and when she was given the ok I was too shaky to hold her. I'll always regret not being the first person to hold my baby girl.

It took a long time to recover from that traumatic experience. Physically I was back to normal pretty quickly, but emotionally I was a mess. On reflection, it wasn't actually because the birth didn't go according to our plan that was upsetting. Our regret is that we naively thought that we were prepared for the birth. It turns out that my daughter was born face-to-pubes, which had caused involuntary pushing from only 4cm (hence the pain and bleeding). And guess what the worst thing is that you can do if your baby is face-to-pubes? That's right, lying down on your back is a disaster waiting to happen! Why didn't I know that? Why didn't any of the midwives, obstetricians or nurses suggest getting up off the bed and taking the pressure off my cervix? Why didn't I know what was going on in my own body and act instinctively? Why had this been such a negative birth experience?

I'm not the sort of person that takes this sort of thing lightly, and I was determined that there had to be a better way – and that's when I decided to train as a specialist in complementary therapies for pregnancy. I was already a qualified massage therapist, so I knew the benefits that massage had to offer, but that was just the tip of the iceberg. So I set up my business called 'mumabuba', and over the last nine years I've been providing specialist complementary therapies to pregnant women, including the wonderful benefits of Maternity Reflexology and Shiatsu – all with the aim of helping mums achieve a positive birth experience.

Now don't get me wrong, antenatal classes are important, and understanding the mechanics of the birth process is essential, particularly for first time parents. But it's not enough – you also need to know what's going on in your own body, and how to prepare physically and mentally for the birth. Think of it as preparing for a marathon – knowing the route and having a training regime is important - but in order to achieve your personal best you need lots of physical and mental preparation that is individual to your own needs.



I believe that every woman should have the opportunity to be in control and enjoy the birth of her baby. Encouraging self-awareness is an aspect of maternity care that is often overlooked since pregnancy and birth has become increasingly medicalised. Reflexology and Shiatsu offer unique ways of helping mums tune into their bodies and adapting to the many changes that occur during pregnancy. By developing self-awareness, women are able to birth more instinctively and with less risk of intervention.

Shiatsu

Shiatsu is a Japanese word meaning 'finger pressure', although it actually uses a range of techniques other than finger and hand pressure, such as stretching, holding and massage. It includes working with the muscles, ligaments, skin, releasing physical tension and promoting relaxation. It also works with the energy pathways (meridians) and encompasses work on the emotions and the human spirit.

Shiatsu uses the same meridians and the same acupoints as acupuncture, and in fact it is likely that Shiatsu predates acupuncture, having been used long before needles were used. It is well recognized that touch provides many benefits to a person's health and wellbeing, and touch is a key part of the Shiatsu method, something that acupuncture cannot provide.

Reflexology

Reflexology is based on the theory that different points on the feet correspond with different areas of the body. There are over 7,000 nerve endings on the feet and these nerve endings are linked to every organ and system of the body. Reflexology can help to unblock the flow of energy in organs and re-balance entire systems, and therefore reflexology can be a very powerful treatment on both a physical and emotional level.

Reflexology can bring about a state of deep relaxation, it can increase circulation, detoxify and stimulate the body's own healing abilities in order to return you to a state of balance and well-being. It is a holistic therapy, which aims to treat the whole person and not just the symptom.

Preparing for a positive birth experience using shiatsu and reflexology

Maternity Reflexology is a specialism of Reflexology aimed specifically at women during pre-conception, pregnancy, labour and the post-natal period.

Preparing for birth with Shiatsu and Reflexology

The earlier you start to use Shiatsu and Reflexology during your pregnancy, the more you will benefit, and they are most effective when you use them in combination. A good practitioner will know how to modify the treatments to suit your changing needs – there's no such thing as a standard pregnancy, so there shouldn't be such a thing as a standard treatment! Effective use of Shiatsu and Reflexology can result in many of the common pregnancy symptoms disappearing after only one or two treatments, and ongoing treatments can prevent them reoccurring.

First trimester - Reflexology and Shiatsu can provide many benefits during the first trimester, including alleviation of common pregnancy symptoms such as nausea, headaches, fatigue and stress. It can also assist with early bonding between the mother and her unborn baby.

Second trimester - As the pregnancy progresses, Shiatsu and Reflexology continue to provide the same benefits as they did in the first trimester but there is also a greater focus on preventing the common but unwelcome conditions that arise at this stage, such as backache, heartburn, pelvic pain, constipation and hemorrhoids, and encouraging good body posture.

Third trimester – At this stage a key focus is birth readiness through the support of optimal fetal positioning, reducing fatigue, helping to alleviate birth anxieties, helping the mother with self-care strategies and involving the partner in birth preparation. Common third trimester symptoms such as sleeping difficulties, water retention (oedema), sciatica, symphysis pubis dysfunction (SPD) instability, and weakness in the sacroiliac joint can also benefit greatly from Shiatsu and Reflexology.

Shorter, easier labours

Using Reflexology and Shiatsu to prepare for labour, and provide support during labour can have many benefits including shorter labour, less need for medical intervention; a reduction in pain and increased capabilities in managing pain; reduced anxiety; increase in breastfeeding initiation and a number of postpartum benefits such as reduced depression and greater sensitivity of the mother to her baby's needs.

You don't just have to take my word for it, a look through my collection of cards and notes from past and present clients - all of who are convinced that complementary therapies helped them achieve a more positive birth experience - provides compelling testimony.

There's also plenty of research out there too.

"A study at the Gentofte Hospital in Copenhagen revealed that reflexology is beneficial to women during the labour of childbirth. 58 out of 60 women giving birth experienced "outstanding pain relief using reflexology treatment", and 11 out of 14 women were able to avoid surgery under general anaesthesia. Dr Carsten Lenstrup was so impressed by the results that he said: "Taken as a whole, the results are so good that am not in any

doubt that reflexology can give many women a better, easier and less painful delivery than they would have had otherwise." The findings of the Gentofte study were supported by a further study carried out by Dr Gowri Motva at the Jeyrani Birth Centre on the effects of reflexology on pregnant women. 37 pregnant women completed a course of 10 reflexology treatments with remarkable effect. The average length of the first stage of labour was 5 hours whereas the text book average is 16 - 24 hours; the second stage of labour lasted an average of 16 minutes compared to the text book expectancy of 1 - 2 hours, and only 5.4% of the women who had reflexology treatment required emergency caesarian section compared to an average of 13% in the district where the study was conducted. (<http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/WomensHealth/Childbirth-Index.html/Reflexology/Childbirth>)"

My positive birth experience

During my second pregnancy I taught my husband how to use Shiatsu and Reflexology techniques, and so I was able to experience the benefits first hand. My second birth experience was a complete contrast to my first. We were determined to have a home birth this time around, and this time we would stay in control. Having invested the time in getting to know my body during the pregnancy, and preparing physically and mentally for what was to come, I was much more aware of what my body and baby needed, and it made the whole experience more enjoyable – in fact I even remember by husband laughing with excitement when my waters broke! My husband used Shiatsu and Reflexology to help me relax and manage the pain of contractions right up until the moment my daughter was born, even when I was in the birth pool. My second daughter was born into a calm, welcoming setting, and I was the first to hold her. That early bonding experience was so rewarding, and I will always be thankful for my positive birth experience.

Joanna Lloyd is the founder of Mumabuba, based in the Sutherland Shire, providing specialist complementary therapy treatments exclusively for pre-conception, pregnancy and postnatal women. Joanna has undertaken extensive specialist training in the UK for pregnancy massage, reflexology, shiatsu, infant massage instruction and birth art and has been helping mothers achieve positive birth experiences for nine years.



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Lotus Birth:

Lotus Birth is the practice of leaving the umbilical cord intact, so that the baby remains attached to the placenta until the cord naturally separates at the navel, exactly as a cut cord does 3-10 days after birth. Lotus Birth is part of the continuum in the development and unfolding of the human organism. Lotus Birth is also part of the continuum of awakening consciousness expressing itself via the birth process.

“We need to relearn what a birth can be like when it is not disturbed by the cultural milieu. We need a reference point from which we should try not to deviate too much. Lotus Birth is such a reference point.” Michel Odent

Lotus Birth is a call to pay attention to the natural physiological process.

Its practice, through witnessing, restores faith in the natural order. Lotus Birth extends the birth time into the sacred days that follow and enables baby, mother and father and all family members to pause, reflect and engage in nature's conduct. Lotus birth is a call to return to the rhythms of nature, to witness the natural order and to the experience of not doing, just being.

I re-experienced having my cord cut in regressive therapy and it hurt. My stomach ached and throbbed like an enormous heart. I was angry and most distressed. From our primal experiences we had come to understand how our own births influenced how we reacted and responded when attending births. Viewed through the filter of our own trauma, our interpretation of what was happening was likely to be inaccurate. We learnt to be aware of our own feelings and to be present for the mother and baby with clarity.

A three-year-old boy, neighbour of a two-and-a-half-year-old girl, came to her house the morning after her baby brother was born. She ran and greeted her friend and took his hand. I watched them, expecting her to take him to see the new baby, but she took him to the bucket where the placenta lay. The two of them stood there, wordless, hand in hand; there was a deep silence as they looked and were simply 'with' the placenta. "Why did they do that?" I wondered. It was obviously meaningful for them.

Reported reactions of babies to having their cords cut included: gasped, shuddered, screamed, cried louder, whimpered, wringing of hands, crying. Mothers descriptions of third stage included: "unpleasant, didn't notice, awful, horrific, a non-experience, foggy, pretty dreadful, disastrous, painful, surprising, lovely, sensuous."

Helma Bak, Dutch-born medical doctor practising anthroposophical medicine and homoeopathy says:

"These Lotus Birth babies are different. They are more whole- more like babies used to be. Today's babies are often very worried, they show signs of stress. This is concerning; that stress is increasing even in babies. The most striking example of wellness I have seen in a lotus-born baby was a baby whose father had died during the pregnancy. When this happens one can expect that the child will manifest symptoms of distress related to the mothers emotional state. This lotus-born child was completely clear of the residual trauma that these cases usually carry. She was very calm and centred. From my observations of the babies I see in my practice I find Lotus Birth most beneficial."



Womb Ecology becomes World Ecology

Many indigenous cultures have a strong sense of being part of a continuum. Our isolated 'me' culture deprives us of this. If we reflect on how most of us were born - drugged, isolated from our mother and deprived of basic mammalian needs of access to the breast, skin-to-skin contact and holding, we might begin to understand more fully, the difficulties we have in our interpersonal relationships. The implications of Lotus Birth are best approached through the perspective of the ancient mystery traditions, developed in places as diverse as India, China, and Egypt. Through disciplines of contemplation and meditation, these traditions have developed an understanding of the totality of a human being that is still absent from Western medical science. Generally, they articulate dimensions across which human beings live simultaneously, and how disharmony or trauma in one effects the others. We could regard the baby and the placenta as a single unit - with the placenta an essential organ, such as the heart or liver, functioning and necessary for survival. However, we don't say, 'some of the genetic material turns into the baby and some turns into the heart or lungs', so why do we conceptually separate the placenta from the baby? Lotus Birth establishes the baby-placenta relationship and suggests that the mother gives birth to the baby-placenta. As we shall see, there are no sustainable medical reasons for cutting the cord and separating the biological unit that conceived, grew and delivered (or birthed) together. Lotus Birth ensures that the physical body is well cared for by ensuring that the baby receives the full quotient of the oxygen-bearing highly nutritious blood that is in the cord. The infant obtains 40 to 60 mL of 'extra' blood from the placenta if the cord is not tied until pulsations cease. The loss of 30 mL of blood to the newborn is equivalent to the loss of 600 mL to an adult. Common practice of immediate cutting of the cord before the pulsations cease deprives the newborn of a possible 60 mL of blood, the equivalent to a 1200mL haemorrhage in an adult. This is a likely explanation of the strange phenomenon of weight loss that most newborns seem to endure. The new organism is put immediately under undue stress to reproduce the blood it was denied.

We must wonder too, whether the denial of the iron-rich cord blood is a contributing factor to the widespread cases of infant and childhood anaemia.

Leaving the umbilical cord intact



The immature liver is supported by the placenta in the offloading of toxins, as the pumping action continues until the cessation of pulsations. Most babies' bodies are loaded up with these, including any drugs administered during the birth, and have to begin life dealing with the unnecessary toxic waste in their immature systems.

"Lotus birth is not a majority choice, but offers some important benefits for mother and baby. Lotus birth ensures all the benefits of delayed cord clamping (DCC) for the newborn baby. DCC allows the transfer of an extra 100 ml of blood from placenta to baby: around 1/3 of total newborn blood volume. Babies who receive this blood (including lotus babies) are less likely to be anaemic in the first year of life compared to babies whose cord is cut immediately; standard practice in most hospitals. DCC also gives extra blood for heart and brain, which may be critical for some babies. Lotus birth ensures close mother-baby contact in the hours after birth, and discourages others (including medical staff) from unnecessarily removing the baby. Early skin-to-skin contact gives the newborn healthy glucose levels, less crying, more organized behaviour, more quiet sleep and better temperature regulation. Lotus birth encourages the mother to be still and quiet for the few days after birth - you certainly can't take a lotus baby shopping! Rest at this time, as practiced in most traditional cultures, gives the new mother time to recover, to establish breastfeeding and get to know her baby. (I recommend two weeks rest for any family, ideally six, and advise women to not get out of their PJs for maximum benefit!) More info www.sarahjbuckley.com/articles/leaving-well-alone.htm www.cordclamp.com." Dr Sarah Buckley

Protocol for Lotus Birth

- ~When the baby is born, leave the umbilical cord intact. If the cord is around the baby's neck, simply lift it over.
- ~Wait for the natural delivery of the placenta. Do not use syntocinon - this forces too much too soon into the infant and compromises the placenta delivery.
- ~When the placenta delivers, place it into a receiving bowl beside the mother.
- ~Wait for full transfusion of the umbilical blood into the baby before handling the placenta.
- ~ Gently wash the placenta with warm water and pat dry.

- ~ Place the placenta into a sieve or colander for 24hrs to allow drainage.
- ~ Wrap the placenta in absorbent material, a nappy or cloth and put in into a placenta bag. The covering is changed daily or more often if seepage occurs. Alternatively, the placenta may be laid on a bed of sea salt (which is changed daily) and liberally covered with salt.
- ~ The baby is held and fed as the mother wishes.
- ~ The baby is clothed loosely.
- ~ The baby can be bathed as usual - keep the placenta with it.
- ~ Keep movement to a minimum.

*"Dear Rachana,
A beautiful baby daughter arrived to us in the early hours of the 10th Feb. She was water-birthed at home after a two and a half hour labour. She came with ease and grace, powerfully and definitely. She was born in the caul, and was Lotus birthed. Her placenta popped off after just 3 days. She has been very happy, strongly embodied, and very clear about communicating what she wants.*

*It was helpful for me to read your book Rachana during the first few days as Asha and I noticed some of our own placenta trauma being triggered, as well as in the older siblings, and even grandparents. Thankyou! We are experiencing so much joy... i love simply looking at her, being present with her". With Love, Jonathan & Asha
www.lotusbirth.net*

Shivam Rachana is an intuitive visionary and healer, a pioneer of gentle birthing practices, founding principal of the International College of Spiritual Midwifery and former vice-president of the Childbirth Education Association. ICSM teaches ancient women's knowledge in a modern context and is committed to returning women to the integrity of their feminine process. Rachana was present at the first Australian water birth in 1982 and the first Lotus Birth in 1986. She established the Dial-a-Doula training program in 1995. "Lotus Birth" is a world first publication on this subject. Rachana is a long time member of APPPAH, the Association for Pre and Peri-natal Psychology and Health and offers individual consultations in Melbourne. www.womenofspirit.asn.au www.lotusbirth.net.com

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Placentophagy

“Well you also have the option to encapsulate your placenta and ingest it.”... Blank stares, open mouths, nervous giggles, or simply no registration at all. This is the normal response I see when talking about the third stage of labour in my calmbirth® classes.

I have been encapsulating women's placentas for over two years now and what once seemed to me like sacred 'ooga booga' has now reached the brink of mainstream with almost all of the families I support as a doula, and a high percentage of my calmbirth® clients, seek my services for this beneficial service.

Recently, Amanda Johnson from Full Circle Placenta Encapsulation in the U.S visited Australia to run a certification course for those wanting to learn more about becoming specialists in this new field. In Victoria and NSW, midwives, doulas, herbalists, naturopaths and mothers attended the weekend certification to learn or discover even more information on this unique organ. I realize how much effort, preparation and time that goes into the readiness for a new baby. We renovate our homes, (what's with that anyway?), book into classes, organize prenatal visits, host blessingway ceremonies or baby showers and patiently wait for labour and birth. After our baby has arrived, we often forget to nurture the nurturer and get caught up with keeping up, and we sometimes don't realize how much of an adjustment having a new baby in our lives really is. Unfortunately, something we don't usually talk about is the high level, up to 80%, of mums who develop the "Baby Blues", making everyday tasks a challenge and caring for an infant exhausting. After birth, our bodies lose so many nutrients, our hormones go up and down like a yo-yo, and with our babies we are trying to establish a breastfeeding rhythm, all while attempting to catch a few hours sleep at a time, and if we already have children, caring for them as well! Researching and understanding what the placenta can do for you post-birth can really impact the BabyMoon you experience. By choosing a placenta service you can absorb and enjoy heightened energy, a full milk supply, less bleeding and pain, a constant flow of the 'love hormone' and more. After all, you put in months of hard, baby creating. Now it's time to replenish your temple.

Most of the time, after we birth, we squeamishly or curiously look at our placentas while our midwives examine them, before they get discarded as waste. Some families put their placenta in the freezer... where it still may be! Or they plant it under a tree. That has been the norm in our mainstream birthing culture. But now, evidence and ancient tradition suggests that there is so much more to the placenta than its role of filtering, feeding and accompanying the baby in the womb. If honoured and prepared in the right way, this amazing organ just keeps on giving.

To all ancient peoples, either the placenta or the umbilical cord represented the mysteries of creation and was honoured in sacred ritual the world over. Aboriginal people felt that the cord was to be buried at the place of quickening, the moment when mother first felt her baby's movements, a place of power for the child's entire life. Ancient Hawaiians would paddle close to three hundred miles from Kauai to the big island of Hawaii to place their baby's cord in the lava at the base of the great volcano, asking for their baby's long life. In New Zealand, Maori people of each clan have a certain tree under which all placentas are buried. Those ancient trees continue to grow with great mana, or life force. In some cultures, the placenta is called 'little brother/little sister' and acts as a comforting womb buddy to the baby. The dried umbilical cord was saved to remind the baby of the unbroken connection to Father Sky and Mother Earth, symbolic of Oneness with all things, and was often placed in a handmade turtle pouch or rattle. Before the 1300's, the dried placenta of the King of France preceded him on a cushion and was honoured in this way at every procession or parade. The word placenta comes from the Greek



root, meaning cake. Might we be honouring our own placenta every year with our tradition of having a birthday cake?

Two sides of a miracle

The placenta is essential to a healthy pregnancy. It functions for the baby and the mother from 5-6 weeks of gestation, until it is expelled naturally after birth. Many birth professionals believe that when leaving baby and placenta attached via the umbilical cord, the placenta is able to assist the baby even outside the womb.

The maternal side of the placenta gathers and guards. It gathers from the Mother's blood stream just what the baby needs in the moment. The intelligence of the placenta sifts through all nutrients, choosing specific amounts of each vitamin or substance needed and draws it into baby's bloodstream. As the guardian, the placenta regulates a barrier to keep a lower percentage of some vitamins and minerals in the baby's blood than is in the Mother's blood, and prevents the Mother's blood coming into contact with the baby's blood. This action is not just a mechanical process, it is an intelligence that chooses wisely for the good of the baby. The placenta's marvellous abilities have always awed medical science, even without knowing its energetic aspects.

The foetal side of the placenta is called the Tree of Life, with the beautiful silvery tree trunk of the umbilical cord and its lovely intricate branches or root system of veins and arteries. This is the side the baby sees during pregnancy and is also the side that the umbilical cord inserts into. The placenta helps sustain functions that the baby is not yet mature enough to do on its own as it grows and develops within the womb, and it passes on the Mother's antibodies to help keep baby healthy for several months after birth.

The placenta is formed from the same sperm and egg cells that form the baby and at the earliest moments past conception, even before it takes its known roles of oxygenating, nourishing and purifying, the placenta energetically holds the space for the baby to become what its soul intends. During womb life, the placenta mediates between mother and baby. All information is passed between mother and baby by way of hormones, pressure and blood through the placenta and umbilical cord.

It is very common in Western culture that birth is a rushed, chaotic and often times traumatic experience for mothers, babies and placentas. Although families are starting to regain control of the way they give birth and the process of bringing a life earth side, early cord clamping and cutting is still extremely common. More and more studies are showing that delayed cord clamping (or no clamping at all) and cutting of the cord has many benefits for a newborn and continues to offer positive outcome throughout the child's life.

For Postnatal Health



The three main benefits of delayed cord clamping and cutting are: - Lower incidence of jaundice in newborn babies - Higher iron levels in the newborn - Less chance of anaemia and clotting issues as the child ages.

It is recommended to wait at least three minutes before clamping a newborn's umbilical cord, but I have witnessed cords still pulsing for much longer than that. Holding the cord until you can feel no pulsing is one of the best ways to know when to clamp. Waiting for up to three hours has the most effective results for the newborn. The placenta is still functioning for the newborn and even passes on cancer fighting T-Cells through the umbilical cord into the newborn post birth. Allowing time for the nutrient and stem-cell rich blood to enter the newborn's body ensures that the newborn will have the best possible start to a healthy, long life. This three hour wait will also allow you to have a semi-lotus birth and be able to witness your baby and it's 'little brother/little sister' still intact outside of the womb.

Equipped with its own ability to prevent, control and treat postpartum bleeding, many midwives use the placenta in place of locally injected or IV drugs. It is completely natural, safe and often times effective. There are a couple of different ways to utilize your placenta, amniotic sac and umbilical cord to treat such occurrences right after birth.

If the placenta has not yet been fully birthed and the mother is haemorrhaging, giving her extra oxytocins without the use of manufactured drugs is needed. The amniotic sac and umbilical cord from a fresh placenta have more natural oxytocins content than the placenta itself. The mother can choose to swallow a piece of the sac whole or to suck on the cut end of the umbilical cord. If the mother cannot stomach doing this, then cutting off a small piece of raw placenta can be used. One midwife I know recently placed a small piece of raw placenta in the mother's mouth and let it rest just inside her cheek. This effectively stopped the postpartum haemorrhaging that the mother was experiencing. Another way is to dip a piece of raw placenta in natural honey and swallow whole. This method not only offers the amazing power of the placenta, but can give the body a boost of energy to finish off the clamping down of the uterus.

So why encapsulate and ingest your placenta?

The process of ingesting your placenta is called Placentophagy and this process has abounding benefits for the postpartum woman. Some of the amazing things that it can help with are:

- Lessening the risk of postpartum haemorrhage and lessening the lochia phase.

- Providing the hormones Human Placental Lactogen and Prolactin to assist with milk coming in sooner and maintaining a healthy supply throughout your nursing relationship.
 - Replenishing iron lost from birth and preventing post-birth anaemia. Low iron levels can lead to depressive symptoms in a new mother.
 - Balancing out your hormone levels until the body is able to regulate on its own.
 - Providing natural pain relief from the labour and birthing process.
 - The placenta helps your uterus return to pre-pregnancy size.
 - Lending you a constant flow of oxytocin (the bonding and euphoric hormone).
 - Replenishing your B-Vitamins and offering your body protein for energy.
 - Protection from infection due to retained placenta or bacteria in the uterus.
- Your placenta is perfectly made for you, by you. It is an amazing organ created to nourish baby in the womb and then the mother postpartum.

Placenta services include smoothies, tinctures, capsules, salves and a number of recipes so the placenta is presented in a more palatable form to ingest.

Most encapsulation specialists can offer all of these services and more so that once your baby and placenta are born, you can begin to reap the benefits that this unique organ has to offer and start your journey into motherhood feeling strong, balanced and nurtured.

“Giving... placenta to a new mother following birth has become standard protocol among a growing number of midwives in the United States. By nourishing the blood and fluids, endocrine glands and organs, placenta will... reduce or stop postpartum bleeding, speed up recovery, boost energy and relieve postpartum blues” Homes, Peter. 1993

Resources: Sacred Birthing – Birthing a New Humanity by Sunni Karll www.fullcircleplacenta.com

Erika Elliott is a mother, doula, Calmbirth® practitioner, massage therapist, birth photographer and encapsulation specialist. Her business, MotherBirth, has been serving Sydney's thriving birthing community since 2005 and she is dedicated to helping pregnant mothers and their partners find their voice and follow their hearts as they guard and nurture the new life within.



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Erika Elliott 0425 217 788 erikabirth@gmail.com

CranioSacral Therapy



that performed and published the clinical research which formed the basis for the modality he named CranioSacral Therapy. Dr. Upledger's accomplishments soon caught the interest of local parents who had children with learning disabilities, autism, hyperactivity and dyslexia. The successful rates for these children who received CranioSacral Therapy astounded even the researchers. Today, some of this therapy's most effective results continue to occur with children.

The Benefits of Early Intervention

It is widely recognised that in certain instances, the birth process can generate mild to severe central nervous system abnormalities. CranioSacral Therapy carried out in the delivery room or within the first few days of life can potentially reduce a wide spectrum of health challenges, many of which might not otherwise become apparent until the child is in school. It can even address problems with head shape and/or skull bone override.

Many congenital and acquired health challenges also respond well to CranioSacral Therapy. It is shown to be effective at improving and maintaining a healthy immune system and because of its gentle, non-invasive qualities; it seamlessly accommodates other therapies delivered by early-intervention medical teams.

Childhood Conditions That May Be Avoided Or Reduced

- ~ Chronic Ear Infections
- ~ Colic, Reflux and Digestive Disorders
- ~ A.D.D. and A.D.H.D.
- ~ Autism Spectrum and Sensory Processing Disorders
- ~ Abnormal Muscle Tone
- ~ Seizures
- ~ Strabismus, Nystagmus and other Disorders
- ~ Cerebral Palsy, Erb's Palsy
- ~ Foetal Alcohol Syndrome/'Drug Babies' with Withdrawal Syndrome
- ~ Torticollis and Plagiocephaly
- ~ Learning Difficulties, Dyslexia
- ~ Speech Disorders, Nursing Difficulties
- ~ Hearing Problems
- ~ Hydrocephalus
- ~ Emotional Problems
- ~ Failure-to-Thrive Syndrome
- ~ Incoordination
- ~ Impaired Immune System
- ~ Down Syndrome and Genetic Disorders

The Hope for Children with Health Challenges

It is no wonder babies and children respond so favourably to CranioSacral Therapy. Because of the child's still-developing physiology, the central nervous system is particularly accepting of this effective therapy.

Even a single session can help your child to priceless benefits, from calmness and greater focus to better integrated sensory facilities. Additional sessions can extend and strengthen these outcomes, often producing results unmatched by other therapies.

"I am thoroughly convinced that one of the best things we can do for children is to have them begin life with smoothly

for Babies & Children

functioning cranosacral systems, a removal of physical restrictions so that their body tissues are not burdened by destructive or traumatic memories. This can all be accomplished in a very short time within the first few days of life." Dr John E. Upledger, DO, OMM, Developer of CranioSacral Therapy

In Adults CranioSacral Therapy Treats a wide range of conditions such as:

- ~ Sensory Integration Disorders/ Learning Disabilities
- ~ Dizziness
- ~ Tinnitus
- ~ Emotional Difficulties: Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, Anxiety
- ~ Digestive Issues including Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- ~ Sleep Disorders
- ~ Unexplained (Tooth) pains
- ~ Migraines and Headaches
- ~ Chronic Neck and Back Pain
- ~ Motor-Coordination Impairments
- ~ Stress and Tension-Related Problems
- ~ Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries
- ~ Chronic Fatigue/ Exhaustion
- ~ Scoliosis
- ~ Central Nervous System Disorders
- ~ Temporo-mandibular Joint Syndrome (TMJ)

For more information visit: www.upledger.com or www.ashfieldphysio.com.au
Suggested reading: 'The Inner physician and you' by Dr. John E. Upledger



Kristiane Heidrich is a mother of 3 children aged 20, 18 and 16. She is a Physiotherapist, Massage Therapist, CranioSacral Therapist, Somatic/Emotional Release Therapist, Visceral Manipulation Therapist and a teacher of these therapies. CranioSacral Therapy enabled her to realise that instead of pushing against the body's restrictions causing 'dis-ease', that she could follow the body's own innate patterns and wisdom to facilitate the healing process. Kristiane has a special interest in working with mothers in the pre-conception (fertility) phase, during pregnancy, postpartum and also treats children of all ages in her clinic (0-90). She is currently a trainee Doula and Placenta Encapsulator, and has enrolled for midwifery at UTS for the year 2013.

Creating A lifetime of Good Health Childbirth is a journey like no other. For mother and father it is one of wonder, excitement and the unknown. For the child it can hold all the rewards and risks that a new life offers.

Thankfully, for babies and children today, there is a gentle form of therapeutic touch that can help them enjoy a lifetime of good health. It is called CranioSacral Therapy, and it can help your child overcome congenital and acquired health challenges and prevent new ones from occurring.

What Is CranioSacral Therapy?

CranioSacral Therapy is a light-touch therapy shown to be effective in supporting the central nervous system so that your child's body can self-correct and heal naturally. As the control centre of the body, the central nervous system influences every major body system and function. That is why problems here can cause a wide range of sensory, motor or neurological disabilities.

By supporting the central nervous system and releasing restrictions throughout the body, CranioSacral Therapy has shown to bring about profound healing. And because it is so gentle, non-invasive and virtually risk-free, children of all ages can benefit from this essential therapy.

How is CraniSacral Therapy Performed?

A typical CranioSacral Therapy session takes place in a quiet setting with the child resting at ease on the parent's lap (may even be nursing), on a treatment table or sitting on the floor engaged in play. Using a light touch – generally no more than the weight of a 5 cent coin – the therapist monitors the rhythm of the fluid that is flowing around the central nervous system to detect potential problems. Delicate hand-on techniques are then used to release any tensions that may be affecting your child's brain and spinal cord. A session can last from 15 minutes to more than an hour. The result is a central nervous system free of restrictions and a body that is able to return to its greatest level of health and performance.

How Did CranioSacral Therapy Begin?

CranioSacral Therapy was developed by Dr. John E. Upledger, an osteopathic physician featured in TIME magazine as one of America's next wave of innovators. From 1975-1983, Dr. Upledger was a professor of biomechanics at the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. While he was there he led a team of anatomists, psychologists, biophysicists and bioengineers

Are you storing Trauma in your Connective Tissue's Memory?

- Are you carrying trauma in your uterine tissue due to miscarriage, abortion or surgery?
- Is that trauma preventing you from falling pregnant or is it affecting your pregnancy?
- Are you holding trauma in your uterus or pelvic tissue from previous stillbirth or instrumental birth?
- Are you aiming for optimal conception and an essentially natural birth process with optimally aligned pelvic structures along with a symmetrical pelvic floor and flexible uterine ligaments?
- Is your newborn baby holding trauma or tension patterns in its system due to restricted movements in utero, the birth process or due to instrumental birth?

Consider CranioSacral Therapy, a light touch, non-invasive, Manual Therapy (derived from osteopathy) to locate and release trauma out of connective tissue.



In infants the following symptoms may be avoided or reduced:

- Colic, Reflux
- Abnormal Muscle Tone
- Seizures
- Strabismus, Nystagmus
- Cerebral Palsy, Erb's Palsy
- Substance Abuse related Syndromes
- Nursing Difficulties

For further information visit www.ashfieldphysio.com.au or call Kristiane on 0405501012

Merchandise

T-SHIRTS

Please order your goods by phone 0451 969 152 or online at www.homebirthsydney.org.au



HAS RETRO LOGO BASEBALL TEE
White with navy 3/4 sleeves and black logo. Sloppy fit. S, M, L, XL
100% cotton
Price: \$29.95.



HOMEBIRTH MAMA WOMEN'S T-SHIRT
White with green print. Sizes 12 - 18
95% brushed cotton & 5% spandex. Fitted design, V-neck, short sleeves
002BT Price: \$24.95



BORN AT HOME BABY T-SHIRT
White with purple print. Sizes 00, 0 and 2
100% cotton t-shirt, round neck, short sleeves
002BT Price: \$16.50



SUPERFISH BABY T-SHIRT
White with blue print. Sizes 00, 0 and 2
100% cotton t-shirt, round neck, short sleeves
003BT Price: \$16.50



BORN AT HOME BABY T-SHIRT
Purple with white print. Sizes 00, 0 and 2
100% cotton t-shirt, round neck, short sleeves
001BT Price: \$16.50

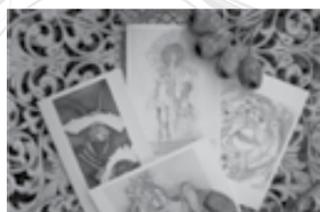
PRINTS AND GIFTS



MANDUCA BABY CARRIER
Made from organic cotton and hemp. Available in 8 different colours. Great features include inbuilt newborn insert and extra long hip strap.
Price: \$159



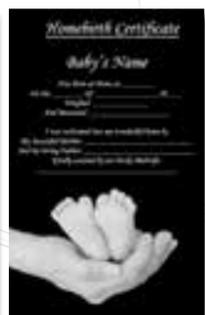
HOMEBIRTH BABY BIB!!
A cute white cotton bib with Homebirth Baby embroidered onto it. Velcro straps, various colours available:
- Dark Red - Green - Light Blue - Purple - Orange
Price: \$5.00



CHRISSEY BUTLER GIFT CARDS
Printed on 100% post consumer recycled card and envelopes. Card measures 105 x 148mm with a C6 envelope. Blank space inside to include your inspiring wishes and messages. Includes envelope. Great as invitations to Blessingways! Sold individually.
Price: \$6.00



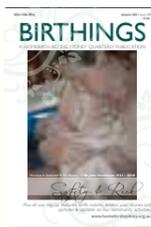
BREASTFEEDING MAMA
Fine art print by Chrissy Butler
From the homebirth children's book, 'My Brother Jimi Jazz', comes this 8x10 inch fine art print from Chrissy Butler.
Price: \$30.00



HOMEBIRTH CERTIFICATE - BABY FEET OR BABY FACE
Having a homebirth is a beautiful achievement and should be an event to remember. A personalised Homebirth Certificate is a beautiful keepsake to place on display in your home. Each certificate is a matte photo finish, personalised to your details. With the name of your baby, the time and day of your baby's birth, weight and height. Also included are the parents' names, and you can add details such as siblings, midwives, doulas and/or family members assisting on the day.
Price: \$15.00



BACK ISSUES OF BIRTHINGS



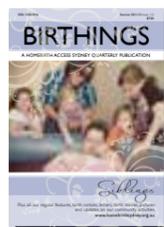
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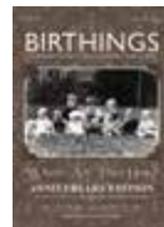
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BOOKS, CDS AND DVDS



BIRTHING RIVER
Rachel Nixon
Birthing River is written in simple rhyming verse, with soft watercolour pictures that speak to the very young. It incorporates the gradual stages of birth, and includes the special and unique ritual of Lotus Birth.
Price: \$20



BIRTHWORK BOOK
A COMPASSIONATE GUIDE TO BEING WITH BIRTH
Jenny Blyth
'Birthwork' is a guide intended for anyone who is working with, or caring for pregnant, birthing and new mothers. This includes professional and lay people alike and may also include support people, the father or coparent, or the mother herself.
15% Discount for Midwives and Doulas Price: \$42.95



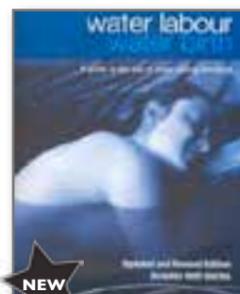
THE DOWN TO EARTH BIRTH BOOK
Jenny Blyth
A practical guide to natural birth in any setting, promoting self-nurturing, responsibility and awareness to help create a conscious birth and parenting experience. This is a grass roots' book that celebrates the innate intelligence of mind, body and spirit in relation to birth.
Price: \$65



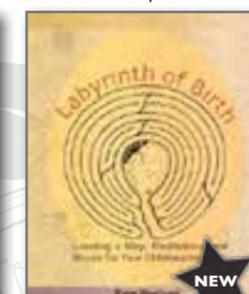
25 WAYS TO JOY AND INNER PEACE FOR MOTHERS
25 Ways to Joy & Inner Peace for Mothers is like having a supportive, encouraging friend by your side. This beautiful book and CD set helps new mothers connect with baby and feel renewed and energized by the love connection between them. With the empowering realization that nurturing themselves is nurturing their baby, this book and CD set helps a woman find the balance between the two and tap into her natural mothering instincts and her ability to feel joy and satisfaction in motherhood.
Price: \$24.5



25 WAYS TO AWAKEN YOUR BIRTH POWER BOOK
The beautifully presented hard cover book and CD is a divine gift set for yourself or a friend as well as a rare birth preparation set that gets to the point and the beauty better than any other birth CD package encompassing meditation and learning, goal-setting and partner work, empowering belief systems, relaxation and real-life feelings.
Price: \$24.95



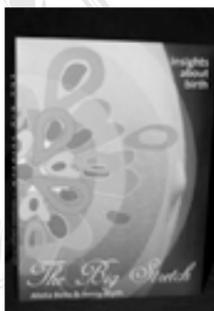
WATER LABOUR, WATER BIRTH
Annie Sprague
This comprehensive, evidence-based and visually beautiful book can dispel myths, inform protocol and enable those involved in maternity care gain confidence to give water a go whilst offering the best care to women who choose to labour and give birth in water.
Price: \$20



LABYRINTH OF BIRTH
The timeless and powerful symbol of the labyrinth forms the core of this collection of fourteen meditations and ceremonies designed to transform the experience of the childbearing year. Beautiful instructions for drawing and making variety of labyrinths are included.
Price: \$13.95



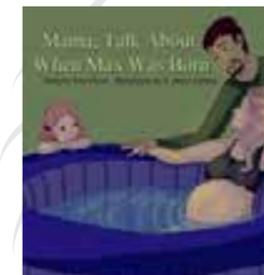
THE BIG STRETCH DVD
Alieta Belle & Jenny Blyth
Includes Booklet Inside!!
THE BIG STRETCH presents a fresh insight into the amazing journey each woman takes in becoming a mother. Women in different stages of pregnancy and preparing for a natural birth, reflect (with their partners) on how they are 'stretched' in every way - emotionally, physically and spiritually. You are invited to become intimately engaged, share in the transformation, and follow their stories to the first moments and days after birth. Includes an Extra on Baby Massage, and also The Big Stretch Booklet - Birthwork Topics explored: breath awareness, pain and the intensity of birth, vaginal and body awareness, women's challenges, asking for help, relationship and personal transformation. Running time approx. 60 minutes. Made in Australia.
Price: \$42.00



THE BIG STRETCH DVD SEQUEL
Alieta Belle & Jenny Blyth
The Big Stretch Sequel explores the experiences of: a first birth with a big baby in compound presentation, a long first stage in a first birth, a long pre-labour, birth preparation for the first time, a previous difficult birth, birthing a baby stuck at the shoulders, a posterior labour, breastfeeding with inverted nipples, birthing after a previous VBAC with a 4th degree tear, a breech birth, an uncomfortable pregnancy, birthing twins and more. This is a celebration of natural birth and the innate wisdom of parents and babies. Running time approx. 2 hours. Made in Australia.
Price: \$42.00



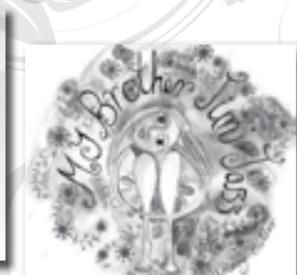
BIRTH JOURNEYS
Stop listening to horror stories. Be encouraged and inspired! Birth Journeys is a collection of 29 diverse birth stories by Australian women (and men) written to encourage, inspire and reassure you. Find out how beautiful and powerful every birth can be by reading these positive, uplifting and truthful stories.
Price: \$29.95



MAMA, TALK ABOUT WHEN MAX WAS BORN
Toni Olson
This tells the story of Max's birth, which takes place at home in water. Max's older sister likes to hear about when Mama first learned that she was pregnant; about seeing the midwives; about preparing for Max's arrival and finally his water birth in their living room.
Price: \$25.00



WE'RE HAVING A HOMEBIRTH
Kelly Mochel
Children will love this colorful, contemporary book about their family's special upcoming homebirth event. A great tool for discussion about what to expect when the baby arrives, this affordable book covers important issues such as the role of a midwife, being good labour support, noises to expect mom to make, cord cutting, placenta delivery and breastfeeding. Combined with healthy conversation about pregnancy and homebirth, this book will help teach children that birth is a natural occurrence, not a medical emergency.
SKU: KMBK Price: \$12.00



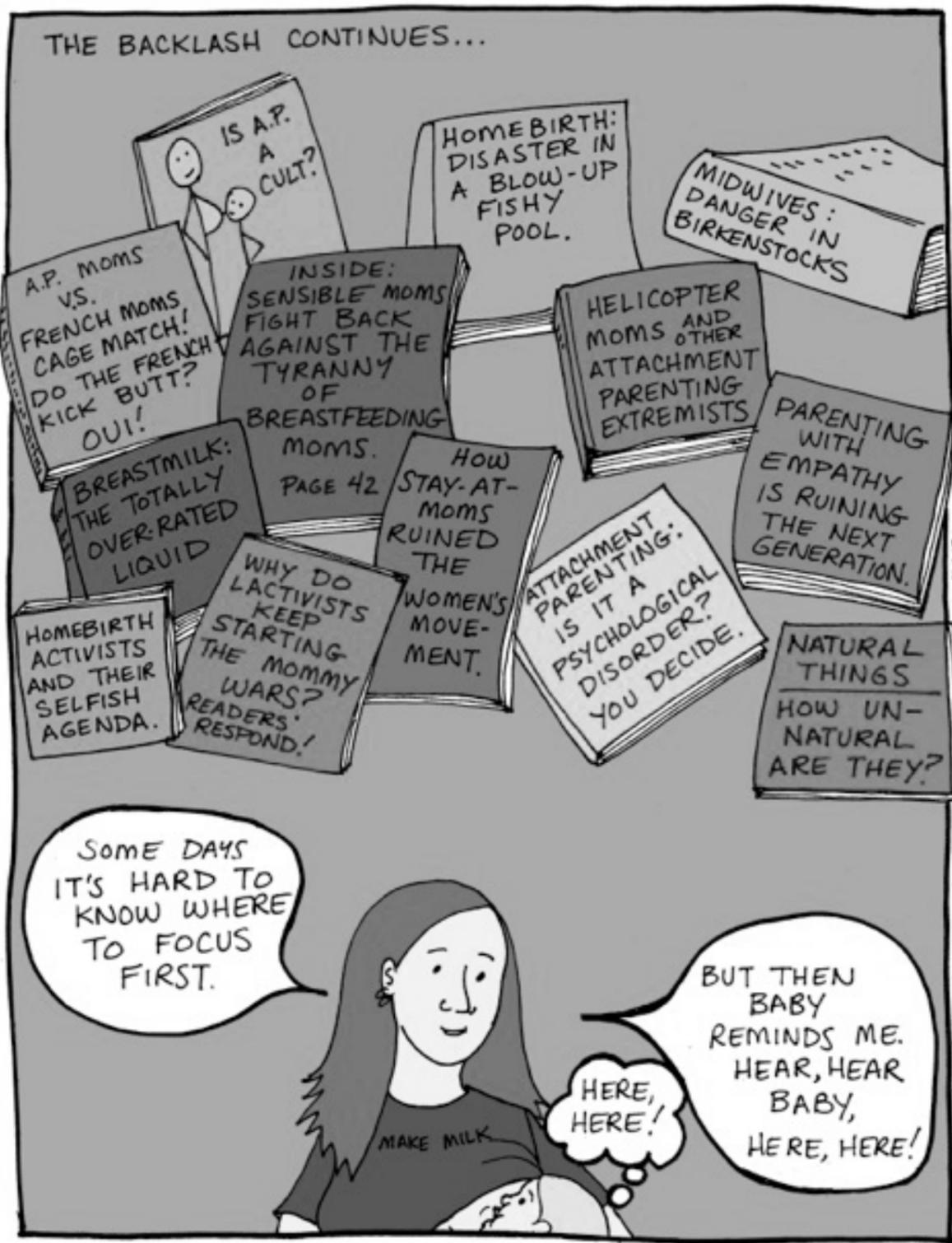
MY BROTHER JIMI JAZZ
Chrissy Butler
A beautifully illustrated children's book, written from the perspective of a young girl about the homebirth of her brother Jimi Jazz. This book embraces natural active homebirth, breastfeeding, co-sleeping, cloth nappies and siblings at birth.
Aust 2006.
013BK Price: \$20.00



THE WONDERFUL PLACE BOOK
Chrissy Butler
This unique picture book is printed onto 100% post consumer recycled paper which affirms the sustainability of breastfeeding. 'The Wonderful Place' is a delighted look at full term breastfeeding through joyful artwork and the whimsical musings of a breastfed toddler.
Price: \$20.00

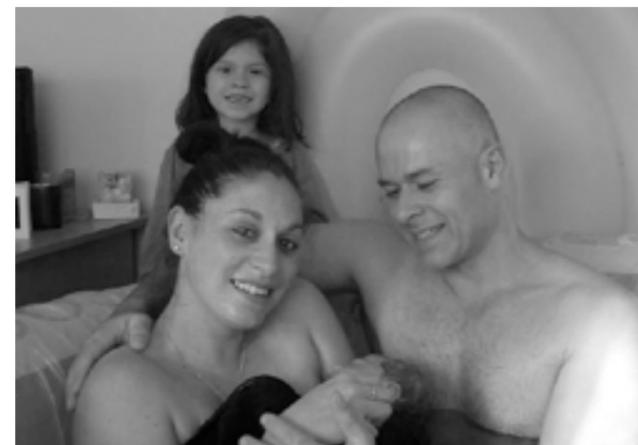
Mama Is...

'HERE, HERE'



Heather Cushman-Dowdee is mother, mom, or mommy, depending on who you ask, to four children and the creator of the long running comics: *Hathor the Cowgoddess* and *Mama Is...* Her comics follow the antics of a goddess-type mother and her side-kick babies as they attempt to save the world through breastfeeding, homebirthing, attachment parenting, and homeschooling. Her comics have been translated into Spanish, French, and Portuguese, and have been included in publications in Norway, Sweden, Australia, and England, to name a few. Her work can be seen at www.heathercushmandowdee.com or www.facebook.com/mama.is.comic

A Grandmother's point of view



For Loretta's second birth she wanted a homebirth with family members present including her husband Damon, her seven year old daughter Bella, myself, her Dad and Georgie the dog. She sought the assistance of midwives and Loretta and Damon did lots of research and decided they would like a water birth if possible.

The midwives Robyn Dempsey and Jane Palmer were fantastic and gave caring advice and support throughout the pregnancy and birth. We laboured with Loretta as a family, all very excited and happy. The labour progressed in a very natural, relaxed way in the peaceful surroundings of their home.

To witness new life emerge in such familiar surroundings with all family members giving love and encouragement is something that has to be experienced not spoken. Ivy Grace was born in water greeted with much love from all.

As a yoga teacher I am often amazed how little pregnant women and their partners understand about their bodies and the birth process. As advocates of homebirth, women and their partners need to help educate society about birth as a positive experience and woman's ability to give birth naturally given the right environment.

Ivy Grace is now five months old; a happy little baby who is cherished by all.

As a mother and grandmother I felt compelled to write about my births and, more significantly, about the wonderful experience of being at the homebirth of my granddaughter Ivy Grace.

I was a young woman when I gave birth to my first two children. They were born in a hospital delivered by an obstetrician. My mother gave birth to me in hospital and I suppose I thought that was the most appropriate place to birth.

As all births are, my children's births were a wondrous experience. But like many women I was totally ignorant about my options. When my doctor suggested an induction it seemed like a good idea as you knew when your baby was going to be born. I was assured my baby was ready to be born. I was fortunate as there were no complications with my labour; I was left alone through most of it with a midwife checking me from time to time. The second birth was a repeat of the first.

My life and point of view took quite a different turn when I became seriously interested in yoga. I became involved in natural therapies and found a lifestyle that allowed me to live in harmony with the universe.

When I fell pregnant with my third child I was older, wiser and much more in tune with my body so I felt I wanted to be in control of my own labour and birth. I sought a doctor who was more co-operative and not in such a hurry to induce and recommend epidurals. Still I did not consider a homebirth. It was 33 years ago and I had not heard much about homebirths then.

This birth and the following one of my youngest daughter Loretta were the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I laboured at home arriving at the hospital not long before the births. Cohen and Loretta were born peacefully without intervention. It was a very special and rewarding experience. From that day on I knew that when my daughters decided to have children I would wholeheartedly encourage them to be informed, confident and positive about the wondrous experience of giving birth.

My passion for yoga continued and I became a certified Iyengar yoga teacher. I began teaching my prenatal yoga classes with great enthusiasm and encouraged women to have faith in their womanhood and to make informed decisions about birthing. Sharing my knowledge and experience has been the most rewarding component of my yoga teaching.

My daughters followed my advice and gave birth with confidence. Their first babies were born in a birth centre with midwives assisting. My first grandson was born on my birthday. I was present at all births, which is an unbelievable bonding experience with your grandchildren and your daughters.

Jan Baxter is a mother, grandmother and Yoga Teacher, teaching Prenatal Yoga Classes at the PBB Health Centre, North Parramatta.

Milly's

Birth Story

I was determined that this birth would be amazing.....and it was. I will never forget the day that Milly decided it was time to join us.

My birth with Abigail had been far from what I had envisaged. Thinking I was doing the best thing, we engaged a private obstetrician for my prenatal care. When my labour began I went into the hospital too early (1.5cm dilated). After 11 hours of laying on the bed and minimal progress (3cm) I was told my waters must be broken. My waters could not be broken easily and the attempts were causing me excruciating pain and as such I was advised an epidural and some synto as the way forward. Needless to say my darling Abigail was born after an episiotomy, ventouse and forceps. Over the next year I reflected a lot on the birth. I talked to other mums I met and after hearing a few amazing home birth stories I decided that was what I would do for any future pregnancies.

After falling pregnant, I met with a few midwives, however after a phone conversation with Jo (Hunter) I knew she was the one. There was just something about her, even after our initial conversation I felt like I had known her for ages.

A few months into my pregnancy I wrote a birthing affirmation. I will birth easily in water with little pain. My birth will be safe and joyful. It will be hard work and I will do it. My baby will be safe and healthy. Since then, I have read that in fact Yogis believe that a positive affirmation (sankalpa) repeated daily and never shared will always be realised (Thanks Jodi).

I had a feeling Milly was on her way. When Jo messaged me on 25 June to confirm our next appointment on the 27 June, I wrote back "Wed is great. C u then if not before :)"

I drifted in and out of sleep early Tuesday morning, only half aware that I was having contractions. I woke up at about 5am to Abigail calling out. I got up and brought her into our bed and we continued to sleep for a few more hours. I remember groaning a little as the dull aching pain continued - it felt like period pain. I woke up when Olly got up for work at about 6:30am and decided to get up and sit on the coach and continue with some knitting - perhaps with a little excitement that this could be the day.

I timed the contractions and they were coming about five to six minutes apart, however sometimes a little irregular. Olly and I talked briefly about whether he should stay home, however we came to the conclusion that I should get on with my day and he was only half an hour away. I texted Jo to let her know and said I would keep her updated. Jo suggested that

I ignore the pains until I couldn't ignore them anymore.

Abbie and I set off for our normal Tuesday morning - playgroup at our local Steiner school. I continued to have some contractions throughout the morning, however nothing too intense, I just closed my eyes and breathed deeply - I guessed it was just my body getting ready for the big day. We left playgroup at about 11:15pm and continued on to our local organic shop to get a few things. I remember driving home and having a few contractions in the car. They were quite uncomfortable when I could not stand and move, so I would make a little noise - Abbie thought this was quite funny and would imitate my low groaning noise whilst giggling in the back of the car.

A friend called just as I arrived home - Sally had had her second baby exactly one week before. I had just seen her husband at playgroup and he mentioned that I may have been having some contractions. We chatted briefly about her birth and she gave me some wonderful words of encouragement and advice.

I remember standing on our front lawn, holding Abbie above my bump, rocking as another contraction came.

We went inside and I put Abbie to bed for her sleep. I then set about making dinner (chicken pie) and some ice cream as we had run out and I was quite sure I would be too busy to make any in the coming weeks. When a contraction came I would hold onto the kitchen bench, rock from side to side... and groan.

I sat down and had some lunch and this is when I decided that I could no longer ignore the fact I was having contractions as they began to come every three minutes - it was about 2pm. I called Olly and said he should be prepared to come home early however told him to hold off until I called him back. I texted Jo to let her know I was having contractions about three minutes apart. After a few conversations with her, she decided to send Tanya over as she was at another appointment about one to two hours away (having not heard from me since my initial text that morning, she went in the opposite direction!). Tanya is a registered midwife who was attending our birth, before she potentially ventures into private practice herself.

I then called Olly and told him to leave. Thankfully he said he had left after my last phone call. I remember crying and feeling a little overwhelmed that I was on my own and then said out loud "I can do this, I will do this, I have to do this". I think I must have been in transition.

Over the next 40 minutes I continued cooking and the contractions continued - about 15 minutes before Olly arrived home, the

intensity grew and as a contraction approached I would walk quickly to the lounge and burry my head in the cushions so I could make a little more noise, as Abbie was still sleeping.

Once Olly arrived home, he began getting the pool ready. Within about 30 minutes of him being home, Tanya arrived. I stopped cooking at this point - I had ignored it as long as I could and now I wanted to fully immerse myself in what was defiantly labour. The house was so quiet and peaceful - just the place I wanted to be to birth my baby.

I roared through about three more contractions and then could no longer get comfortable on the lounge. I went and sat on the toilet as the position felt comfortable. Tanya later told me that my noises changed at this time and she knew things were a little more progressed than we perhaps thought.

I went back to the lounge and we decided that Tanya would check to see how dilated I was. After taking off my pants, all I remember is another contraction. Tanya never checked me as things progressed very fast. I leant over the lounge and remember saying I needed to push. Tanya told me to do what my body was telling me. I next remember her saying "You are going to have a baby". I was so shocked given how quickly everything was happening. I pushed.

It felt so good to direct the pressure of a contraction into pushing. I asked (perhaps shouted) to get into the birth pool, however it didn't have enough water in it - we had decided to fill it closer to the birth to ensure we didn't need to keep the water warm. It felt like my bottom was going to open up. It was so different to what I had imagined. I remember my noises started to get higher more like a scream and at this point Tanya reassured me saying something about me being safe. I felt instantly reassured by her words that were said with much conviction and I refocused my noises to be low and more primal.

On the first push the bag of waters began to emerge in tact (what a great picture that would have been!). My waters then broke and I felt some relief from the pressure, then I felt the head. I had been anticipating the feeling of the head crowning the whole pregnancy given I hadn't felt that during Abbie's birth. I had read a lot about it feeling like a ring of fire and I guess I can see why people call it that. Although it wasn't nearly as bad as I had thought. Don't get me wrong it was hard work, very intense and during those three contractions of pushing I felt pain, but it was manageable.

Abbie woke on the second contraction when I was pushing.

Olly brought her out and popped her on the lounge in front of me. I remember looking up at her rubbing her hand and saying "It's okay; mummy's just having a baby".

So with three powerful contractions and a roar - Millicent Rose made her way into the world.

Tanya caught our little Milly and passed her to me, I was in total shock that I was being given my baby. It had all happened so fast. Jo arrived about 30 minutes after the birth. My contractions after the birth were strong and I continued to make low primal noises during these. I barely lost any blood and so was able to get into the pool after Milly was born to wait for the placenta. I birthed the placenta about 1 hour 30 minutes after the birth and all that pressure I was feeling was gone.

Olly and Jo helped me into the shower after the cord was cut and I got into my pyjamas. Mum arrived and we all had pizza in the lounge room (needless to say the chicken pie was unfortunately not finished, that was now my sister's job!). Jo stayed around for a few more hours until we were all settled. It felt so good to go to sleep that night in my own bed, with my husband and two children by my side.

Natural birth was a rite of passage I desperately wanted to experience. I am so proud to be able to say that I birthed my baby girl without the use of drugs and that I felt what women all around the world have for centuries experienced - real birth - and it felt euphoric.

There could be many reasons why my labour was so fast and relatively easy. Many people could simply say that I was lucky. I truly believe that my shift to a traditional diet in line with recommendations of Weston A. Price (and taking cod liver oil each day) played a significant part. I also believe that a positive state of mind and focusing on my birth affirmation throughout my pregnancy played a significant part.

Natalie Trusler lives in Sydney with her husband Oliver and their two children, Abigail and Millicent. Currently on maternity leave from her role as a Chartered Secretary/ Corporate Governance Professional in funds management, she now delights in the simple joys of motherhood. Natalie is passionate about real nutrition with a focus on eating a traditional diet, Steiner education, anything crafty and creating a handmade life. She shares her thoughts on her blog - <http://thelittlegnomeshome.blogspot.com.au/>



Nathanael's Birth Story,

with Aura-Soma



As I approached 40 I could feel my biological clock ticking away. I felt the ever growing desire to have a second child, not only for myself but also as a sibling for my son.

Conception wasn't happening, despite a change of diet and taking care of myself physically. As an Aura-Soma practitioner I work with clients and on myself with this amazing colour care system which uses the qualities, gifts and healing powers of colour and light, blended with the living energies of herbs, essential oils, gems and crystals. There is an Aura-Soma bottle which has been known to help women conceive and which had helped one of my own clients to conceive the child she so desperately wanted. This bottle is known as 'A Chain of Flowers/Essene Bottle 1', and as the 'Love Rescue' bottle, with its delicate aroma of rose oil and energy of rose quartz crystal, and it is used to anoint one's body.

Using it in this way as an act of self-love, rubbing the oils on my tummy, hips and throat, helped me unconditionally accept myself and nurtured me on many levels. Its clear colours helped me detox emotionally in addition to the physical detox I'd been doing. It helped me to see that the beautiful family of three I already had was perfect exactly as it was, whereas I had been seeing it as something which needed altering as I'd felt it had something missing. The moment I accepted us, perfect as three, I conceived. It was remarkable. I had managed to let go of the deep drive, the insatiable need for another child and, the moment I did, the very thing I wanted happened.

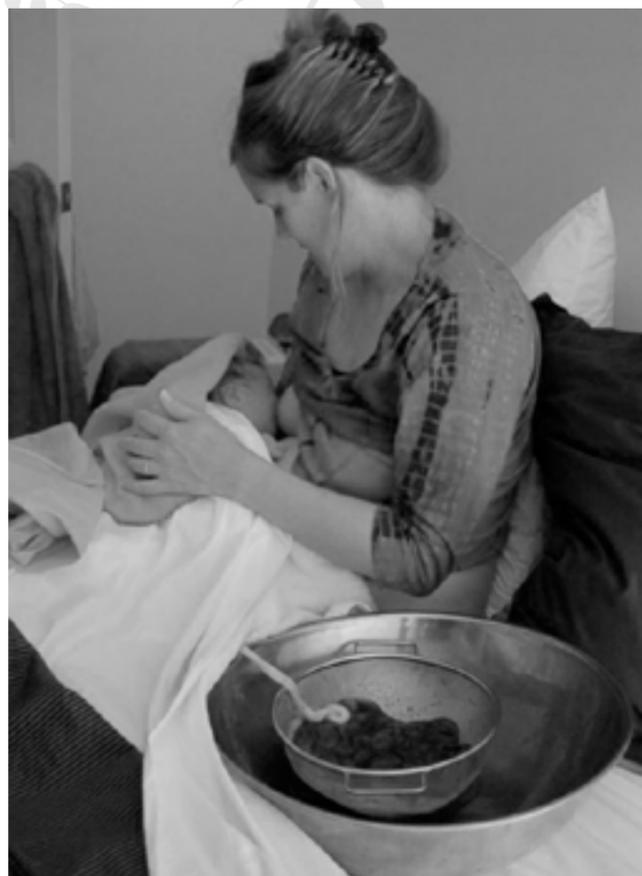
When I found out I was pregnant I was ecstatic - more 'perfection' for our already perfect family! During my pregnancy the Aura-Soma oils were my safe space keepers, as at that time I was in a very stressful work environment. I used the oils on my belly on a daily basis, to remind me to keep loving myself and to connect with my baby who, in the latter months, would respond to my anointing of the outside of his growing space with a gentle nudge of a foot or elbow.

At this time I also used Aura-Soma Pomanders. In the middle ages Pomanders were used to keep away negative energies or 'evil spirits' and, in their modern day form with their coloured herbs and plants, they do the same. I used these to cleanse and protect my energy. Blue was my favourite as I surrounded myself with an imagined orb of peace, to protect me from anything which was not conducive to me and my baby. I used pink to bring me a feeling of mothering myself as my own mother was not around, and I began to prepare for the birth of my baby.

We got our birthing pool out of the garbage and tested it for holes, and even had a practice run to ensure it would do its job. Not long before his due date, my baby told me he wanted a lotus birth. It was a great surprise and not something I had considered before then. Fortunately our amazing midwives (Robyn Dempsey and Jane Palmer) were fully supportive and had the 'Lotus Birth' book by

Rachana Shivam to lend me. My husband and I both read it avidly and, shortly afterwards, made a trip to Spotlight to buy red corduroy and white felt to make a placenta bag. The act of hand sewing this beautiful creation helped me connect with my creativity and impending creative forces, as well as my inner strength. It helped me connect with my baby and ensured we were fully prepared for what we hoped would be a gentle, loving, home and water lotus birth.

At this intense time of preparation and nesting I used Aura-Soma energy clearers to help prepare the birthing space at my home. This helped to create a clear, loving and welcoming space for our baby. My first baby's birth had been a busy one in terms of lots of people being present, both poolside and in other rooms - preparing food for us and as backup support. This birth was to be different. I was determined to reclaim my power and only have my husband, son and midwives there - I needed to do this one on my own. The extra support of the Aura-Soma energies helped me do that, they helped keep me in a space



of love and positive intentions, and reminded me of my own strength so that I could connect with and bring forth my inner birthing warrior.

Going into labour was as I had hoped, it wasn't long before the pool was being filled and I could get into the deliciousness of that warm water, soothing and easing my legs and labouring body, knowing that I was closer to meeting our son. After a four hour labour I was ecstatic to finally feel him coming, as he birthed into the water and came up for air; a cry and an instant connection - skin on skin, the wait was finally over. After a few minutes I looked to see whether we had a boy or a girl, and was surprised by the excitement I felt when I saw we had a son. My oldest son, who had been awoken from his slumber, sat by the pool and gave an ecstatic air punch when I told

him he had a baby brother. Our family of four was now complete.

As we sat in that timeless space in warm water I heard a whisper past my ear "Nathanael". Initially I took no notice as I was so mesmerised by the beauty of our son. It was only later, when I had been helped into bed and we were discussing names, that I remembered what I'd heard. Until then the only names we'd talked about were the names of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, who my son was obsessed with at the time, and we'd managed to steer him away from Leonardo, Raphael, Michaelangelo and Donatello! My husband looked on the internet to check the meaning of Nathanael, and of course it was absolutely perfect. It means 'Gift of God', and contains the name 'Hanael' - an Archangel in Aura-Soma system which symbolises Peace Rescue, or Peace Re-Cue or restore. It was so apt, as his conception, my pregnancy and his peaceful birth had brought me so much inner peace. It was a beautiful completion, with all the support I had from our midwives, friends and of course, Aura-Soma, who had helped me come full circle on this amazing journey.

Claire Hickson is a mother of two radiant boys, both home-water-birthed, one with a Lotus Birth. Claire is an accredited Aura-Soma Practitioner and owner of The Colour Rose Online, selling Aura-Soma essences. Claire works with women who desire a conscious conception, pregnancy and birth, and also with their children. Claire runs children's and adult's Aura-Soma workshops. www.thecolourroseonline.com.au

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Harvey's Birth Story

The due date came and went. I had expected Harvey to be born on his due date since my first son Will aged two, came on his due date. That was not to be, albeit Harvey came only three days late. From 37 weeks I had patches of pre-labour, mostly at night when I went to bed. Tightenings and very mild period pains were my body's way of getting ready. For two weeks prior I had about three or four nights where the pre-labour was getting stronger. Each time I kept thinking "Is this it?" I freaked out my husband Tim, the first time when the next morning I informed him that I thought I could have been in labour last night but not to worry, nothing was happening now. In hindsight all the practice runs was good provision helping us both to be mentally and emotionally prepared.

On June 22nd, the pre-labour started a bit earlier in the afternoon but I continued normally; cooking dinner and washing up and getting Will to bed. I eventually sat down on the couch about 7:30pm to watch Masterchef. The pre-labour was still going when Masterchef had finished. I wasn't yet convinced it was labour, it wasn't painful. Jo, our wonderful midwife had previously told me that a hot shower would usually stop any practice runs and that if it was real labour it would continue even after a hot shower. So I had a nice hot shower and just before bed had a little show. I was still not completely convinced it was labour, although I was starting to think "Maybe?"

I told Tim excitedly and little nervously that "Things could be starting." I was hoping this was the real thing. The birth pool had previously been blown up given our numerous practice runs. So we both got into bed to get some rest. I didn't really sleep, I just kept thinking about the mild contractions and whether this would develop into labour or not. Jo had assured me that I would remember what labour feels like when it comes. However I was a bit anxious about recognizing this and knowing when to call Jo since Will's labour was so quick and was almost a free birth. I knew this time I definitely wanted a home birth but not a free birth :). Jo lived 50 minutes away on a good run and up to 2 hrs with traffic

so I had to make sure I called her with enough time. Romany, our doula, lived close by so we would hopefully have someone here if the baby came too quickly for Jo to arrive.

By 9:30pm the pre-labour was continuing and I called Jo to let her know. I just felt like staying in bed and was still not convinced it was labour. We agreed I'd let her know how I was going in half

an hour. By 10pm I had more of a show and thought "Yes, this is probably labour". Jo said she would leave and be here in 50 minutes. Romany too would arrive in 50 minutes. Tim and Will were asleep. I stayed in bed with the pre-labour slowly getting stronger.

Jo and Romany arrived and the contractions were still getting stronger, but easy enough to breathe through. I felt like getting up out of bed so came out to the lounge room where the birth pool was set up. In Will's labour my waters broke like a bucket of water all over our rug, so Tim had been sure to roll up our lounge room rug this time. I chatted with Jo and Romany for a while and went through the contractions while resting on the couch in between. I couldn't be bothered monitoring and looking at the clock; I just decided to go with my body. Romany would press my lower back when needed. Jo advised me after everything that the contractions were only about 30 seconds long and five to six minutes apart. I wasn't aware of how far I was and didn't really know what Jo and Romany were thinking, but apparently they were expecting at least another 10hrs before the baby would be born. I'm glad they didn't tell me this!

I was conscious Jo and Romany were waiting around and offered for them to lie down and rest. We decided to start filling up the pool and see how I progressed. At about 12:30am the contractions changed. They were quite intense now and moved to my lower back. I told Jo I had a slight sensation in my back, the kind you get when a "number two" might be coming. I moved from one couch to another and knelt with my head in a pillow. There were about three contractions here. Romany got me the heat pack as I thought it was still too early to get into the pool (which was still filling), and the labour wasn't yet painful enough. I wanted to leave the pool for the end as I've heard the pain relief is more effective when left until really needed. The contractions had a bit of a grunt to them and then the poo smile arrived (the kind of involuntary grin you get on your face when pushing out a poo!). I thought a poo was coming so went to the toilet... It wasn't a poo, it was the baby! Jo heard me have another contraction on the toilet. This one was an involuntary push. She got me off the toilet. "Quick the baby's coming, go get Tim" Jo said. Tim was in bed asleep as I'd told him not to worry and to rest. Romany got Tim. Jo quickly grabbed a yoga mat and put it on the ground in front of the toilet. My body took over... I knelt down on all fours as my body involuntary pushed out the baby. I held Tim and remember saying "Tim I need you." He assured me with his touch and words. I felt like I was roaring, but Jo assures me I was very quiet.

My body was literally spewing this baby out right in front of the toilet on the bathroom floor. I felt the burning sensation. Jo put a hot towel on me and Romany reminded me to breathe slowly with a "ha ha". This was invaluable as it saved my perineum which had torn with Will. With one contraction half of Harvey's body came out and I heard that beautiful assuring scream. Jo caught him and with the next contraction he was born. I sat in the bathroom holding my beautiful boy. Ecstatic!

Tim and Jo moved me to the lounge. We left the cord attached until it stopped pulsing. Harvey quickly found my boob and started sucking beautifully. Tim and I sat admiring our beautiful baby "So fearfully and wonderfully made", a little miracle and gift from God.

The third stage of labour was the longest part, approx an hour and half. The placenta eventually came out after a bit of breast feeding and one of Jo's herbal remedies. It went into a bucket and into our fridge, much to Tim's dismay :) Jo took it home and made me placenta pills. I know it sounds out there, but I'm sure they have helped with recovery and energy post birth! I totally recommend it if you get the chance! Tim cut the cord and we dressed our new little boy. After making our bed, cleaning up and settling us into bed Jo and Romany left.

A few hours later we introduced Will to Harvey. Will was so excited to meet his baby brother who had "Finally come out of Mummy's tummy." Although Will was prepared to be there for the labour, he ended up sleeping through it, which I was quite happy with. His response to Harvey was beautiful, he lay down next to him and gently touched his head and hands and face. He continues to be a very affectionate big brother.

I am so thankful for a great pregnancy, amazing birth and now two gorgeous boys. It never ceases to amaze me how wonderfully designed and made our bodies are. Special thanks to Jo and Romany. We felt confident in very capable, caring and supportive hands; couldn't ask for a better team. I'm looking forward to doing it all again should we be blessed with another bubba. Maybe next time I'll make it into the birth pool!

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" Psalm 139:13-14.



Alison Bradford is married to Tim and mum to two gorgeous boys Will, 2, and Harvey, 6 weeks. In a previous life she was an accountant, now happily full time mum and learning how to get two boys to sleep at the same time :) Alison likes the beach, exercise, good food and anything from Adrianno Zumbo.



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My first pregnancy was wonderful. The care that was taken by our team of midwives and the relationship that we built way surpassed any of my expectations. I felt secure and excited about having our first baby in the comfort of our home.

Our first baby boy, Zavier, was born on a cold August Evening. As the waves of the labour began to get a little stronger, we decided to take a walk down to the lake to take my mind off things. By the time we were on our way back I was stopping every few minutes to breathe through the waves. We arrived home and lit the fire and some candles, rang our midwife to tell her we were going to be meeting our new baby soon (but no hurry), and began to fill our birthing bath.

While my husband was busy trying to fill the bath and cook me dinner (which I promptly threw up), I made myself a little 'nest' by the fire place breathing through the waves and resting on a beanbag in between. Within an hour and a half I began to feel the urge to push, which at the time really surprised me as I really believed the baby wasn't coming for quite a while. I put my hand down and could feel the beginning of the baby crowning just as my midwife came through the door. Great timing! My midwife was AMAZING! She supported me as my beautiful boy entered the world 10 minutes later! Our boy was in such a hurry to come into the world that we didn't even have time to finish filling our birthing bath!

The postnatal care I received from these beautiful women was amazing. They were so supportive and caring. They came to visit me in my home



Boys In

everyday for two weeks and we still keep in touch even now, as friends.

My second beautiful boy, Brodie, came into the world just over two years later. After building such a wonderful relationship with the midwives at our service here in Newcastle I was very excited to catch up with them again. My pregnancy went very smoothly and I felt great through most of it.

I had been having lots of Braxton-Hicks for weeks and at 38 weeks they were getting quite strong. We had a family day out at the beach where I thought I was just having more Braxton-Hicks, but they were unusually strong. I floundered about in the cold water at the beach (my favourite pregnant pastime!) and eventually the pains stopped completely. I had a feeling that these 'Braxton-Hicks' may have been the beginning of my labour, so we spent the afternoon taking a long walk around the lake. No baby... No more Braxton-Hicks. I had the best night's sleep I had had in ages.

I woke early, and decided to take my son for a walk with our dog before I took him to childcare. As soon as I left the house I knew that we would be meeting our new baby in the next day or so. I cut our walk a little shorter than usual and went home to let our midwife know. I also rang my husband (who at the time was working around 1 1/2 hours drive away) and told him to come home. I rang my best friend and I asked if she would be able to come and pick up my son as I no longer felt like I could drive. I told the midwife to come around in a few hours. The waves were intense, but manageable.

I paced around the house trying to pack my sons bag to go to his friends house. I went and sat on the toilet. Next minute, I had a really big urge to push (and I knew it wasn't a 'number two') I was completely surprised as I had only been back from my walk for 15 minutes! I rang our midwife and told her that I was crowning and to come over now. She advised me, obviously to get off the toilet unless I wanted my baby to swim! By this time our toddler had come into the bathroom to find out what the noise was all about. I consoled him by telling him that our new baby was coming! I hobbled off the toilet and into the hallway. By this time, the babies head still encased in its bag, was well and truly crowned. I kneeled down in the hallway



A Hurry

next to my dog and my eldest son, Zavier and put my chest to the floor to try and slow things down. But there was no slowing down my little fella, who was in a big hurry to enter the world! Brodie entered the world in the hallway, still in his bag. As I caught him the bag broke and I was left cuddling a little purplish, wrinkly, gorgeous little boy!

I looked over to my 2 year old, Zavier, and my dog, who were just staring at me open mouthed!! I cuddled our new baby as I rang our midwife to tell her our baby had arrived a little early!! At this point, my best friend came in the door with her two children. I yelled out for her not to panic, but that I had had the baby. She burst into tears and came running in. She helped me clean up, and also helped me back into the bathroom to birth the placenta. Just as I had finished our midwife flew in through the door. She helped untangle me. I was holding our baby and my placenta in an ice cream container! She took me into my room and helped to make me comfortable. She checked that me and my baby were ok, and then made me a well deserved cuppa and some food. My hubby made it around half an hour later to take his first peek at his brand new son.

It was the most amazing birth experience and I am so happy that I was able to share it with my son, that he was a part of watching his brother enter the world. It could have only been bettered by my husband being a part of it too! Our midwives from the Belmont service were so supportive of me throughout my pregnancy and



my birth (although over the phone!) and also during my postnatal care. It was such an amazing experience to have both my babies at home in our own comfortable environment. To be able to lay in my own bed with my baby and recover, to hop into my own shower, use my own toilet, and eat my own food!! We are so blessed here with the beautiful team at Belmont and the wonderful midwives that attend and care for women who birth in their home.

Rebekah Nutter is a 31 year old part time Fitness Instructor, full time mum from Newcastle.



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Azalea's Birth In

They say every birth is different. My third birth could not illustrate that more. I love the journey that each birth has taken me on and how I have grown, changed and been enriched by each experience.

So to tell this story, it would be relevant to give a quick synopsis of my first two experiences. Gracie, my sweet first, was my pregnancy that came on the back of infertility and pregnancy loss. In a nutshell, it was a pregnancy laced with anxiety, yet elation at expecting at last. I was terribly uncomfortable with intense and long-lasting morning sickness, sciatica and debilitating back pain. I chose an obstetrician who ultimately knew little about maximising my chances of a healthy pregnancy and good birth experience. At 40+ 4 weeks I had a very long posterior labour and at full dilation Gracie deflexed her head and a c-section was called for. The spinal block failed and I was put under general anaesthetic. I was thrilled with my gorgeous girl but a horrible recovery followed. I learned a lot about what not to do next time.

When Gracie was 17 months old I discovered I was pregnant again. Infertility clearly not an issue anymore! We were so happy. My husband and I undertook an amazing journey of educating ourselves about VBACs and employing a private midwife to either accompany us to the local birth centre or to support us in a home birth. During pregnancy I did some yoga exercises at home and walked a lot. I paid careful attention to my diet. We did the CalmBirth course and we felt so much better prepared this time! Ultimately, the home birth won out as we discovered that even the Birth Centre was not necessarily going to support my desire to have a VBAC the way I wanted to.

This little one was not keen to come out. We tried to coax it out when 41 weeks ticked by with acupuncture, herbs and a sweep of the membranes and finally at 42+ 1 my labour began. Another long and intense pre-labour and then 9 hours of established labour with hours of pushing in the bath and my adorable son Darcy, was born. He was rather big (4.2kg) so it was really hard work but I felt I had just won every gold medal in the world. It was just awesome!

And so the story of my third begins. I had learned more again about pregnancy and birth after Darcy came and once again, my fertility returned unaided and I discovered number three was on the way when he was about 20 months. This time we employed Jacqui Wood as our midwife, as our last midwife had retired.

I had been seeing a fabulous chiropractor, Bec Bowring, for a number of months before I found out I was pregnant and had been reading more and chatting to her about keeping in good condition during pregnancy and being even better prepared for a good birth. I continued to see her regularly in pregnancy and all the usual issues I had with back pain and sciatica just did not eventuate. I kept forgetting I was pregnant, I felt so good! I began going to pre-natal yoga classes at the Sydney Pregnancy Centre from around 25 weeks and tried to go twice a week for the rest of pregnancy. I felt fantastic and having that regular time out from my other children to just focus on this baby, breathe deeply and to stretch my body was beautiful.

At 36 weeks I saw a naturopath who had also had home births and she gave me lots of goodies including a labour tonic to start the process of ripening me up, ready for birth at full term or just beyond! I was not keen on waiting beyond 42 weeks again! I also started to see the acupuncturist at the Sydney Pregnancy Centre for a pre-birth course of treatments from 36 weeks to maximise my body's readiness for birth. All these things were also intended to make my labour more 'efficient'. I felt pretty fantastic for almost the whole pregnancy except for a few weeks towards the end when I got a nasty bout of sinusitis and even then, the acupuncturist and chiropractor sorted me out relatively quickly in clearing my aching head. I also had a bit of a shiatsu induction massage just after 40 weeks to ease my body and mind.

My baby engaged just before 39 weeks and sure enough 40 weeks



ticked by and then 41 weeks ticked by. I had lots of pre-labour during that time which was familiar to me and I didn't expect the baby to come before 41 weeks. I had a show the day before 41 weeks and hoped that it may be soon. But the bouts of pre-labour continued to tease me over days and by the 9th day past 40 weeks, I declared to my husband Luke that today must be the day after 5 hours of pretty constant but gentle pre-labour that morning. It was certainly not strong enough to even make me stop what I was doing but I was getting pretty over it and thought that it surely couldn't go on like this much longer.

Luke stayed home from work and we took our daughter to pre-school. As we arrived at pre-school I realised everything had stopped. Not a single twinge. I was discouraged and annoyed, to say the least. I felt I was wasting one of Luke's precious days off and wondered if I would still be waiting around with the tease of possible action in another week! Luke was so reassuring and in retrospect it was perfect having him home that day to keep my head together.

We went for a walk. I had a big cry. We came home and he gave me a massage and pressed all the acupressure spots the acupuncturist had shown us to try and get things moving and then I had a very restful sleep.

In the afternoon, my mum came to help with minding Gracie and Darcy. My birth-support friend Bek, called to check in with us. She suggested we make the most of my Mum being there and go out for a nice dinner. Genius! So we did. Luke chose one of our favourite fancy places to eat. I must have looked quite a sight at that size. The waitress was quite fascinated! During dinner I started to feel gentle but fairly long-lasting surges again. The surges were not enough to even stop me eating my delicious dinner, so thankfully I could enjoy a great night out with Luke. In the car on the way home it all stopped again. Mum had decided to stay the night and so we all went to bed at 10pm.

I slept so well and was deeply engrossed in a dream when, just after I am my dream and reality merged and I realised my membranes were rupturing through the bed! It was so gentle and a completely foreign experience for me, as in my previous labours the membranes broke right at the end of labour with much more of a 'pop!' I woke Luke and we got up for a bit but nothing was really happening.



The Fast Lane



We almost went back to bed and then decided we should set up the birth space first and then go back to bed. Mum got up and we told her what was happening (not much) and she went back to bed. I was kind of aware of fairly lengthy tightenings that were completely painless. I started timing them after a while and they were well over a minute in length and as close as 6 or 7 minutes apart but they were so strangely free of any sensation that I figured it was just pre-labour again. We pottered around for an hour chatting about strategies for labour and making the lounge room birth-friendly.

By 2:30am I was starting to feel more sensation in the surges and so we called Bek who had over an hour to drive, and let her know she could probably start coming, but no rush as I didn't feel much was really happening. The sensation was so different to my previous labours. I felt tension low down in my uterus and cervix at the front but not much in my back or bottom, which had been the dominant feeling in surges in my previous two labours. I text messaged a few friends who I had asked to pray for me and got a few more bits and pieces set up around the room, pausing every now and then to breathe through fairly tolerable surges.

At 3:10am, I was messaging one more friend and I got a couple of really strong surges and decided I should focus and that perhaps labour was beginning to establish. Luke got the hot towels ready for pain relief and we called Jacqui at 3:22am. It seemed to have gone from not much at all to strong quite quickly, but I was still functioning pretty well so I couldn't decide if I wanted Jacqui to come or not. I was speaking to her completely normally and said I would just time a few more surges and call her back to let her know if she should really come yet. She got up and had a shower while she waited to hear from us. At 3:38am after a number of quite strong surges, most of which we missed timing properly I said "Call Jacqui and tell her to come!" Luke did and in that one minute phone call I had a surge with a little push in there. In slight disbelief I said to Luke "That one was pushy!" Little did I know that Jacqui was saying to Luke on the other end of the phone "If she's getting a bit pushy now, I don't think I'm going to make it. If the baby comes, just remember, it is all about catching the baby." Jacqui was about a half hour drive away. Luke had only just started to fill the birth pool. Although Luke didn't pass Jacqui's comment on to me, after a couple more surges I knew Jacqui wasn't likely to make it as the pushiness became full-paced 2nd stage.

As I watched the water level gradually rise in the birth pool I began to lose my mind a little. Having had two labours that went on for ages, this one could not be more opposite! I suddenly had to get my head around the reality of a baby coming ready or not! I had one almighty surge where I felt the head moving right down and cried out "What are we going to do!?" My Mum heard me shouting that and came downstairs looking a bit bewildered. I was telling Luke to call a couple of other midwife friends in the area and Luke was saying calmly "Anna, they're not going to make it before Jacqui or Bek." Bek, although her role was birth support for us, is also a trained midwife.

I looked at the birth pool and although it wasn't quite filled to the fill-line, I decided that would be close enough and if I didn't get in now, I would miss my chance and I needed some kind of relief to

get my head back into gear. Just before 4am I somehow catapulted myself over the side of the pool and the beautiful warmth of the water over my pelvis brought me back to the 'zone'. In that instant I accepted that this baby was nearly here. I could hear Luke calling Bek on her mobile and discovering she was parking the car in our street.

During the next surge, Bek's face appeared in front of mine. I have never been so happy to see anyone in my whole life! In the meantime, Luke had got his board shorts on and jumped in the pool behind me. I called out "Get Gracie!" and Mum went and got our four-year-old out of bed but our two-year-old slept on! Mum and Gracie watched by the pool and Bek calmly instructed me to slow down the pushes and control my breathing to ease the baby out gently. Another totally foreign concept for me, based on my last two births with long and arduous second stages! Luke guided the baby out over a few pushes and Bek helped unwrap the cord from around her neck.

At 4:10am Luke officially 'caught' our third child and lifted her up out of the water and on to my chest as I turned around. She was in shock and Bek went straight to work rubbing the baby with a towel, checking the heart (great heartbeat) and getting her breathing. Bek was brilliant. Somewhere amidst that, someone noticed it was a girl! I double-checked in total amazement as it dawned on me, I had another daughter! "Woo hoo!" After a couple of minutes she took some good breaths and so did we! Mum went and woke my son and he came and joined us. I had a couple of surges for third stage and in walked Jacqui! She went straight to work, clamping the cord and guiding my Mum in cutting it, then helping with the somewhat stubborn delivery of the placenta. As blood loss seemed to be significant she and Bek got me up and out of the pool and on to the sofa swiftly to ensure the bleeding had slowed. It had, thank goodness, so we avoided the Syntocinon!

I was so pleased Jacqui had got there when she did. In one way we were kicking ourselves that we didn't call her earlier, but on the other hand we both really didn't think I was in real labour until we did call her. It took me a good day or two to really realise what had just happened. In the end, Luke and I both concluded that although it was a surprising experience in 'the fast lane', it was a truly amazing birth. The relative comfort and ease of delivering a 3.9kg baby was incredible and we both felt so connected and calm except for one small wobbly moment! I felt all my preparation and investment in various different therapies had been worthwhile and the birth of our little Zali was such a wonderful, positive chapter to add to my journey of birthing babies.

Anna Johnston-Buckle spends a large portion of her 24/7 being Mummy to Gracie (4.5), Darcy (2.5) and now Azalea (fresh new bubba). She shares the fun of parenting with her husband Luke, a social media addict who gets paid to be a social media manager. Anna is a Primary teacher on a long break from schools, but has worked with a small number of dyslexic children in the past few years, teaching them to read and write. She gets involved in various community roles, tries to quench her thirst for creative pursuits and cooks and bakes a lot because she loves a good feed.

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And Baby Makes Nine: Of Archie

The HBAAC Story Mcquire Wolfe

My greatest achievements in life are my nine gorgeous children. Each of the journeys that delivered them to me has been unique. With each new pregnancy my 'risk' status grew in the eyes of healthcare providers and I became more determined each time to have the birth I felt was not only my right, but was best for myself, my baby and my family.

My birth history is extensive. I have had eight hospital births. My first three were vaginal births (with interventions), the next four were c-sections (after 'failure to progress' diagnosis). Two of those c-sections were attempted vaginal birth after caesareans (VBACs), one was a 'forced' elective. My next birth was a successful VBA4C in hospital. This leads me to the birth story of my most recent little cherub.

This story starts during my second trimester. I had booked into John Hunter Hospital for my second VBA4C. I had birthed my two previous babies there with the last one being a VBAC. With this in mind, I expected to have my 'risk' level lowered and not be subjected to the same old restrictions while in labour. Unfortunately it wasn't to be. In fact more restrictions than ever were placed on me: continuous monitoring, no shower, water, laying on the bed and an epidural upon arrival. It was unacceptable that there was no room for negotiation. I began looking at my options.

I met my wonderful midwife at a VBAC support group when I was about 32 weeks. We got talking all things birth and one of us mentioned homebirth. It was always something I admired but never thought possible with my history. Lisa was very supportive. We met a few times and discussed the possibility of me home birthing in detail. After much toing and froing, research and discussion, I decided a water homebirth was the best option for another successful VBAC.

BAM! At 40 weeks and five days I'm awoken by a strong contraction at 4am. I get up and go to the bathroom to see if I'd had a show. Another strong contraction. Wow, this is it. We're having a baby today! First thought... 'Remind Rob to get Jasmine to surfing and kids to footy'. I wandered around a bit with contractions coming strong and regular. Second thought... 'Damn, didn't do groceries or fold the washing'. At 5am I texted midwife Lisa and doula Emma to let them know today was the day. I got the birth ball out and tried some rocking. After a while I felt a bit faint and had to lie down. I texted Lisa again at 6am to let her know and asked if she could come over.

When Lisa and Emma arrived I was leaning over the bed. I had started to get the dreaded backache that generally goes with my posterior babies. The girls were both encouraging me to move around and also had a hot water bottle on my back. I just wanted to get in the birth pool. Hubby Rob and the kids were putting it up as I was thinking it.

I don't know what the time was but finally the pool was ready. Oh My God, it was heaven! I was so worried that I wouldn't be comfortable in the water but it really helped ease the pain of the contractions. Some of my little ferals popped their heads in at some point to check out what was going on. I could hear the kids on and off all day as they kept themselves amused.

I was so tired. After five or six hours, sometime around 10am I guess, I asked Lisa to examine me. I didn't feel like I was getting anywhere



and wanted to know how dilated I was. 8cm, waters bulging... this was good. 7cm had always been my hoodoo number where everything stopped. I could do this, it wouldn't be much longer. 'Relax, release' I started thinking to myself. I was surrounded by lovely warm water. All I was missing was some drumming music and incense... LOL.

Things appeared to be slowing so Lisa and Emma helped me out of the pool and tried some rebozo while I was head down, bum up, on the floor. What an odd sensation and damn uncomfortable. Didn't like it at all! I got back into the pool and it still felt awesome and very relaxing. I had no idea of the time. I had so much backache and pressure in my bum.

After what seemed like an eternity of contractions I asked Lisa for another vaginal exam. I don't think she was keen. Maybe it was for the best. I didn't want to know if I wasn't making progress. There was no way I was transferring to hospital without it being an emergency. I could tough this out! I wonder aloud if the hospital would give me an epidural and let me leave? Hmm... probably not!

The next thing I recall is lying in bed with the electric blanket on and a TENS machine attached to me. It was dark. Where had the day gone? I felt like I had been labouring a long time yet I was still surprised when I realised how quickly the time had passed. I was comfy in bed and was sleeping between contractions. The TENS machine kept stopping so I didn't really use it much.

Emma, my doula, was a constant presence; whispering encouragement in my ear; getting me to drink her god awful labour concoction and generally making sure I was as comfortable as could be. I noticed something was going on and later learnt that Lisa was sick and had to call in her backup midwife. I was lying in bed when this stranger popped up and introduced herself as the backup. She'd scared the crap out of me... LOL. All I could think was, 'Poor Lisa, I hope she's ok. She's gonna be pissed she missed it!'

At some point Emma got me up to the toilet to help keep things moving. I was getting the urge to push with some contractions but it was excruciating. I had so much pressure on my back that I felt I would snap in two. I tried to stay on the toilet to open my pelvis but had to



stand and lean into Emma when a contraction came. I tried reciting the 'relax, release' mantra in my head. Stuff that crap, it wasn't helping! I leaned against the bed again with one leg up to open everything and help bub come down more. At some point I vomited in the shower. I had to get back in the pool. Finally the water was warm again and I got back in. Instant relief! It was around 11pm and I remember thinking our baby wouldn't arrive until Monday now. Surely this couldn't go on much longer. I was so tired and didn't want to keep going.

I asked the midwife for another vaginal exam. I was talking to bub, saying "Come on baby, it's time now". She examined me during a contraction while I pushed to see how far bub came down. The midwife said my waters broke but I know she helped it happen, bless her. There was no going back now. I tried pushing with contractions. I don't know if it was helping. Sometimes it was involuntary and I could feel bub move, other times it felt like nothing was happening. I was leaning over the edge of the pool on my knees.

All of a sudden I felt bub's head come down almost with a whoosh! It seemed to happen so quickly. When he started to crown I screamed. OMFG! I had never felt the 'ring of fire' quite like this. My contractions slowed and the pain was almost unbearable. This baby was going to rip me in two. I tried pushing without the help of contractions but it didn't work. Slowly bub's head made progress. "It's breech," I heard the midwife's surprised voice. What? "No, it's ok. It's just got big cheeks". What did this baby look like if you could mistake its face for its bum? LOL.

It seemed like forever but finally his head was out. The midwife asked if I wanted to touch it. No, it was too distracting, I had other things going on. I could feel him moving inside trying to position his little body. It hurt like hell!

After a while the midwife's voice became urgent. She told me to push harder. I was trying. "Push... again... harder." "I am!" I screamed. Emma and the midwife helped get me over the side of the pool to the floor. I had an enormous head between my legs and couldn't manage on my own. What an odd sight that must have been.

I was on all fours on the floor pushing as hard as I could. The midwife's voice was more demanding and urgent. "Push harder! Baby's turning

blue!" Fuck me, what was happening? She got me onto my back with my legs pushed back as far as possible. My hubby had called an ambulance but the midwife was still trying to get baby out. Next thing I knew he was out and she was talking to him, telling him to breathe. I kept asking if he was alright. I heard a cry... Thank God!

It was 2am on Monday 6th August 2012. My brand new baby was put on my chest. I was asking if it was a boy or girl. I couldn't lift bub high enough to see for myself. It was another boy! He was so very big and very pink! No wonder he got stuck. Everything seemed to be normal again. We were covered in a blanket. It was almost like there was no emergency. The midwife looked incredibly relieved. Someone woke the kids and all of a sudden we had an audience. They each had a little look at their new brother but couldn't nurse him as he was still attached to the placenta. After a little while they went back to bed.

I have no regrets about my homebirth. I am incredibly proud of myself and feel that I can achieve anything. I birthed a 12lb 4oz (5.56kg) baby after a 22hr labour without drugs and without tearing (thanks to the magical birth pool) after four previous c-sections. I feel complete. I finally had the birth that every woman should be able to experience. My body, my baby, my birth!

Gerri Wolfe is a working mum of nine gorgeous ferals (seven boys, two girls), ranging in age from 17 years to 13 weeks. Her partner in crime is Rob. After experiencing eight hospital births with varying satisfaction, Gerri recently accomplished her first homebirth (HBA4C). Through her own varied birth history, she is hoping to inspire other mummies to embrace the birthing process to achieve the births they want.

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Have you had a VBAC at home?

Would you be interested in being interviewed for a research study on why women VBAC at home?

For more information please contact Hazel Keedle on 17340162@student.uws.edu.au or phone 0408661503

Parker's

Birth Story



[Photos 2-5 By Anna Todd Photography]

My birth story is not only about the birth of our baby boy, it is also the birth of a woman.

Back in December 2011, I picked my word for 2012: Honour. What I didn't know was that this word was going to take on a different intention than its original. You see, originally I wanted to honour my body through nutrition - feed it healthy soulful foods. However, I fell pregnant and my body craved anything covered in fat, so honouring my body in the way I intended was not working for me.

My pregnancy saw me take a journey full of personal and spiritual growth where honour was always present. I was honouring myself, my inner child, my adult self and my parent self. The people-pleaser in me was being silenced and I was learning to honour and trust. I honoured our choice to have our baby at home. I mastered visualisation, trusted the universe and chose to only speak positive affirmations. I was unraveling. I found beauty in silence and discovered the beauty in me. I found me. I was enough, wholeheartedly enough.

On September 3rd 2012, once my eyes opened and the sun beamed through our window, I woke with a knowing that our baby would be born that day.

After the false alarm of the morning before, there was one belly picture I wanted to take. We all wandered down stairs and ate vegemite toast. I painted Mr Kypo and the kidlet's hands and they printed them on my belly. We all want to meet and touch our baby and this photo would represent that. I looked at my reflection in the mirror, my round beautiful belly with bright handprints on it. I was feeling our baby move and I was beaming. My whole pregnancy has been one of pure love.

The kidlets had the day off school and we went along our day like we would any other. I was feeling sensations all morning and as the day was getting on, they were getting stronger. By lunchtime we decided to walk down to the harbour and have some lunch. Stopping and breathing between sensations saw my babes touch me more and I could feel this electricity of love run through my body.

At the café, I was completely unaware of all the other diners, my awareness only on my breath, when I had to stand with each sensation. Then, as we were leaving the café, an old lady in the corner caught my eye and gave me a smile with a knowing of being where I was once upon a time.

I had in the back of my mind that it was coming up to 48 hours since my waters had broken and I knew what that meant. I was not going to call my midwives unless I was on my hands and knees and could not move. I didn't want another false alarm.

In the late afternoon the sensations were coming strong and fast. I spent most of the afternoon downstairs with the heat pack on my back or in the shower. What I was reassured most about

bliss. My unity was there for me emotionally, spiritually and loving. When they were unaware I would look at them. Drink them in.

I knew it was getting close to the time I needed to call my midwives. My body was telling me. I took my phone into the bathroom with me as I was timing sensations when Tanya, my midwife, called and was coming over. I was relieved to be honest. I walked upstairs, sprayed some of Mr Kypo's aftershave on my neck. It is my favourite and it also meant that wherever I am, I could smell him. He was on me.

When Tanya walked through my 'Red Tent' I knew. I knew there would be talk of risk due to the length of time my waters had been broken. I knew I could possibly have to go to the hospital. I knew I wanted her to examine me and see how far dilated I was but, what I absolutely deeply knew was that I was going to birth our baby at home. Our baby knew it; I knew it and I felt safe.

Tanya examined me. I was 4cm dilated and, like she had thought, my hind waters had broken. This meant that my forewaters had not broken. With my permission Tanya broke my forewaters. As the warm water leaked out down my legs I was smiling with elation. It was getting close.

My sensations were now as strong and intense. With everyone I concentrated on my breathing; in - two, three, four. Out- two, three, four. With the intensity I visualised my uterus being the colour ruby red, like Dorothy's shoes in *The Wizard of Oz*. If I kept visualising this beautiful red I knew the uterus was getting the blood it needed to contract our baby out.

With every sensation I needed Mr Kypo to rub my back. Once his hands touched me I would surrender. I gravitated to the corner of our dining room table where I could lean. My legs started to tense and I knew in that moment I was allowing fear to creep in and I needed to affirm and bring myself back to visualising a ruby red uterus and concentrate on my breathing. Tanya guided me to lean over the lounge. It was then I knew I needed to get into the bath.

The kidlets had been asking over the day if they could hire a movie they had already hired some time ago. I kept responding with no until they caught me at the right time and I finally said yes. Upstairs they went to watch the movie. I heard the patter of their feet going up the stairs together and I wondered if they were ok being up there together and were they scared knowing I was downstairs preparing to birth their brother? I wanted to hold them, tell them that I love them very much and how proud I am of them. Change was coming; I was giving them a brother.

Once I glided into the bath I felt an instant sense of peace. My body was immersed in warmth. I was in heaven. I floated, I felt light and I felt invincible.

I could feel our baby making his way down. I was aware of everything. The light of the room, the smell of our home and the love I felt

from everyone in the room. To me it was as if there was a cloud in our home filled with unconditional love and support. Whilst I was feeling this love cloud, I was snapped back into the moment when the lamp next to the bath globe went. Mr Kypo swapped the lamps over, as we didn't have another globe. He just put the lamp down. I began to feel agitated. It was not in the right place. I started directing him to where it needed to be placed - in between sensations was a little difficult and that is when Sheryl, my other midwife, stepped in and guided Mr Kypo. It was hilarious. It was as if time slowed down and allowed me to observe, laugh and chat.

Mr Kypo asked to bring the kidlets down, although I was unsure. I didn't want to control, scare them or them feel as though I was in pain. Breathing deeper I looked up and there they were. Sitting on our lounge together smiling and any insecurity I had dissolved. They were what I needed to stay focused and be present. With both my midwives on either side of me, it was time.

I asked the kidlets to come and kiss me. I remember each of their embraces so clearly. There was my beautiful girl. Soft lips kissed me and my hand that gripped her at the base of her head said "Thank you for being beautiful you". I told her I loved her. My gorgeous boy, filled with excitement, put his hand on my face as he always does and kissed me. It was his kiss that told me "You can do this Mama". As he walked over to Mr Kypo, who had a smile on his face and brown eyes that disarm me, it was then our baby's head was coming.

I was doing it, really doing it. Breathing our baby out calmly. My midwives held my hands and spoke words of encouragement and praise. I did it. The universe sent me two remarkable women who gave me, in their touch and words, what I needed. My body was electrified.

As I was breathing our baby out, I heard my sweet boy say "I can see his head Mama". My beautiful girl's eyes were wide open and she was smiling. I breathed him out some more to hear my gorgeous boy tell everyone in the room it looked like a rock. "I didn't want it to end", I said out loud.

Leading up to our birth I was scared to touch his head as it was coming out. When I could feel his head emerging, a big part of me wanted to touch it, another part scared. Tanya guided my hand without words into the water and all I could feel was hair. His hair was swishing in the water. I was smiling. Another breath and his head was out.

This was the moment I had been visualising, delivering our baby and bringing him to my chest. I could no longer wait. Once his shoulders were out I reached down and scooped him up. As I lifted him to me we locked eyes. He had joy in them and mine mirrored his. We were in love. I held him to my chest taken over with emotion, only to be able to articulate, "I did it. We did it."

I looked at my two gorgeous babes and I cannot describe what I saw in their eyes. I know they were in love with their

brother and I know they were unbelievably proud of their Mama. The look they shared with me will stay forever.

Our baby was alert and present. He was looking around drinking in the faces he was matching to the voices that were so familiar to him. My babes and Mr Kypo came to me. Mr Kypo's kiss was so unbearably soft and gentle, I craved more. The kids' kisses were so infectious, I wanted more. I had all my loves with me.

My sweet boy cried. He told us they were happy tears while his sister had her arm around him for protection. He thanked the midwives for being there for me. He told me I was amazing.

I did it. I delivered our baby at home. It was organically raw, absolutely beautiful and completely sacred.

Welcome Parker Quinn.

Belinda Kapryotis is a thirty-five year old proud woman.

Her daily life is filled with being a wife, a mama, running her two Kindergartens and her Photography business. She has always had a hunger to write and a love for words. If you would like to know more, she writes daily musings over at www.billyandaugust.com

Intuition In Midwifery Study

Privately Practising Midwives are invited to participate in a university research study about the use of intuition in their professional practice.

My name is Fiona Reid and I am doing a Master of Midwifery Research (Honours) study on private midwives use of intuition in their practise.

If you are : a private midwife currently registered with AHPRA, have been practising for more than 3 years, have more than 5 clients a year and have attended births within the last 3 years, you are cordially and enthusiastically invited to give me an hour of your time for an interview about your use and understanding of Intuition.

All details relating to the interview material will be kept strictly anonymous. If you are willing to participate, please contact Fiona Reid at: dandfreid@bigpond.com Thank you.

The HBAC



At 12 weeks pregnant I began planning my hospital VBAC with the community midwives. I enlisted a student doula and began going to prenatal yoga. I also started going to a VBAC support group, where I met the wonderful homebirth midwife, Lisa, who was later to deliver our baby (I just didn't know it yet!).

The hospital seemed very encouraging of my VBAC plans, so I was very confident that I would get the natural birth I wanted. Unfortunately, after two borderline tests for gestational diabetes I was transferred to high-risk clinic care. I was no longer allowed the care of the community midwives. I was also restricted by hospital policy regarding the use of water during the labour and birth and 'compulsory' use of a foetal monitor.

At 33 weeks I could no longer fight for my natural birth, and I didn't believe I should have to fight at all. Under the care of my doula I meditated and asked my baby where she should be born and I received a very obvious "At home" message. After lengthy discussions with my husband, we decided to meet Lisa to discuss our options and, at 34 weeks, we began our homebirth planning.

During the final six weeks of my pregnancy I had one appointment a week with Lisa; each one was as encouraging as the next. It felt natural, normal and safe. I really started to believe that we'd have our baby at home. I had a mini-blessingway, belly henna, made placenta plans and got ambulance cover – just in case! We didn't tell many people about our change of plans and it felt nice that it was private and just for us.

On June 14th, my actual due date, I was woken at 3am with mild contractions. I continued to doze until 6am when I sent a text to Lauren and Lisa saying that I was feeling mild contractions and that today seemed like a nice day to have a baby.

Later that morning we sent our two and a half year old son to day-care as usual and I packed a bag for him to spend a day or two at Nana's house. Then I had a good breakfast of eggs and toast. I knew my parents were returning home from their two week cruise that day and that my mum could stay at my nana's to help if need be. Subconsciously I think I was waiting for my mum to get home before having our baby. I knew she was worried about the homebirth and I wanted her to know we were okay. I also wanted her to help my 81 year old nana with our two year old!

I had been planning my post-birth meals for a few weeks, and at 10am I put the beef and red wine casserole in the slow cooker.

I wanted this to be my first 'real meal' after the birth. At 11am I was tired of having contractions that didn't seem to be doing anything and so I took a nap while listening to my Calm Birth CD.

I woke up and had left over chicken soup for lunch. I also cooked a groaning cake for post-birth 'birth-day' celebrations. All day I had been drinking water, walking, napping, eating, cooking... and contractions continued on and off, getting regular and then dropping off again so once again I went to bed and took a nap, this time listening to Shamanic Drums.

When I woke I was quite disheartened that I felt my contractions had stopped again and that I wasn't progressing... the last remaining fears from my first birth were coming to the surface to be dealt with. My husband, Matt, had said he heard me have two contractions while I was sleeping but I didn't believe him. Who sleeps through contractions?

At about 4pm I spoke with Lauren and she helped me verbalise my fears about not progressing. I had a bit of a cry and she reminded me to trust myself and my baby. Then Lisa came for our 40 week visit and I had another little cry. She checked the baby's position and assured me that she was not posterior (another fear which stemmed from the first birth) and we were all perfectly prepared for the birth.

During her visit, my parents returned from their cruise and were at our place picking up their car. I could feel my contractions becoming more regular and a bit more intense but I was still not convinced. I was sure they would drop off again and that I'd be in pre-labour for days!

Everyone left at around 6pm and this is when my labour really kicked in. I recall having a few quite intense contractions and wondering why Matt was in the kitchen cooking sausages and chicken chippees... each contraction was obvious by my verbalisations and he would come running from the kitchen and put pressure on my lower back. The verbalisations I practised at yoga were amazing at helping me through each contraction and the counter pressure on my back reduced the intensity by about 50 per cent.

At some point I allowed a chicken chippee into my mouth and regretted it and I then remember thinking "why did I let Lisa go home... and why haven't I called Lauren yet?!"

My husband called Lauren and she was at our place within 20 minutes. It was about 7pm and things were getting serious. I was labouring in the bathroom, which came in handy when I had to use the toilet! Lauren made me a labour aid drink but I think I was already too deep

Story of Ruby Jane Ash

in my labour to appreciate it. I kept sipping water but only because someone kept shoving a straw in my mouth, thank you 'someone'!

I was in transition and I felt completely out of control, yet completely in control at the same time. I had previously given myself permission to let go and just surrender to the process, so essentially I

did not need to be in control. This is kind of where my memory gets hazy and I thank the birth gods for labour hormones!

I hopped in the shower and put my head right in the corner against the tiles and, as I verbalised my "Ohms" "Haas" and "Ohhs", I could feel the humming vibrations all around me. I remember thinking "yay for wall to wall tiling and its wonderful acoustics" although I'm sure my neighbours disagreed!

Somewhere around this point Lisa came back... although I have no recollection of who called her. I knew she had arrived but her arrival was so peaceful and quiet that I barely noticed. She was simply listening to me labour. I'm sure she also came and checked the baby's heart rate at some point... but I don't recall. I do know that in the midst of transition when I almost lost it completely she laid a quiet hand on me and made me feel like everything was going to be alright.

It was about 9.20pm when my water broke with a very distinct 'pop' and, amongst the labour haze, I was able to stop and say "my water just broke!" It was a very exciting moment for me as it didn't happen in my first birth and it made my experience feel different and positive.

I knew the pool was full and Matt had suggested we go to it a couple of times but during transition this just felt like too much. I wasn't sure I could have a contraction in the hallway without having a complete meltdown... so I waited. During each contraction Matt had stayed by my side and now, during transition, he stayed by my side, using counter pressure, encouragement and breathing with me to help me stay focused. His unwavering support is etched in my mind forever.

Although I didn't know it at the time my contractions had changed and I was getting 'pushy'. It was at this point I felt ready to get in the pool. So I did the walk... and as soon as I got one leg in the pool I jumped in. Lauren had done the most wonderful job of completing our birth space with aromatherapy, music, candles and, most of all, her divine presence and belief in me.

As soon as my body was immersed in water I felt the haze lift, transition was over and I was pushing. Each contraction was an opportunity to help bring my baby into the world and I wasn't going to waste a single one. My yogic chanting had had its time and was gone. In its place was a raw and powerful noise that came from deep within. I felt like a lioness roaring for her cub.

After a few pushes I realised that I had no idea how dilated I was... another fear creeping in... I stopped and said something along the lines of "I'm pushing. Am I pushing? I think I'm pushing. Should I be pushing yet?" A simple nod from Lisa was enough to help me realise that this was going to happen and that I simply needed to trust my body and go with it... and back to being a lioness!

I don't recall the pushing being painful at all. I remember the pool being replenished with hot water from the pots on the stove... the smoke alarm going off from having too many pots on the stove... not letting Matt go to fix the alarm because I

would not let him out of the bear grip... then one tiny little sting – one little tear – and she began to descend.

Slowly, during each contraction, I felt the head of my little girl move down and back up again, slowly stretching the space. My pushes got stronger as her head moved further down. I even felt my pelvic bones readjust to make more room and I roared "Open" to encourage this movement.

I also remember stopping at some point to say "I can so totally do this!"

A short, or long, time later (time had no meaning), her head emerged, and I took a little break. Then in a couple more pushes her body was born. Although we had planned for Matt to catch her I was reluctant to release him from my grip and so our wonderful midwife Lisa brought her to my chest and I breathed her in, taking in everything I could.

Ruby Jane Ash was born at home into water at 10.34pm, 14th June 2012, weighing 3.9kgs (8 pound 8 ounces) and 52cms long.

The placenta followed about 45 minutes later and Lauren made a few simple prints onto paper. We followed that up with some lovely skin to skin time, breastfeeding and then a big glass of milk a huge piece of groaning cake.

By 2am we were all tucked safely into our bed and our house was quiet again...

Nicole Ash moved to Newtown, NSW to start her primary teaching degree in 2006 and there she met her partner Matthew. In the four years it took her to complete her degree they had dated, become engaged, got married and had their first child Jackson in October 2009. Nicole had planned a natural water birth in the hospital. Unfortunately, her natural birth plans were not to be and his birth was via emergency caesarean. Healing was difficult and she still yearned for a natural birth.



We have been very busy socially in the last three months. Check out the events we have been involved in organising or attended:

September 20 - Film Premiere: Freedom For Birth

Freedom For Birth is a documentary which centres around Hungarian midwife Agnes Gereb who has been jailed and is currently under house arrest for attending homebirths in her home country where it is illegal. One of her clients Anna Tchernovsky took the Hungarian government to court for violations of Human Rights for restricting her access to a professional to attend her during birth at home, and she won! This film highlights the human rights abuses that happen during childbirth to women all around the world as the medical establishment monopolises women's birth choices, and has some great interviews with birth experts including our own Dr Sarah Buckley, Prof. Hannah Dahlen and Prof. Sally Tracy.

After hearing about the Freedom For Birth film and the goal of having 1000 screenings worldwide on the premiere release date of September 20, I skyped with Toni Harman, the UK producer and organised a discount for the DVDs (\$50 > \$35) for purchasing numerous copies. I then rallied up some volunteers in all the homebirth support groups that we list, to have a premiere screening of the film in their local area. We offered a deal that if they held a screening cohosted by HAS, we would pay for the DVD upfront, make up a poster for them to advertise it and an event on our Facebook page to promote it, then it was up to them to do the rest, and then pay us back within two weeks after the film. We ended up having ten premiere screenings on the world wide release date of September 20 between the Central Coast, Sydney, Blue Mountains and the Southern Highlands. Unfortunately I cannot give you any idea of total numbers as most of the screeners did not get back to me with any figures or follow up reports. The one that I organised in Gynea in the Sutherland Shire got 19 people in total. We had a raffle to fundraise for Birth Kit but unfortunately only just made back our outlay. After the film there was a panel with myself, local independent midwife Betty Vella and independent childbirth educator Julie Clarke of Transition To Parenthood. It was a stimulating discussion which highlighted the need for women to educate themselves with independent antenatal classes, hire a doula and write a positively worded birth plan when planning on birthing in hospital.



October 12 - Childbirth and The Law forum

I was given the opportunity to attend the Childbirth and The Law forum which was organised by Homebirth Australia and chaired by the funny Catherine Deveney. Elizabeth Prochaska from the UK was the keynote speaker and is the Human Rights Lawyer who successfully won the case for her client Anna Tchernovsky (vs Hungary), as portrayed in the Freedom For Birth film. It was really fascinating to hear her speak and talk about that case as well as other cases where women's rights during childbirth have been outrageously infringed upon in Europe and the UK. The other speaker was John Seymour, an Australian lawyer, who spoke about whether women have the rights or whether they have the freedom to birth at home in the case of having risk factors. He referred often to the South Australian case of a "homebirth advocate" who was involved in three baby deaths during homebirths. I found it disturbing that the person whom he referred to was sitting in the audience and had no recourse to reply or defend herself.

Afterwards there were two separate panels with numerous birth professionals and academics who were presented with hypothetical case studies of women with high risk factors. The first panel was on Regulation and Rights which was a discussion about the role of regulation in supporting and restricting women's choices and the role of regulation in protecting the public and the unborn baby. The second panel was about Birth with Risk Factors and a discussion about childbirth when a woman has identified risk factors such as Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (VBAC), twins and breech birth and whether women with risk factors are able to make genuine choices and informed decisions across all settings – hospital, birth centre and home.

Panels included Prof. Hannah Dahlen who always articulates herself so well, as well as obstetrician Dr Andrew Bisits and Professor of Foetal Medicine Alec Walsh who are two of the good guys in the obstetric world in Australia! Other standouts included HAS members past and present Bashi Hazard and Dr Rebecca Dunlop who as homebirth consumers as well as specialists in their fields of medicine and law respectively were valuable additions to the panel and told of their different birth experiences – Bashi who came to HBAC after negative experiences with obstetric hospital care that led her to two caesareans, and Rebecca who homebirthed in the UK under the NHS then in Australia with a private midwife.

October 21 - HAS Annual Picnic

Homebirth Awareness Week was from 22nd to 28th October and this year we decided to hold our annual picnic on Sunday 21st October, rather than in February or March as it has been in past years, so we could capitalise on the celebration. We also changed locations from Glebe to Petersham, in the hope that being a little further west might be more central to attract more people.

I was the first to arrive with my kidlets and waited 45 minutes for the next person – apparently the Facebook event invite had somehow changed to an hour later (maybe due to daylight savings?). Anyway we ended up with about seven families altogether – a little disappointing we didn't get more after all the advertising we did to push it but I know that Sundays can be a tricky one to have people free. Regardless, it was a lovely day with perfect weather and a beautiful spot by the playground, hanging out with other homebirthers, some old and some new.



October 26 - Film preview: Birth Story

Later that week, on Friday October 26, we held another homebirth film screening. This time it was a documentary about Ina May Gaskin and The Farm midwives called 'Birth Story'. We paid \$200 for the rights to have a preview screening and held it at Arncliffe Community Centre which is where we hold our committee meetings.

We had 22 people in total come along, which we were hoping for more and thought that it would be a popular film that some midwives would like to come and see, but surprisingly no midwives came along. Maybe it was a busy night for birthing, or it was too far for them to come. Anyway, it was a fantastic film and by far my favourite birth documentary I've ever seen. We held a raffle which prizes were generously donated by some local businesses and HAS advertisers. We also had some food provided by the HAS committee which we took donations for, and a table of HAS merchandise. Fortunately we made our money back and about \$200 more but more importantly, everyone loved the film as much as I did. We are thinking of holding another screening next year for those who missed out so we will let you know when we confirm details.



02 August 2012 CORONER HEARS THAT HOME-BIRTH MIDWIFE OBSTRUCTED HOSPITAL DELIVERY

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/coroner-hears-that-homebirth-midwife-obstructed-hospital-delivery-20120802-23h70.html>

KATE Thurgood had had three children by caesarean section before deciding to have her fourth at home. Tragically, her baby boy died after she was rushed to hospital when the home birth went wrong. Coroner Kim Parkinson said yesterday she would be investigating the circumstances and cause of death of Joseph Thurgood-Gates at the Monash Medical Centre in December 2010. "Whilst this is an inquest and not an inquiry into home birthing in general, the issue of birthing arrangements and management in this case will necessarily be considered," Ms Parkinson told the Coroners Court. "Also considered will be the circumstances of the delivery and post delivery management at the hospital."

07 August 2012 MIDWIFE DENIES SHE DELAYED TAKING MOTHER TO HOSPITAL DURING UNSAFE HOME BIRTH

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/mdwife-denies-she-delayed-taking-mother-to-hospital-during-unsafe-homebirth/story-e6frg6nf-1226444836148>

A MIDWIFE who took part in an attempted home birth has denied she delayed taking the mother to hospital when the baby's heart rate fell, despite medical opinion that her actions represented "gross mismanagement" in the events leading to the baby's death.

08 August 2012 HOME BIRTH WAS LOW RISK, MUM TELLS INQUEST

<http://www.smh.com.au/victoria/home-birth-was-low-risk-mum-tells-inquest-20120808-23t56.html>

A woman who deeply wished to have a home birth for her fourth child, after having two prior caesarean births at hospital, has told a coronial inquest into her baby's death that she believed a natural home birth would be low risk. Kate Thurgood yesterday said that it was always her desire to have her baby naturally at home, believing it was the healthiest option for both her and her child.

10th August 2012 NEW HOME BIRTH RULE OUTRAGES DOCTORS

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/new-homebirth-rule-outrages-doctors/story-e6frf7kx-1226447880297>

MIDWIVES will now be able to deliver babies at home without the permission of a doctor, giving pregnant women better access to Medicare rebates. Doctors are outraged at the decision, which they have labelled "dangerous and unexpected", while midwives have welcomed the move.

14th August 2012 MOTHERS GIVEN BIRTHING CHOICE

<http://www.byronnews.com.au/news/mothers-given-a-choice/1503614/>

GIVING BIRTH at home may not be every mother's cup of tea, but having the choice should be their right according to new mum Bronwyn Moir. The new mum and midwife said an agreement between state and federal health ministers would assist expecting mothers to access a range of birthing options rather than just those in the hospital system. Last week federal and state health ministers agreed to extend the professional indemnity insurance exemption for privately practising midwives and agreed to vary the determination on collaborative arrangements required of midwives.

01 September 2012 BEYOND THE BATTLE OVER BIRTH

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/beyond-the-battle-over-birth/story-e6frg8y6-1226462709148>

"Six to seven babies die in Australia every single day, and the vast majority do so in hospital," says Dahlen, who is also an associate professor in midwifery at the University of Western Sydney. "Most of them you'll never hear about. But not a single baby dies in a home birth without it becoming a media story often reported in hysterical, soap opera-like terms. "If we put the details of those six or seven babies dying in hospital every day into the newspaper, we would all be terrified of hospitals. But we know that's erroneous. The thing is, it's just as erroneous to be terrified of home birth."

09 September 2012 NO MOTHER OR UNBORN CHILD DESERVES THE RISK OF A HOME BIRTH

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/no-mother-or-unborn-child-deserves-the-risk-of-a-home-birth-20120908-2515d.html>

"Currently the home-birth debate focuses on deaths. It is a terrible tragedy that Claire and the Australian babies discussed died foreseeably and avoidably. But the silent tragedies are not the deaths, but the long-term disability that often does not make the news that results from home birth. And it is this risk that weighs most heavily against home birth. Women should not consider having a home birth unless their pregnancies are low risk. But low risk is not no risk. We do not know how much home birth risks severe, avoidable long-term disability because there aren't good figures."

19 September 2012 HOME BIRTH ADVOCATE SPEAKS LIVE ON AIR WHILE IN LABOUR

<http://blogs.abc.net.au/victoria/2012/09/home-birth-advocate-speaks-live-on-air-while-in-labour.html>

ABC Ballarat and South West Victoria Mornings almost witnessed the birth of a child this morning. Home birth advocate Dominique Quirke began experiencing contractions at around 2am last night. She spoke to Prue Bentley live on air at 8.35am. Ms Quirke has had three girls; the first was born in hospital while the next two were born in a bathtub at her Port Fairy home. Ms Quirke is again choose to go drug-free at home for the birth of her fourth child. "I just feel that its every woman's right to choose where and how they give birth," Ms Quirke said.

01 October 2012 HOME BIRTH MAY BE SAFER THAN HOSPITAL BIRTH, SAYS NEW REVIEW

<http://www.inquisitr.com/350044/home-birth-may-be-safer-than-hospital-birth-says-new-review/>

"For women with low risk pregnancies whose home birth is planned with an experienced midwife available and with medical back up ready in case of the need for emergency medical transport, there is no strong evidence either to support or to disfavor home birth over hospital birth. Additionally, women who give birth at home have 20 to 60 percent fewer interventions including cesarean sections, inductions and augmentations, and epidurals than women who give birth in a hospital. Each medical intervention, although potentially life-saving, increases the risk for complications during the labor and birth."

03 October 2012 BARBIE'S HOME BIRTH EXPERIENCE

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/7775205/Barbies-home-birth-experience>

Barbie has become a mum, thanks to self-described "birth-junkie" and US photographer Katie Moore. Moore, who runs a photography company called Beach Birth Photography, wanted to show a positive home birth experience. So she photographed Barbie, long-time love Ken and a midwife doll in a series of birth photos, telling the story of their expanding family.



16 October 2012 MIDWIVES FACE LEGAL UNCERTAINTY FOR HOME BIRTHS (THE LAW REPORT ABC RADIO NATIONAL PODCAST)

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lawreport/child-birth/4310134>

The focus of child birth is on the safe birth of the baby and the wellbeing of the mother. But with legal consequences hanging over the head of medical professionals, is the community's aversion to risk compromising a woman's ability and right to make an informed choice about where and how she will give birth?

22 October 2012 IS CHILDBIRTH ORGASMIC? I THINK NOT, SHEILA KITZINGER

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/9621204/Is-childbirth-orgasmic-I-think-not-Sheila-Kitzinger.html>

"Too many women end up giving birth in a roomful of people, which doesn't make for an intimate experience," says Kitzinger. "If they crowded around when you were making love, you wouldn't have many orgasms then either, would you?" She has an impish gleam in her eye, and I can't help but smile, although I suspect stipulating sexual ecstasy in your birth plan might be taking feminism a bit too far. Would reading Kitzinger's book before my second baby have changed my view of childbirth? If I'm honest, no. I was too damaged. But I do wish I'd called her Birth Crisis helpline. She says she would have recommended that I seek out the services of an independent midwife, not just to care for me, but to be my advocate. I had fully intended to be in control when I brought my babies into the world, but having ceded a little power, I somehow lost it all. And looking back I realise that sometimes what women truly need in childbirth isn't drugs, but a voice. A voice a little like Sheila Kitzinger's, perhaps."

25 October 2012 WARNING OVER HOME BIRTH RISK

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/breaking/15212139/warning-over-homebirth-risk/>

Doctors have renewed their warnings about the risk of homebirths after a WA woman was taken to hospital last week with life-threatening bleeding after giving birth at home. Australian Medical Association WA vice-president Michael Gannon, an obstetrician, said the case highlighted his belief there was no such thing as a low-risk pregnancy and homebirths endangered the lives of women and their babies.

PRE-NATAL SERVICES

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Email: counsellor@doula.net.au

www.rebeccagouldhurst.net.au

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Birth Art Group, Prenatal Counselling, Hypnosis and Creative Preparation for Pregnancy Wellbeing and Positive Birthing.

For group details and individual sessions please phone Jacki:

90433079 or 0419286619

ackichip@internode.on.net

North Shore / Northern Beaches

HEATHER CRAWFORD

Acupuncturist + Midwife

Please see my listing under "Birthing services: Midwives"

Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine for fertility, pregnancy and postnatal home visits.

Crows Nest Ph: 0423 171 191

Manly Ph: 02 9977 7888

heather@heathercrawford.com.au

www.heathercrawford.com.au

Sutherland / St George

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The calmbirth® course imparts the knowledge of birth preparation techniques such as deep relaxation, visualisation, breathing, positive imagery, attitudes/expectancy to achieve a rewarding, easier, more comfortable stress-free birthing experience. Julie Clarke is an experienced homebirther. Many women who have done the calmbirth® course during their pregnancy are far more likely to have positive feelings about their birthing experience. Their partners and midwives are quite often very impressed with how beautifully they've worked with their body during the labour.

For enquiries of dates and available times and bookings phone 95446441 - available weekends, weekdays, evenings. Visit: www.julieclarke.com.au see website for dates and discount.

Special note: Julie's calmbirth® course is very reasonably priced.

Mobile: 0401265530 / 9544 6441.

9 Withybrook pl. Sylvania (20mins south of airport).

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Herbal Medicine, Nutrition & Birth Support

I have a very personal interest in treating preconception, pregnancy and children's health, naturally. With some help from herbs and nutrition, my partner and I prepared our bodies' health naturally for conscious conception, and I enjoyed 2 trouble free pregnancies, and gave birth at home to my 2 healthy, full term baby boys and they continue to enjoy perfect health. You too can benefit from my experience in natural health care.

I can assist you with:

- ~ preconception health and natural fertility
- ~ preparing for a healthier baby
- ~ overcoming health conditions, (including during pregnancy)
- ~ preparing your body and mind for a better birth
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- ~ treating your children's health naturally
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Natural Pregnancy, Birth and Post-Natal Kits also available which make great gifts for the expectant or new Mum!

Virginia Maddock

Herbalist, Nutritionist & Doula

0415683074. 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah 2229

www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

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Active Birth and Newborn Care Courses

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Julie has a great sense of humour and a very gentle approach, she is regarded as one of the most inspirational educators in Sydney. Good variety of courses to choose from: 8 wk evening course 1 night per week, or 2 full Saturdays condensed or 1 full Sunday super condensed.

Julie is a unique birth educator who also provides post natal in home baby care support service exclusively to the couples who have attended her courses.

Julie Clarke / julie@julieclarke.com.au / Mobile: 0401265530

Landline: (02)9544 6441

Southern Highlands

PREGNANCY WORKSHOPS

Midwife Jane Hardwicke Collings gives regular workshops – "Pregnancy The Inner Journey" – in the Southern Highlands and in other places by arrangement. As well as "The School of Shamanic Midwifery" – a women's mysteries school for doulas and midwives

Jane Hardwicke Collings

48882002, 0408035808

janecollings@bigpond.com

www.moonsong.com.au

www.placentaremedy.com

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Conscious birth preparation - for birthing projects, babies, a new sense of self... for evolution. Explore primary relationships, gestational experiences, generational patterns, and how our own entry to life impacts our flow of love, birth of babies and experience of life.

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I'm happy to offer Birth/Postpartum services; I trained through ADC and hold Cert 4 in Doula Services.

I offer support and encouragement to families during pregnancy, labour and birth. No matter where you choose to birth, at home, in hospital or at a birth centre. I can tailor a doula package to suit you. Feel free to contact me for Doula or Placenta encapsulation services.

Amanda Macdonald (Certified Birth/Postpartum Doula)

P: 0431892458

E: adoula4you@gmail.com

www.adoula4you.com.au

NATURAL BEGINNINGS

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As a homebirth mum, I have the experience and trust in natural birth to be your ideal birth support, whether you choose to birth at home, in hospital or birth centre.

As a natural therapist, I have the resources to assist you with reiki massage, herbs and flower essences in case the journey of labour becomes difficult.

As an ex-nanny, I can help look after older siblings so that Mum can focus on birthing, Dad can focus on Mum, and older sister or brother can still feel important and included in the process, without fear.

My birth package includes 2 prenatal visits, birth support incl. herbs/flower essences and reiki massage, follow up visit to debrief, and a beautifully presented photo book of your birth for you to keep.

Natural Pregnancy, Birth and Post-Natal Kits also available which make great gifts for the expectant or new Mum.

Virginia Maddock

Herbalist, Nutritionist & Doula

9501 0863

5 Balfour Ave Caringbah 2229

www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

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There are many benefits that come with encapsulation. It's my pleasure to offer this service with a range of products listed below:

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Placenta Tincture

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Feel free to contact me to discuss your requirements, for this healthy use of your placenta.

I also offer Doula packages, please see Doula listings.

Amanda Macdonald (Placenta Encapsulation Specialist)

P: 0431892458

E: adoula4you@gmail.com

www.adoula4you.com.au

NATURAL BEGINNINGS

Doula, herbalist and nutritionist Virginia Maddock is now offering placenta encapsulation in the St George and Sutherland shire areas, to give back what your body has lost after birth. The placenta can be ingested in a palatable way once it is dried and encapsulated, to nourish your body and replace nutrients and hormones that will help with post natal bleeding, mood regulation, breast milk production and energy boosting.

I can also make your placenta into a tincture to be taken by you or your baby for years to come, create a beautiful tree of life artwork, have the cord dried into a heart or spiral shape keepsake, and make a placenta salve infused with herbs and essential oils for many skin conditions. Please see my website for more information and prices.

Virginia Maddock 0415683047 Virginia@naturalbeginnings.com.au

www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

THE NURTURED BEBE

For ten moons your placenta nourished, supported and grew your precious bebe. Once you have welcomed your bebe earthside, your placenta can still continue to nourish both of you. The most common benefits of placentophagy include;

~ Reduced risk of postpartum depression

~ Increasing breastmilk supply

~ Replenish iron stores

~ Assisting recovery post-partum

~ Reducing the length of postpartum bleeding

~ Increasing general wellbeing in both mother and bebe

I offer a variety of services including encapsulation, tinctures and salves as well as mementos such as artwork and dried cord keepsakes.

Alicia Langlands 0400684464

www.thenurturedbebe.com.au

info@thenurturedbebe.com.au

HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH PROGRAMS

BELMONT MIDWIFERY GROUP PRACTICE HOMEBIRTH PROGRAM

Our service provides individualised women centred continuity of care throughout pregnancy, birth and for two weeks postnatally.

Healthy women have the choice to birth at home if they are within 30 mins to our supporting hospital, John Hunter Hospital (New Lambton Heights in the Hunter/New England area).

For further information contact Kelley Lennon: 49232291

ST GEORGE HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH SERVICE

This public health service is available to women in the St George and Sutherland Shire area. Continuity of care is provided by two midwives throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

For further information, call the Birth Centre on 9113 3103.

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH SERVICE

This public health service is available to women in the Helensburgh to Kiama region. Continuity of care is provided by two midwives throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

Contact the Antenatal Clinic on 42534256 and ask to book in with the Midwifery Group Practice (MGP). Your details will be taken down and MGP will return your call.

Homebirth Access Sydney provides a list of midwives currently offering homebirth services in the Sydney area and a list of questions to ask when interviewing them on our website. Midwives are listed when they agree to sign up their clients for a year's membership of HAS. Listing does not imply endorsement by HAS.

ACORN MIDWIFERY: KATIE SULLIVAN

I am a midwife in private practice on the NSW Central Coast and have been a midwife for 10 years, having worked in continuity of care models for all of my clinical experience. I can tailor your care to your needs. Antenatal or postnatal care individually or as part of the suite of services including labour and birth at home. I am a placenta specialist certified to provide placenta encapsulation, placenta tinctures and placenta salves. I will travel to Newcastle/Hunter Valley/Port Stephens and Upper North Shore/Northern Beaches area to work with women and their families.
Katie Sullivan: 0408614029 midwife@acornmidwifery.com.au

BIRTH WITH GENTLE CHOICES

Offering continuity of midwifery care during pregnancy, birth and postnatally. Birth is a natural, and empowering experience that is part of a normal life journey rather than a medical event. Providing support for women and their families and encouragement to believe in herself and her ability to birth instinctively.
Betty Vella (Gymea)
9540 4992 bpvella@optushome.com.au

BIRTHING SPIRIT: HEATHER CRAWFORD

[Midwives @ Sydney and Beyond]
I am based on the Northern Beaches and provide pregnancy, labour & birth and postnatal care in the community, serving families in Northern Sydney, the Eastern Suburbs and Inner West. As well as providing midwifery care, I also work as an acupuncturist & herbalist specialising in fertility and pregnancy. I love being with women and their families through this transformative time and believe that every woman should be able to journey through pregnancy and birth in a supportive environment where she feels safe and loved, surrounded by people who respect and support her choices.
Heather Crawford
0423 171 191 heather@heathercrawford.com.au
www.heathercrawford.com.au

BELLA BIRTHING: LISA RICHARDS

Holistic Women Centred Midwifery on the Central Coast, in Newcastle and the lower Hunter Valley. I work with women, their family and their chosen supports for birth at home. I practice with the philosophy that pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period are normal and when a woman is nurtured individually, sensitively and with no intervention, she is empowered to make choices that suit her and her family's needs and to birth the way she wants. I provide full antenatal, birth and postnatal care in the home.
Lisa Richards (Central Coast, Newcastle and the lower Hunter Valley)
0404422617 bellabirthing@live.com.au
www.bellabirthing.com.au

BELLA BIRTHING: MEGAN BARKER

Hi my name is Megan and I have practiced as a midwife for the past 15 years. Throughout my career I have always enjoyed every aspect of midwifery care. My philosophy of care is that pregnant women have the natural ability to nurture, birth and care for their babies. I provide information and education about pregnancy and birth options, and above all respect the informed choices made. I am a guest in the birth space and feel very privileged to be there. I see my role as guiding and supporting women and their partners throughout the pregnancy, birth and early parenting journey.
Megan Barker (Central Coast, Hunter Valley and Newcastle)
0458 160 185 megan@bellabirthing.com
www.bellabirthing.com.au

THE ELLA MAY CENTRE

[Midwives @ Sydney And Beyond]
The Ella May Centre provides an alternative to the medical management of fertility, pregnancy, birth and beyond by providing Midwifery and Naturopathic care to prospective and expecting families. Your midwife will provide you with individualised care throughout the preconception, pregnancy, birth and postnatal periods and is on call 24 hours a day.
The Ella May Centre supports you to birth in the way and place of your choosing. For full details of services please visit our website or book a free information appointment.
Melanie Jackson (Western Suburbs & Blue Mountains)
0425 280 682
www.ellamaycentre.com

EMMA FITZPATRICK: MIDWIFE IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

[Midwives @ Sydney And Beyond]
With over 11 years experience in Midwifery, I am passionate about supporting women and their families throughout the journey of pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. As well as being a passionate Midwife I am mum to 3 children, my littlest recently being birthed at home in the water. I am located in the Hawkesbury, and happy to provide support and service to women in Western Sydney, The Hawkesbury and The Blue Mountains areas.
Emma Fitzpatrick (The Hawkesbury)
0432724103 emma_gu77@yahoo.com.au

HAZEL KEEDLE

I have attended homebirths as a midwife and have been a practising midwife for over 3 years. I have attended the homebirth midwives retreat in 2008 and also an active birth workshop. I have qualifications in massage, aromatherapy and infant massage. I have recently obtained Cert IV Breastfeeding Education (Counselling) with the Australian Breastfeeding Association and Childbirth Education training. I am passionate about keeping birth natural and providing continued care from pregnancy through to birth and during the newborn time. I have a keen interest in women achieving vaginal births after a caesarean (VBAC) in part due to my own personal experience of VBAC.
Hazel Keedle (Orange and Central West NSW)
0408 661 503 hazelkeedle@gmail.com

INDEPENDENT MIDWIFE: JACQUI WOOD

Pregnancy and birth is a normal, healthy life experience. As natural as it is to conceive your baby in a loving, safe and intimate environment, labouring and birthing at home, in your own relaxed setting, gives you the freedom to follow your body's instinctive knowledge of birthing naturally, without restrictions. As a Midwife, I have immense passion for my career and gain great professional and personal satisfaction from it. I offer a holistic approach to midwifery care, providing care throughout your pregnancy, labour and birth (a birthing pool is available for water birth) and postnatal care up to 4 weeks after the birth of your baby. All care is provided in your home.
Jacqui Wood (Blue Mountains, Western Sydney and South West suburbs)
0430 109 400 jacqui@independentmidwife.com.au
www.independentmidwife.com.au

JO HUNTER: HOMEBIRTH MIDWIFE

I believe that women should be placed at the centre of their own experience, supported to empower themselves with knowledge and skills, given time and encouragement from their midwife, as well as being surrounded by those they love and people who believe and trust in their ability to birth. It is the midwives role to have patience and trust in the innate ability of women and babies and to be comfortable and confident to support this process in any setting the woman chooses. Pregnancy, birth and postnatal care up to 6 weeks is provided in your home. I live in The Blue Mountains and service local families, inner west and western Sydney.
Jo Hunter (Blue Mountains, Inner west and Western Sydney)
(02) 47519840 midwifejo@bigpond.com
www.midwifejo.com.au

NEW BEGINNINGS MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

[Midwives @ Sydney and Beyond]
New Beginnings Midwifery Practice offers a personalised approach to pregnancy, birth and beyond. Receive comprehensive prenatal care with your own midwife. New Beginnings can assist you with homebirth, hospital birth or birth centre birth. Extensive postnatal visits. Access to information, resources and a large lending library. Care and support available 24 hours a day.
Robyn Dempsey (North Ryde) 9888 7829 midwiferyrobyn@optusnet.com.au
www.homebirthmidwives.com.au

PREGNANCY, BIRTH & BEYOND

[Midwives @ Sydney and Beyond]
Looking for special care during your pregnancy, birth and as new parents? Receive personalised, professional care by an experienced midwife. Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond supports women and their families birthing at home, birth centre or hospital. Midwifery care helps you avoid unnecessary interventions and to be recognised as the most important member of the birth team. Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond aims to assist families achieve an empowering birth experience. For full details of services please visit our website.
Jane Palmer (Dundas Valley) 9873 1750 jane@pregnancy.com.au
www.pregnancy.com.au

SHERYL SIDERY

Sheryl has been in private practice for the past 23 years. Her core belief is that pregnancy and birth are not only about producing a healthy baby but is also a period of profound transformation for the parents. Sheryl lives on the northern beaches and takes only a small caseload of women. She has Medicare eligibility that provides a rebate for antenatal and postnatal care.
Sheryl Sidery (Northern beaches through to the Eastern suburbs)
0409760548 secretwomensbiz@bigpond.com

TANYA MUNTEN

Having trust in the process of birth is Tanya's foundation for midwifery practice along with the understanding that every pregnancy and birth is a unique and profound life experience.
Having qualified as a midwife in 2008, Tanya is following her passion for normal physiological birth and is excited to offer support at home to women and their families on Sydney's northern beaches and surrounding areas.
Tanya Munten 0412 210 222 tanyamunten@hotmail.com

WITH WOMAN MIDWIFERY CARE

I am an independent midwife based in Shellharbour. I provide continuity of midwifery care throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period to women planning to birth at home. All visits take place in the woman's home at a time that suits the family. Areas covered include the Illawarra, Southern Highlands, Southern Sydney, Shoalhaven and Canberra.
Rachele Meredith 0421 721 497 rachele@withwoman.com.au
www.withwoman.com.au

For a downloadable list of these questions to ask your midwife, please go to the 'Find A Midwife' page on our website.

Different midwives have different personalities and practices, and different midwives are right for different women. Finding the right midwife for you is your responsibility. When selecting your midwife, we recommend you:

- Interview as many midwives as you can from different practices
- Talk to as many of their clients as you can

Here are some questions you might consider asking midwives you are considering for your care:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Are you registered?
- How long have you been practising?
- Where did you train and when?
- Do you do regular continuing education? What about refresher courses and extra skills courses?
- Have you had any long periods away from practice? If so, what did you do to update your skills and knowledge?
- Do you have regular peer review of your midwifery practice?
- Did you work in a hospital setting and then become a homebirth midwife? When?
- Do you combine hospital shift work and a homebirth practice?
- How many births have you attended as primary caregiver?
- How many of these were at hospital? In a birth centre? At home?
- How many births per year and per month do you attend?
- Do you have a specialty area of practice?
- What is your rate of transfer to hospital? Rate of caesarean section? Rate of assisted delivery?
- Have you ever had to resuscitate a baby?
- Has a baby ever died under your care? What were the circumstances?
- Are you certified in neonatal resuscitation? Do you carry oxygen to the birth?

ELIGIBILITY

- Are you registered as an eligible midwife?
- Can I claim Medicare for pre and post natal services?
- How much will I get back from Medicare per visit?
- Can you prescribe antibiotics, vitamin K etc?
- Do you have a collaborative relationship with a GP or obstetrician?
- Do you have midwife visiting rights to my local hospital?

PHILOSOPHY AND ATTITUDE

- Why did you become a midwife?
- What do you perceive your role to be - during my pregnancy, during my labour, after the baby is born? How does your practice vary for different women?
- Do you see yourself as actively involved in a woman's labour? How? (Some midwives prefer to sit back and let you do it with your birth support people, others will become actively involved if you want that and talk to you, massage, hold heat packs)
- What is your attitude to complementary therapies such as homeopathics, acupuncture, etc
- What is your attitude to circumcision? Immunisation?
- What do you expect regarding self-care during pregnancy?
- What is your view on nutrition and weight gain during pregnancy?

COLLABORATION/TEAM

- Will you provide all my midwifery care or will others be involved?
- What are your back-up arrangements if you are not available to provide my care? Do you work with a regular second midwife?
- If you work alone, what happens if two women go into labour at the same time? What is your backup system? If you work with other midwives, when can I meet them?
- Are there any collaboration requirements with doctors, obstetricians or others? Do you have any collaboration agreements? If so, with whom? Please explain how these will work, how the team collaborates and how much each element will cost. How does collaboration affect my care and specifically continuity of care? When will I meet these people?
- Who will you bring with you to the birth?
- What is your experience of working with doulas? Do you prefer a woman to have a doula at birth? Do you have any doulas with whom you regularly work?

- What will happen if I need to see a specialist during my pregnancy or labour?
- What will happen if my baby needs to see a specialist?
- In what circumstances would you recommend my baby see a paediatrician or doctor?

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Legal, contractual, financial

- What do you charge for your services and what does that cover? Is it a lump sum or segmented for different phases of care? Will there be a written contract?
- When do you expect payment? Is there flexibility?
- What rebates are available?
- What happens if we discontinue our relationship during my pregnancy? For example, if I don't want you to be my midwife anymore, if there is a medical situation that recommends against my having a homebirth, or if you are unwilling or unable to continue my care? Will you refer me? How will the finances work?
- Please explain the current situation regarding professional indemnity insurance and how it affects my care or our relationship.

TIMING

- What happens if two clients are in labor at the same time? How many clients do you have due around the same time as me? Will you take on more?
- Do you combine hospital shift work and a homebirth practice? What if you're working when I am in labour?
- Are you likely to be away when my baby is due?

SPECIFIC ISSUES...

...DURING PREGNANCY

- Where will the prenatal appointments be? What do they include? How long will they take? How many antenatal visits do you recommend, and why?
- How and when can I contact you if I need help or advice during the come up between visits?
- In what circumstances would you transfer me to obstetrical care for during pregnancy? What is your rate of prenatal transfer?
- What is your attitude to 'due dates' and how would you feel about my pregnancy going over 40 weeks? What would your advice be?
- How do you feel about natural induction methods? Can you offer any of these services?
- What would you do in the case that I was having twins? Had a breech baby?
- What prenatal tests do you require? What do you recommend? Do you have an obstetrician to whom you refer?
- Do you provide education as I prepare for the birth? Do you have a lending library of books/DVDs?

...DURING LABOUR AND BIRTH

- In what circumstances do you recommend transfer to hospital? How often do your clients transfer and for what reasons? Do you stay with your clients who transfer? In what capacity?
- Do I need a backup booking with the hospital? Which one? What is involved in this? If it's a private hospital, do I need private health insurance?
- What equipment do you provide (eg birth pool)? What must I provide?
- How and how regularly will you monitor the baby during labour?
- Do you support me labouring in water? Birthing in water?
- What do you do in the event of a long labor? A "stalled" labor? Do you stay? Go away and come back? In what circumstances?
- When will you come to me after I begin labor? Have you ever missed a birth?
- How often do you perform an episiotomy?
- What is your attitude towards premature rupture of membranes (PROM)?
- How long do you wait to cut the cord after the baby is born?
- Do you support lotus birth?
- What do you do if there is a post partum hemorrhage?
- What procedures do you perform immediately on the newborn? What can wait? Will you wait if I request it?
- How long will you stay after I give birth?

...DURING THE POSTNATAL PERIOD

- What is the schedule of post-natal visits? Where will they be? What do they include? How long will they take?
- Will you help me with breastfeeding? If so for how many weeks?
- How do I get my baby's birth certificate?

HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUPS

Sydney & NSW

Inner West Homebirth Support Group

First Wednesday of Every Month
Time: 10am - 12pm

Location: changes every month, so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.
Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0410 139 907
Please feel welcome if you're pregnant, have children or are just curious about home birthing. Partners welcome too!

Northern Beaches Homebirth Group

3rd week of the month
Time: 10am-12.30pm

Location: The Highest Intent: 23 Lady Davidson Circuit Forestville
Contact: Beryl Truong 0411769881
beryl@thehighestintent.com.au
Please bring a plate of food to share!

Sutherland Shire Homebirth Group

Every Thursday
Time: From 10.30am

Location: 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah.
Contact: Virginia 0415683074 or maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
If you're pregnant or have babies or kids in tow, come on over, let the kids run amok and enjoy a cuppa and some fresh baked delights with some like-minded mamas.

Western Sydney Homebirth Support Group

2nd Wednesday of the month
Location: 20 Millard Cres Plumpton
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Contact: Veronica ph. 0451 969 152
veronica1530@yahoo.com
All mamas or mamas to be are welcome. Your little ones are welcome to come join and play. If you can, bring a healthy snack to share together, if you can't, don't worry come anyway.

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting - Dundas Valley

1st Thursday of the month
Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Jane Palmer's home: 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.
Contact: Jane Palmer 1300 MIDWYF (1300 643 993) or email jane@pregnancy.com.au
Info: <http://www.pregnancy.com.au/resources/support-groups/index.shtml>
Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting - Hawkesbury

3rd Tuesday of the month
Time: 10am - 12 noon

Location: Emma Fitzpatrick's home: 5 Rowland Ave Kurmond
Contact: Melanie: 0425 280 682 mkjackson@live.com.au
Info: <http://www.ellamaycentre.com/Events.html>
Please bring a plate of food to share (anything you can manage). As always, mums, dads, friends and kids are all welcome! See you there!

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

3rd Monday of each month
Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Location: Held alternatively at private homes. Email us to find out and sign up to our email list
Contact: email info@birthchoices.info
<http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Mothers & Midwives of the South (Southern Highlands)

Every month

For more details contact Kylie Woods: 486801691 / 0416204424 or candlebark@hotmail.com. Everyone welcome!

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Every 2nd Thursday
Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: Lawson Family Day Care room, unless otherwise specified!

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: email Krystal: bmhomebirth@gmail.com or visit our website

<http://www.bluemountainshomebirth.com.au/>

To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings / topics please email Krystal. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway.

*No meetings in school holidays.

Central Coast Homebirth Group

First Wednesday of each month
Time: 10.30am - 12.30

Contact: Lisa Richards 0404422617 bellabirthing@live.com.au
Come along if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, mums, dads, kids, doulas, midwives, and anyone interested in homebirth (including homebirth > hospital transfers).

Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support (HHNBS)

2nd Wednesday of every month
Time: 10am.

Location: New Lambton Uniting Church Hall. 10-14 Grinsell St Kotara (off Orchardtown Rd).

Contact: Rachel 0415 435 045 or email hnbgroup@gmail.com

Armidale and District Homebirth Support Network

First Sunday of every month

Contact: Rebecca Pezzutti hbsarmidale@gmail.com

Interstate & National

Homebirth Australia

Contact: Chris Wrightson 0414 812 144 homebirthaustralia@gmail.com
www.homebirthaustralia.org

Homebirth Queensland Inc.

Contact: 07) 3839 5883 info@homebirth.org.au
www.homebirth.org.au

Alice Springs Homebirth Group

Contact: Anne Yffer 0402 424 780 wildisha@gmail.com

Darwin Homebirth Group

Contact: Justine Wickham 0438 888 755 dhbinfo@gmail.com
www.darwinhomebirthgroup.org.au

Homebirth Network of SA

PO Box 275, Seaford, SA 5169
Contact: Claire at admin@homebirthsa.org.au
www.homebirthsa.org.au

HOME BIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY (INC)

- 1) To create an awareness in the community of planned attended homebirth as an accessible and attainable alternative and to be actively involved in maintaining homebirth as a choice and improvement of conditions for homebirthers. In the interest of furthering the cause of homebirth, our public relations policy will be one of assertive, non-aggressive approach.
- 2) To provide an information and referral service by way of newsletters, pamphlets, telephone contacts, a permanent mailbox, a reference library and regular public meetings.
- 3) To provide support to HAS members by holding regular public meetings and maintaining and publicising a list of contact phone numbers and addresses.
- 4) To represent HAS members on or to any regulatory or advisory body, Local, State or Federal, which is formulating policy or implementing decisions which affect homebirth.
- 5) To work with other homebirth groups and other groups concerned with birthing to further the aims of HAS.
- 6) To be involved in public gatherings that are relevant to and consistent with HAS' aim regarding homebirth.

HAS POLICY STATEMENT

This policy statement was written because of the need to promote unity and understanding among our homebirth members and the wider community.

- 1) Homebirth Access Sydney is an organization which was established in 1973 to provide information and support to those interested in homebirth our members include parents, birth attendants, educators and midwives.
- 2) HAS recognises that Australian families have the right to have their baby in any setting – be it their home, a clinic, a birth centre or a hospital.
- 3) The members of HAS believe that home is a safe place to give birth and that there will always be an element of risk in birth whatever the choice of birth place.
- 4) Families who choose homebirth are taking a shared responsibility in the births of their babies. They are opting for a birth outside of an institution and its model of mass health care which is restrictive and frequently denies individuals requirements.
- 5) The midwives who attend homebirths are specialists, educated to provide total care throughout pregnancy, labour and the post-natal period. They consult with other health practitioners when appropriate.
- 6) Midwives are accountable to their clients and their peers (through quality assurance and standards review) as well as the Dept. of Health, the Nurses Registration Board, the Australian College of Midwives and the various courts.
- 7) With the widespread misconceptions about the safety of homebirth, a homebirth midwife's professional status is in jeopardy whenever anything goes wrong. However skilled she may be, deregistration and loss of career is a constant insecurity in the face of social hostility to her chosen profession.
- 8) Birth is an intense, emotional, life changing experience. In the event of conflict or unresolved issues, HAS encourages mediation and conciliation between all parties whatever the birth place and whoever the birth attendants.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

Homebirth Access Sydney (HAS) Committee Meetings

From 10.30am. Second Tuesday of every month

ARNCLIFFE COMMUNITY CENTRE
35 FOREST RD ARNCLIFFE

Bring a plate or something to nibble.

Children welcome.

Please call to confirm

Virginia Maddock 0415 683 074

NEXT MEETINGS:

12 February, 12 March [AGM]

MAGAZINE ADVERTISING RATES

	Single (1 Issue)	Annual (4 issues)
Service Pages		
Doula Listing	n/a	\$25
Services Listing	n/a	\$35
Advertisements		
Business Card Display	\$20	\$70
Quarter Page Display	\$30	\$110
Half Page Display	\$40	\$150
Full Page Display	\$65	\$250

For print and online advertising please email Karen advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au

HAS ABN 75 947 458 113

HAS MISSION STATEMENT

Homebirth Access Sydney is a viable and visible organisation working with integrity to support mothers and families' rights to informed and empowered home birth.

The topic for the next issue is:

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS



Birthings is your magazine. Please contribute!

This issue will be dedicated to the artistic and creative pursuits of our readers.

So send us your submissions, whether it is photos, art, poetry or even stories of your most important creation ever - your baby.

As always, we also welcome your letters, birth announcements and birth stories.

Submissions are due by February 1st 2013.

Please check word count before sending and don't forget your 100 word bio!

Email the editor at: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

Reminder: Please ensure we have your current email address so you can receive your membership expiry reminder, as well as all the important homebirth updates in our e-newsletter. And if you've recently moved, send us your new address so you don't miss out on the next issue of Birthings!

Email: member@homebirthsydney.org.au