

Birthing

Alternative Birth Practices

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Emotional Freedom Technique

How to Eliminate Fears and Stresses of Childbirth and Early Parenting, for both Parent and Child

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There has been a great advance in handling fear and other non-helpful feelings and thoughts such as guilt, shame, negative judgments on oneself, persistent anger, and many more.

Through insights on how our natural systems work, these reactions and emotional states can be eliminated, not just pushed aside, suppressed, or endured. According to Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), an approach being adopted by increasing numbers of lay people and professionals alike, fear and other negative emotions are stored as patterns in the body's energy system, which is related to the acupuncture system.

EFT shows us how to "de-energize" these patterns. It's done through simple tapping on certain acupuncture points while holding the unwanted feeling or thought in awareness. It's like tapping the side of a tray of sand that has a pattern drawn in it. Say the pattern represents a fearful reaction to a certain thought or experience. As you tap the sides of the tray, the pattern fades into the rest of the sand to leave a smooth, even surface. No pattern, no fear.

With a little learning, this can be accomplished quite reliably and often in a matter of minutes. The fear or other unwanted response usually goes to zero on a scale of zero to 10. The process involves little to no stress, and the results are permanent. The speed and thoroughness of the change is often surprising. This works for the everyday fears, old fears, intense fears, phobias, and every other negative emotion as well.

Actually, EFT doesn't get rid of all fears. It doesn't get rid of the sensible ones that keep us from walking in front of cars or off of buildings. It doesn't change what we know, though we might find ourselves open to new possibilities and understandings of what we know.

EFT works with any kind of trauma, because they share a common way of working. In response to overwhelming experiences, our organisms create "trigger" patterns in our energy systems, the same patterns mentioned before. These operate unconsciously and respond instantly, mobilizing our attention, feelings, and even physical states when an identified threat is detected.

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Spiritual Midwifery and The Farm's Birth Culture

Dina Davidson

The three hundred hippies who settled on The Farm in 1971 effectively left mainstream American society behind them. The Farm was originally a commune (it later became a cooperative) where settlers shared what they had and worked together to grow their own food.

The Farm community's

spiritual leader is and was Stephen Gaskin—a mystical university-educated man with a taste for Zen Buddhism. Because the ethics of The Farm folk did not permit accepting government aid and they were in no position to buy private health insurance or pay large hospital bills, they handled as much of their health care as they could safely do. As



Sign at the entrance to The Farm... Summertown, TN

such, Ina May Gaskin, Stephen's wife, took on the responsibility of being midwife to the women of The Farm.

If Stephen Gaskin was The Farm's spiritual leader, Ina May Gaskin was its temporal one. She not only showed great respect for—and a new way of thinking about—women and their babies, but she managed to pass these revolutionary ideas on to

her assistants, her clients, and several generations of midwives worldwide through her book *Spiritual Midwifery*.

A New Language

The words we use are significant. Ingrid Bengis says, "For me, words are a form of action, capable of influencing

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Midwifery Care for the VBAC Woman

This article originally appeared in *Midwifery Today Magazine, Issue 57, Spring 2001*.

Gloria Lemay

Someone asked me recently what things are done differently with vaginal births after cesarean (VBAC) as opposed to a first baby. Midwives usually reply to this question with a reassuring, "Oh, we treat you normally," but there are differences in the two situations that can be distinguished in midwifery practice.

Prenatal Preparation

The full history of the events leading to the cesarean is very important. With a VBAC client, ask her to get her operative record, nurse's notes, anesthesiologist's report, pediatric report—get all the records and go over them thoroughly. Often the couple did not get full or accurate information about what was going on. Sometimes there's a little "clue" as to what went wrong that could help to prevent a cesarean from reoccurring. Sometimes there is a big chunk of information that didn't get communicated. I saw one set of records where the only indication for the cesarean was the note from the obstetrician that "this woman is a natural childbirth fanatic."

Another set of cesarean records had no indicator whatsoever of why the woman received abdominal surgery when she had given birth at 19 years old. When she told her

parents that the midwife was perplexed and could see no reason for the surgery, her father admitted to her that he had stayed in the visitor's lounge all day and had been verbally threatening to the doctor: "If anything happens to my daughter, I'll sue you!" This helped the daughter to understand what had happened to her and also helped her to be firm with her father that he was to be nowhere near her VBAC birth.

Sometimes there's a little "clue" as to what went wrong that could help to prevent a cesarean from reoccurring.

With VBAC births it is important for the midwife to work with the dad prenatally. A VBAC father is in a horrible place because, despite the fact that his wife had an operation and a long recovery, he still got a live wife and baby at the end of it all. VBAC dads are often "fantasy bonded" to the medical system and terrified of childbirth in general.

The good thing is that they listen very carefully and really know when the care is better and more thorough and when

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Bringing education, resources and support to birth professionals and the families they serve.

Resources

tons of information in an
easy to access format

Birthing Retreat 2004 with Ina May Gaskin

Retreat information and
online registration

*If we are to heal the planet, we
must begin by healing birthing.*
-Agnes Sallet VonTannenberg



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Links

Find birth related
information easily with
the indexed link page

*What's done to children, they will
do to society.*
-Karl Menninger

www.birthingalternatives.com

Information, resources and support for empowering childbirth.
A site for parents and alternative birth professionals.



March 20



April 5



April 19



May 4



May 19



June 3

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Birthing is compiled and published by myself, Julie Samms, independent of any group or sponsor interest. The views in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect my own, but I am in full support of our right to express different opinions and beliefs. This newsletter exists to bring our community together around the beginning of life and the impact that experience has on the mother, the child and all of society. Your letters, articles and events are welcome here. Every new voice put to print touches another soul and brings us closer to a sense of community that we so desperately need in our isolated world.

This publication is printed for educational purposes only. Nothing written here is intended to be taken as medical advice. It is your responsibility to thoroughly investigate and make an informed decision about your own medical needs. *Birthing* is not responsible for your health or the health of your family.
Thank you.

Published in Bellingham, WA.

Contents of a Birth Bag

Anna Fernandez

For some decades now in the dominant culture, birth has become a medical condition that nearly “requires” medication for anyone to survive it. It takes a while for humans to unlearn what we have been taught to believe is the right way to birth, medicate or feed ourselves. We have been taught to eat processed foods and to have medicated births among other things. However unlearning things that don’t work has been done numerous times in history. Look back to when doctors were bleeding quarts of blood from their patients bodies on purpose and dosing them with mercury to “cure” many ailments including the common cold. This combination was the medical savior. Then slowly people began to realize the negative effects and that they were actually weakening and poisoning themselves. That practice would today be considered to be “first doing harm”. It would not be acceptable. People began looking back to their knowledge of the plants, the herbs. As more and more parents choose the natural birth process today, we become part of that unlearning. We can choose to look to the plants for their gentle assistance when needed and seek advanced medical care only if necessary.

We can choose to look to the plants for their gentle assistance when needed and seek advanced medical care only if necessary.

As a herbalist who is fascinated with pregnancy and birth, I thought I would share with you some herbs that may be helpful to a birthing woman and the people around her. The herbs mentioned here are by no means complete. There are numerous ways to use herbs as well as numerous herbs to use.

As a Doula, I don’t necessarily feel that herbs are a must at a birth. I feel that a birth can be perfect with nothing other than water and support (whether present or not). However the bag I carry with me to births is heavy with tinctures, teas, and oils among other things in case there is a need or a desire for herbs. I would like to share with you the contents of my birth bag.

The roles of herbs around birth can be ritual, relaxing, stimulating, astringing, healing as well as nutritive to name a few. For some people herbs can bridge a gap between the primitive world and the modern world, a gap that is getting more distant by the day. For others herbs can be grounding,

they can nourish the spirit, as well as the body and they can also be specific to situations that occasionally arise at birth.

As the birth process begins, some of us have a long period of time before sensations begin dilating the cervix. This can take days or even weeks. During this time it is important to maintain energy by eating and sleeping regularly. At times it may seem necessary to aid our bodies by using some relaxation tools such as hot baths with relaxing herbs or by taking herbs internally. Some relaxing bath herbs include Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), Lavender (*Lavendula officinalis*) and Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*). Some internal herbs that can be helpful are Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*) or St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). These can be taken in tincture form together or separate. The dose is somewhere around 10 drops of Motherwort and 40 drops of St. John’s Wort

depending on the size and metabolism of the woman. This can be taken every half-hour as needed.

Occasionally the membranes are released before sensations/contractions become active. If this happens and it becomes hours or days before the birth it may be wise to take some Echinacea (*Echinacea angustifolia* or *purpurea*) along with some vitamin C preferably from food or herbs such as oranges or Rose hips to keep any infection at bay.

Every now and then the use of herbs to stimulate and increase the birth process is desired. In my bag I carry a blend that several midwives in town use which consists of Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), Black Cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*) Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) and

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By Andrea Dodge

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The key to eliminating fear was discovering how the acupuncture meridians are involved.

What are acupuncture meridians?

Acupuncture meridians are “energy channels” running throughout the body. They were discovered in China some 4000 years ago. The smooth flow of energy through these channels is necessary for health.

There are certain points all over the body, called acupuncture points. When these points are stimulated, such as by tapping with the fingers, the flow can be affected, restoring physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

EFT Continued from page 1

The whole system is meant to protect us from experiencing something that was previously overwhelming, by triggering unpleasant feelings which cause us to avoid those situations. This can be augmented by the physical preparation for fight or flight, depending on the severity of the reaction. So we avoid things that hurt, embarrass or frighten us.

Most of the time it works really well, but sometimes it gets out of hand. Modern culture provides many opportunities to be overwhelmed with experiences we cannot fully integrate, from birth on up. This is one reason births attuned to our natural patterns are so important, to avoid setting up these reactions in the first moments of life.

EFT can reliably release the reaction patterns around or resulting from birthing traumas, feelings of loss, sorrow, or regret, abuse of any kind, shame and guilt, persistent anger, accidents and their lasting effects, attacks and assault, phobias, and PTSD. It works with low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and self-criticism by eliminating the negative thoughts, self-judgments, and other impressions involved.

And it even works surprisingly often with physical pain, even stubborn pain nothing else has helped, and pain you would never imagine it could help. In fact I have seen improvement or, more often, disappearance of every physical pain I've worked with. In some cases everything else had already been tried and failed.

With EFT, it is as if we've found the operating system for negative emotional patterns, and can delete them at will.

What does this have to do with birth and early parenting? Even more than you think.

Negative feelings in general cause a pulling in or tightening of the body, mind, feelings, and spirit. Think of your reaction to fear. Everything pulls in and shuts down. Strong tightening of this kind is exactly the opposite impulse from what is needed to give birth. Pain and other difficulties are more likely if the birthing mother is trying to do both things at once.

Thoroughly releasing the patterns of fear, anxiety, stress, and so on ahead of time removes one or perhaps several major obstacles to successful births. If the mother and support team learn to do this and establish the patterns of

doing so ahead of time, EFT and similar methods can be used right in labor to let go of negative feelings that may come up, and even of pain, and perhaps in seconds.

You can give your infants and children life-changing benefits with these new methods. If you establish a nighttime ritual with them of gently tapping, touching, holding, or rubbing these points, stress will evaporate and sleep will come easily, a blessing to you both. When they get older, doing it while talking about all the good and bad things that happened during the day lets your child release the stresses, self-judgments, disappointments, fears, and even traumas that accumulate daily.

The two of you will feel much closer, sleep will be better, and most important, your child can grow up trauma-free, not limiting her or himself due to unfortunate events or even misinterpretations. That's an amazing gift. Of course, knowing EFT is fantastic in crisis or serious trauma, such as accidents, hospitalizations, or stressful family events such as relationship changes. It's an emotional first-aid kit, literally at your fingertips. After you learn EFT and see what it can do for your life and for those around you, you won't be able to imagine how you got along without it.

Try it Now

Here's a simple but sophisticated pattern-release form I like a lot. It's actually **not** Emotional Freedom Technique. EFT is more powerful at getting to the roots of things. This form uses the same acupuncture points as EFT, though, and it can be learned in a couple of minutes. The basics of EFT take at least twice as long to learn.

This will give you a direct experience of changing your energy patterns and releasing unwanted feelings. Feel free

it is as if we've found the operating system for negative emotional patterns, and can delete them at will.

to use it often, with any feeling, thought, or self-judgment you'd prefer not to keep. Using this makes permanent changes in addition to feeling good instantly, so the more you do this the less stressed and bound by contracted feelings or self-images you'll become.

If you don't happen to be pregnant, or if the fear we're using as an example doesn't affect you, or if you want to extend the use of this approach into your whole life, feel free to substitute any other negative feeling, thought, or judgment of yourself or others. Examples: I'm a loser/I'm not a loser, I'm angry/I'm not angry, He's a (...) / he's not a (...), I can't stand (...) / I can stand (...), I'll never (...) / I will (...).

Instructions

Make a simple, direct statement of something that bothers you. We'll use:

I'm afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

- Use specific, direct, honest language. The more direct you are in your language, the better this works. In the example you can say “intense pain”

if you want. Try it both ways, and see what works for you. Taking different angles (tapping different sides of the tray) is a good tactic.

- Pick a number from zero to 10 to indicate the intensity of your reaction (fear in the case of our example) as you say your statement to yourself. At the end I'll ask you to do this again, to see if there's been a change.
- You'll tap with two or three fingertips on the acupuncture points described below.
- There are seven points, and you'll go through them twice. I call this a “double round.”
- Tap 7-10 times on each point. More is OK.
- Tap so you can feel it, but not hard enough to hurt.
- Tap with either hand, on either side of the face or body.
- At each point, tap and say the sentence written next to it.
- At the first point say what you don't want. After the double round you'll end on what you do want. If you end on the wrong statement somehow, just tap one more point and say what you do want.
- Saying the statements out loud is best, but mentally is OK, too.
- Notice there are two alternating sentences below. Use the same alternating form with any other fear or concern.

Okay, begin tapping:

1. Eyebrow: At the inner point or beginning of either eyebrow.

I'm afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

2. Side of Eye: On the bone around your eye, on the line between your eye and your ear.

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

3. Under the Eye: On the bone around your eye, directly under the middle of the eye.

I am afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

4. Under Nose: Between your nose and upper lip.

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

5. Under Mouth: Between your lower lip and chin.

I am afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

6. Collarbone points: Make a soft fist and gently thump just below the hollow of your throat.

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

7. Under Arm: On the side of your body, about four inches down from your armpit, about in the middle of the bra strap for women, level with the male nipples. Walk your fingers around until you find a tender spot. If you don't find it, tap the general area. It will still work.

I am afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

Keep going by returning to the first point and continuing the tapping without interruption. Keep the alternating statements going. Notice that each point gets the opposite statement this time.

8. Eyebrow:

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

9. Side of Eye:

I am afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

10. Under Eye:

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

11. Under Nose:

I am afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

12. Under Mouth:

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

13. Collarbone:

I am afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

14. Under Arm:

I'm not afraid of the most intense moment of childbirth.

OK, now stop, take a breath, and relax a moment.

Check the Intensity Again

When you're ready, check again. How afraid are you right now as you say your first statement, on the zero-10 scale? Right now is what counts. Most people will find the intensity rating is lower. Their fear has gone down, or even vanished.

Something to notice

When a reaction pattern disappears, the whole subject sometimes vanishes from the person's mind. Their attention may turn instantly to the next issue that holds a charge. If someone doesn't notice this subtle move, at this point she might say, "I'm still afraid," but it's of something new. The old fear is in fact gone.

Go on to other issues, certainly, but please also notice the progress and acknowledge the change you created in yourself. Then you can deal with each fear in turn, each in the same way, knowing each change is real and significant.

The number of fears you have is finite, yet each one is an individual fear, and must be addressed individually. If you do this process persistently, addressing everything you don't like in yourself, you can make amazing changes.

If you can't find the fear or other issue you started with, your intensity is zero. This can be hard to accept, because it's hard to believe it could really be gone, and so easily. If it seems too strange, you can tap with the statements, *I feel empty/I feel complete*, or *I don't believe this could work/I'm open to the possibility this could work*.

Take It to Zero

If your intensity is down but not yet zero, do another double round. After the first time add a qualifier like "still" or "remaining," and say,

I'm still afraid of that intensity for the first sentence, and

I'm not afraid of that intensity for the second sentence.

Experience simply shows better results from doing this.

If the number keeps going down, do a third or fourth double round. If you're stuck, have a glass of water. Dehydration (among other things) will stall things. Then try different language. There can be other factors or "aspects" having an effect. Fears can "prop each other up," so you have to find the related ones and take them all down. Be very specific in the words you use to describe the topic.

Use This for Any Negative Feeling

You can use this same simple pattern for other fears. A few examples about birth issues would be:

- I'm afraid of being out of control, (I'm not afraid of being out of control)
- I won't be able to handle the pain, (I will be able to handle the pain)
- I'm afraid of tearing (I'm not afraid of tearing)
- I'm afraid I'll scream, (I'm not afraid I'll scream)
- I'll be humiliated, (I won't be humiliated)
- I'm afraid of a C-section (I'm not afraid of a C-section)
- I'll be embarrassed to be seen (by ...) (I won't be embarrassed to be seen (by ...))
- I won't do it right (or well enough) – (I'll do it beautifully)
- I don't know how to be a good mother (I know how to be a wonderful mother)
- And try this: I'm not filled with life (I'm completely filled with life). My client this morning said, "It makes the room brighter."

If you can name it, you can frame it as a polarity or dichotomy, then take the charge out of it. Good/bad, guilty/innocent, can/can't, will/won't, acceptable/not acceptable, and so on, however they are expressed, are all prime candidates for this.

As people do this process their natural strength emerges. I have never seen a truth or positive quality become weaker. Rather, whatever is less than we truly are is discredited and disappears. The polarity collapses into the positive, or we simply rise above it altogether.

If an issue has a charge, doing even one double round will allow some relaxation or a shift of energy. More will do more, until the energy stored with that thought is completely cleared out. You'll see people sigh, relax, take a deep breath (you can encourage them to do that after a double round), their color will change, their energy will lighten up or increase, and so on. Sometimes a deeper issue will come up as the first layer is taken away. This is expected, and you can handle it the same way.

For clients with a lot of trauma, or who are emotionally fragile, I do not suggest doing this or anything which could upset a delicate balance. These emergent issues can be handled, but it may take more training than this article can provide.

For Childbirth Professionals

If you're a childbirth professional, this approach can greatly benefit both you and your clients.

Any time you spend learning and using EFT will be extremely well-rewarded through the reduction of fear, anxiety, tension, and other stresses in yourself and in your clients, and even in their partners and children, through improved birth outcomes, through lower (perhaps dramatically lower) levels of pain in labor, and even in time saved.

Contact me if you're interested. I'll be happy to help you, and would like to pool your experience with others, for the benefit of all.

More Information

At my site, www.FearlessChildbirth.com you can find free EFT training materials, learn to sleep better yourself, learn to make that critical voice inside your head disappear, learn how to often eliminate nausea and morning sickness, learn more about the use of EFT with children's issues, and much more. I invite you sign up to be notified of classes. If you're not expecting, the resources are just as useful for individuals or families.

I would really appreciate hearing if and how you've been helped by these approaches in your pregnancy or birth, with your family, or with your clients. I'm collecting stories and experiences for a book on the subject, and you could contribute.

Daimon Sweeney is a Registered Counselor with a private practice in Bellingham, WA, using EFT and other approaches. He has a lifelong interest in finding ways people can live at their full potential. He lived on The Farm and has studied Nonviolent Communication, Voice Dialogue, Focusing, and meditation, among other things. Private sessions are available, with guaranteed major reduction or elimination of the client's major concern in one session. Call for more information at 360-676-8441, email Daimon@FearlessChildbirth.com, or check the website.



Daimon Sweeney

Relaxation for pre-birth:

- Warm baths with Ginger, Lavender or Chamomile
- Motherwort and St. John's Wort internally

Early release of membranes:

- Echinacea
- Food sources of Vitamin C

Stimulate birth process:

- Blend of Blue Cohosh, Black Cohosh, Skullcap, Lobelia

Nutritive herbs:

- Apple Cider Vinegar, Honey, Warm Water, Cayenne
- Ginseng
- Chlorophyll
- Raspberry leaf, Nettles, Alfalfa, Oatstraw, Peppermint
- Burning Sweet grass

Managing Blood Pressure:

- Blend of Skullcap, Valerian, Hops
- Blend of Black Cohosh, Hawthorne berries, Squaw vine, Shepherd's purse

Pain Management:

- Skullcap and St. John's Wort
- Deep relaxation, visualization, accupressure, focusing
- Water tub with relaxing herbs- Lavender, Oats, Chamomile, Ginger and Lobelia
- Lavender Spritzer for relaxation

To release the placenta:

- Angelica

Blood Loss:

- Preventative -Alfalfa and Shepherd's purse during last weeks of pregnancy
- At birth- Shepherd's purse, Yarrow, Nettles, or Cayenne

Recovery From Blood Loss:

- Yellowdock, Nettles, Dandelion, Sea vegetables, Burdock, Rose hips, Raspberry leaf, Chlorophyll

Afterpains:

- Blend of Crampbark, Black how, Motherwort, Yarrow

BIRTH BAG Continued from page 3

Lobelia (*Lobelia inflata*). The dose is a half-teaspoon of tincture every half-hour, as needed or as directed by your midwife or doctor.

One of the best uses of herbs at a birth is their nutritive qualities and their ability to enhance one's energy. Women can get very tired in just a few hours if the birth is going quickly and intensely. They can get especially exhausted if the birth is going more slowly and extending overnight or nights. For this reason I carry in my bag some energy boosters.

My most favorite is to mix two tablespoons of Apple Cider Vinegar, 1/8 cup honey and up to a teaspoon of cayenne pepper to taste into a mug with 1/2 cup warm water. It is sweet, tangy and spicy, just the thing to revitalize your body. It is also perfect for all the folks at the birth who have also been up all night. Ginseng, which is most often used for longer-term situations, can actually work on demand for a woman in the birth process, as they are especially sensitive. It is used in tincture form at a dose of 30-40 drops, as needed for a pick me up. Liquid chlorophyll is very oxygenating and vitalizing. It can provide energy at a birth as well as ensure a solid oxygen supply to the baby. It can be sipped or added to juice. An infusion of Raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*), Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), Oats or Oatstraw (*Avena sativa*) preferably in the milky stage, and Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) possibly with some honey is a great way to keep nourished during birth. Burning some sweet grass can nourish the spirit in times of frustration or exhaustion as well.

Occasionally a woman's blood pressure can go up a little bit during her birth. If for some reason this becomes an issue a blend of Skullcap and Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) with or without Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) is a safe and effective way to lower blood pressure. Each dose will last about two hours. These three are the herbs that I carry in my bag but another blend that stabilizes blood pressure is Black Cohosh, Hawthorne berries (*Crataegus spp.*), Squaw vine (*Michella repens*) and Sheperd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*).

On the topic of pain management: most women feel between uncomfortable and amazingly painful sensations during childbirth. It is my experience that herbs can be helpful in the early stages of childbirth however the later stages can be so intense that I haven't actually given anyone herbs for pain with the thought that they probably wouldn't even touch it. It may be that there are some herbs in the world that might but those herbs may not be the best for the babies involved because of their strength. A combination one could try maybe just before hopping into a nice warm tub is a blend of Skullcap and St. John's Wort every hour. If nothing else they are specific to the nerves and can aid the mother in her ability to relax. There are many other pain management techniques of course that don't involve herbs such as deep relaxation, accupressure, visualization, focusing etc. All of which can play a huge role during birth.

Many women, myself included, use water to help relieve the intensity of birth. When in a tub it may be nice to throw in a bag full of herbs for their aromatic, relaxing effect. I make one up especially for this event which includes Lavender, Oats, Chamomile, Ginger and Lobelia. It can add a bit of aromatherapy to the whole room and everyone involved.

Another aromatic and pleasant concoction I carry is a Lavender spritzer. It contains alcohol, water and essential oil of lavender. This can be sprayed anytime as a relaxation

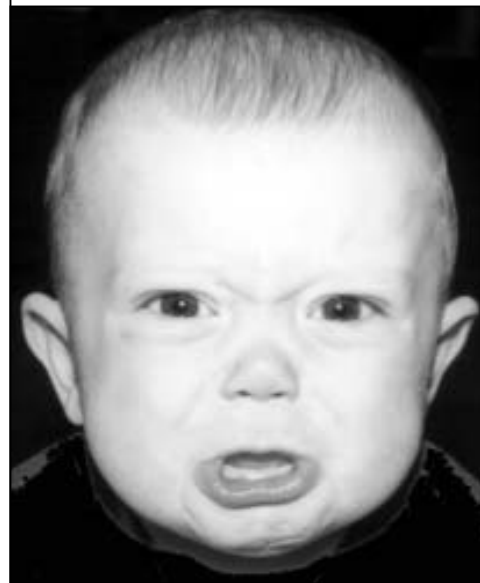
enhancer, to freshen up the room and house especially in winter or when the baby is really low and a bit of stool is being squeezed out of the mom.

women who take this blend bleed considerably less than other women.

Once the beautiful babe is born, the placenta usually follows within a half-hour. Occasionally it takes longer. If this is the case and the mom or the care provider is getting anxious, a dose of Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*) will usually do the trick within five minutes. It may save a woman from having her and her baby's cord yanked on to expel it or a trip to the hospital.

Another concern that can arise after the placenta is excessive bleeding. A woman can take a supplement in the last few weeks of pregnancy consisting of Alfalfa and Shepherd's purse, both of which have Vitamin K. Vitamin K helps the body clot blood. It has been reported to me by a midwife that, the women who take this blend bleed considerably less than other women. This blend, if not taken in the weeks before the birth, could be taken throughout the birth. If there is an excessive amount of blood after the placenta is born, there are some astringent herbs that are effective. Shepherd's purse is considered the most effective. One-half teaspoon in a bit of water is a beginning dose and can be taken again after five minutes

SUBMIT!



We want your letters, stories, articles, artwork and photos! So get creative and e-mail (preferred for articles) or snail mail (preferred for artwork and photos) your work to:

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birthing@birthingalternatives.com

and then every half-hour as needed. If taking in the tea form, a half cup every half-hour is the dose. Other helpful herbs are Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Nettles and Cayenne (*Capsicum frutescens*). If the bleeding continues, medical advice should definitely be sought.

If a large amount of blood has been lost or even if the woman is feeling worn out from the birth, herbs once again can play a large nutritive role in recovery. Some herbal restorative aids are Yellow dock (*Rumex crispus*), Nettles, Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), sea vegetables, Burdock (*Arctium lappa*), Rose hips, Raspberry leaf and chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is molecularly similar to blood. The central atom of chlorophyll is magnesium whereas the central atom of a red blood cell is iron. Other than that they are the same. Chlorophyll is said to provide rejuvenation to a woman's circulatory system after some blood loss during birth. The other herbs are loaded with vitamins and minerals for a quick recovery.

If a woman is having her second baby or more, after pains can be a real challenge. Just when you think you're done with all the contractions, they show up again every time the baby nurses for a couple days. This can occasionally be an issue for first time moms as well. A blend of Crampbark (*Viburnum opulus*) Black haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), Motherwort and Yarrow can help diminish the pain. I carry a tincture of this blend with me which I learned from a local midwife. Cayenne and Lobelia is also said to ease these pains.

If the mom has torn at all or even if she is just sore in the perineal area, a sitz bath can be very soothing. I make a blend of Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), Marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis*), Uva ursi (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), Lavender, Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), White oak bark (*Quercus alba*), Yarrow and Sea salt for this. It can be infused and put in a squirt bottle to rinse the perineum or it can be used as an actual sitz bath for speedy healing.

Most of the herbs mentioned are in my birth bag in some form or another. The ones that I believe are most beneficial to any birth are the nutritive herbs and the relaxing herbs. The others are rarely needed but are nice to have on hand in the event that they are needed.

I had a teacher who always said, "Let us stand on the shoulders of giants." By that he meant for us to use the knowledge of our past generations along with what we have learned in our lives, rather than re-inventing the wheel each generation. It is important for humans to nourish ourselves and give our bodies and spirits what they need to be healthy and give birth to healthy babies. This has been done for generation upon generation before the onset of the medicated birth with complete intervention. Let us unlearn these ways.

Anna Fernandez is a local herbalist and doula. Her company Mother Bloom Botanicals is located on an organic, horse-drawn herb farm where many of the herbs in this article are grown and dried or processed into tinctures. If you would like to reach Anna with questions or for products, her number is 360/398-2505.

Sitz Bath herbs

Comfrey, Marshmallow,
Uva ursi Lavender,
Calendula, White oak
bark, Yarrow and sea salt

VBAC Continued from page 1

the practitioner is authentically on their team. I find that if the midwife talks to them very honestly, they can trust and be fully supportive when the birth time arrives.

If the woman has dilated past five centimeters in the first birth, I plan for it to be fairly fast-like any second baby. If the woman has not gone into the birth process or not dilated past five the first time, that's all right, she'll still give birth vaginally, but we have extra midwives on call to bring fresh energy if the others get discouraged or tired. We plan for it to be like going to two births in a row. The point that the woman reached in her first birth is often a psychological hurdle for her. If she dilated to six centimeters the first time, the news that she is seven or eight will be a relief and a breakthrough. One of our clients, a minister's wife, said over and over again in her pregnancy: "I just want to feel what pushing is. If I only get to push, I'll be happy. I just want to know what other women mean when they say they had to push." She'd had a Bandl's ring in the first birth process and the cesarean was done at five centimeters. We were praying that the complication wouldn't repeat. She dilated smoothly and began to push. With each push she would exclaim "Thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus!" What a wonder it was to watch her push out the baby, a girl whom she named Faith.

All humans have a certain propensity to self-sabotage, and the VBAC woman must be guarded against her own defeating patterns. The midwife must be bold in pointing out ways that the woman is repeating dumb moves-there's no place for us being "nice" if it will mean another cesarean. An example of this: If the woman had a cesarean with five support people, we won't let her have extra people at her VBAC birth.

Privacy and quiet are a must, and we will be very forceful about setting up logistics before the birth so that the woman can birth in peace. In short, the VBAC is high priority because this woman's whole obstetrical future rides on its success.

We show the couple lots of videos of beautiful VBAC births because one video is worth a thousand words. If you don't have your own, I recommend "Gentle Birth Choices" by Barbara Harper, which includes footage of a beautiful VBAC birth. Art therapy is helpful in creating the environment before the birth day. I place a big sheet of drawing paper in front of the father and mother with lots of colored pencils and instruct them to, "Draw your birth cave" or, "Color your birth." When they are finished, I write the date on the two drawings and put them away in my files. After the birth, we take them out and are amazed at the details that were drawn weeks before and later manifested in the actual birth.

I have longer appointments with VBAC women because they seem to need to obsess. I don't have solutions to many of their fears but it seems to help to just be able to talk to someone who cares and understands. I usually also ask them to, "Tell me how you know that this time you're going to have a vaginal birth?" The answers always amaze me. One woman said, "Because this time I'm not depending on my doctor or my midwives-me and my husband are going to have this baby." I suggested that she give up depending on her husband, too. She looked terrified at that idea but I could see that she understood; she looked me in the eye and said, "Right!" That was the moment I knew she would do it. She's had three water homebirth VBACs since then, and after each birth her first words were, "I did it."

VBAC women are so grateful for the opportunity to birth normally that they are often shy to ask for the extra things that make a birth beautiful, such as a Blessingway ceremony or a waterbirth. The midwife must remember to offer and encourage the mother to think "really beautiful birth" rather

than "bare minimum birth." I find it helpful to ask, "This is the only second baby you will ever have-what would make it really special?"

The Day of the Birth

In my well-woman birth work, no one gets induced in any way or gets pain medication. This policy is very important for all women but especially for VBAC women. If there is a small chance of uterine rupture, we must have everything on our side to prevent it (the rate of VBAC uterine rupture without induction is 0.4 percent or less than one in 200*). It is beyond my comprehension how anyone could give a VBAC woman misoprostol (Cytotec), oxytocin or castor oil or strip the membranes or use any other form of induction when that would triple her chance of having a uterine rupture.

I believe that VBAC women have longer, gentler births because Nature is compensating for the scar. There is no hurrying. I would be terrified to induce a VBAC woman but feel safe to attend her at home if her body is pacing itself naturally. We keep it in the back of our heads that the signs of rupture are stabbing pain, unusual bleeding, decels of the baby's heart, or a peculiar shape of the abdomen but we don't look for problems if they don't exist.

be very forceful about
setting up logistics before
the birth so that the
woman can birth in
peace.

We are especially careful with the birth of the placenta in a VBAC because there is a slightly increased chance that the placenta might be adhered to the scar, and we do not want to have a uterine prolapse caused by pulling.

Postpartum Differences

After the birth, VBAC women need to be told that they can walk upright. They can't believe that they can straighten at the waist right after giving birth. Then, they can't believe it when we ask them to do sit-ups and leg raises on day one. Usually by day three when we go to visit, their husbands say, "Oh, she's gone to the gym." With VBAC women, the complaints are very few in the postpartum period because they are comparing to post-surgery pain and any minor scrapes and bruises seem like nothing.

In the years following the birth, these women and men send us more clients than anyone else, and if we're in legal trouble, they'll be at all the rallies, raise money, stamp the envelopes, write letters to legislators, and be our true friends for life. A VBAC is an amazing experience for the birth attendants as well as the family.

Very Beautiful And Courageous (VBAC).

Gloria Lemay is a Private Birth Attendant in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and a frequent contributor to Midwifery Today and The Birthkit.



Gloria Lemay

Tools You Can Use:

Quick, Easy Solutions to Rash-Free Diapering

Susy Goins

Teetering on the thin line between mainstream and crunchy-granola lies the life of a new parent. It's a future full of so many things: hope, joy, frustration, lost sleep ... and baby butts.

I'll be the first to admit that I love baby butts. They are cute, round and soft. A baby carries around its own padding. Newborn butts sit perfectly in your hands. And when that bum is swathed in a diaper — better yet, a cloth one — the baby butt boogie is hard to resist.

Preserving the perfection

With such a cute bum to care for, you'll want to make sure it stays unmarred by rashes and other irritations. So what can you do? Make some natural choices.

The first choice is to choose cloth diapers. Now, now, I hear you moaning and see you rolling your eyes. But really, I have three kids now, all of them have been cloth diapered. My 15-month-old is still in diapers. You can choose a diaper service if you prefer — look, Ma, no washing! — or you can wash them on your own. I do, and I'm still standing.

Another natural choice is to let your baby go buck naked every so often. Nothing like Mother Nature to dry out an irritated bum. Throw a towel under a pre-crawling baby or chase a mobile child around with a towel. Make it a game. Naked, laughing butts are great!

So your baby has a rash

What if your angel bum still develops a diaper rash? How radical is this: If you have breast milk handy, apply that to your baby's bum. My daughter had a rash that cleared up in a day with breast milk.

Making your own ointments is easy and not as labor intensive as you might think. Many of the ingredients can be found in better grocery stores or health food stores.

This recipe was given to me through an e-mail list by a fabulous toiletry maker by the name of Shucky, aka Sylvia LaReverend:

Calendula-Comfrey Diaper Ointment

1 lb. coconut oil (in the oil aisle; do try to buy the organic kind)
2 good handfuls calendula petals (health food section; don't let the per pound price put you off; the petals are not heavy)
Comfrey leaves (don't use on a pregnant woman)
Melt the coconut oil in a stainless steel pan. Add the herbs. Cook the herbs on low heat for about 30 minutes; the petals should be crispy, not burnt. Filter the ointment into jars. Use as needed.

Try an oatmeal bath. Grind up oatmeal in your coffee grinder for a pleasant soak in the tub. Another way to get the benefits of oatmeal without the mess is to put some regular oatmeal (not baby oatmeal) in a small cotton bag and let it soak in the tub with your baby. Squeeze water through it every so often.

Ointments and balms

Try olive oil or shea butter on your baby's bum. These are thicker emollients. Olive oil is readily available in any store; buy the higher grade virgin oil to get the most

benefit. Shea butter can be found in the health food section with other body butters like cocoa and mango. You don't have to use the zinc oxide ointments on your baby's bum. Yes, they do create a barrier, but they also dry into a powdery residue and can make cloth diapers smell like fish. Petroleum also makes a good barrier, but it is comedogenic (clogs pores).

Natural wipes solutions

You can make your own baby wipes to help in your campaign against Ugly Baby Butt, too. A wet cloth is basic — almost too easy, huh? Here are a few recipes for wipes you can try:

Wipes One

3 cups of water
1/8 cup olive oil
4-6 drops tea tree oil
6-8 drops lavender oil

Combine these in a sealable container and shake vigorously; add 1 tablespoon of your favorite baby wash or soap, and mix with a spoon until combined.

Baby Wipes Solution

Add 2 drops of tea tree essential oil or lavender essential oil to 1-2 cups of distilled water.

Anti-Fungal Baby Wipes

1/2 cup distilled water
1/4 cup vinegar
1/4 cup aloe vera gel
1 Tablespoon calendula oil (Remember the coconut oil recipe a few paragraphs back? That would work here.)
1 drop lavender essential oil
1 drop tea tree essential oil

Use a glass jar with a tight fitting lid. Pour in all the ingredients, cover the jar and shake to blend. Place your wipes in a container, and pour on enough solution to moisten them. Store any extra solution in the fridge. It should stay fresh for a long time, especially if you use distilled water. The vinegar and essential oils discourage yeast growth, which means you shouldn't have too much trouble with these wipes getting moldy. If your baby has a really red, raw diaper rash, you might not want to use these wipes because the vinegar may cause a burning sensation.

The wipes themselves

Once you have your solution mixed up, choose your wipes. A roll of paper towels (recycled is very cool) cut in half with a bread knife gives you a lot of wipes. I haven't personally had much success with the bread knife part, but tearing them in half as needed works, too. Or you can cut up a towel and finish the edges or use flannel or other cotton fabric. And what about those blue shop towels? Or inexpensive wash cloths?

As for storage, use a zipper baggie for travel or a small plastic storage container with a lid for home. Shoot — be subversive and recycle a commercial baby wipes container for your homemade wipes!

Thanks to the numerous people I have communicated with via e-mail over the years and many postings across the internet for recipe ideas and information.

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La Leche League



of Whatcom County

La Leche League is an international nonprofit, nonsectarian service organization dedicated to helping mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-mother support, education, information and encouragement and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

Bellingham Day L.L.L. Meeting Schedule 2nd Wednesday, 10 a.m.

We meet at the Garden Street Family Center, 1231 N. Garden Street, at the corner of N. Garden Street and Holly Street in Bellingham.

Whatcom Evening L.L.L. Meeting Schedule 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m.

In January and February meetings are at Brenda's home, 5163 Ranchos Rd. (off Smith Rd., between Noon and Everson Goshen Rds., 20 min. from B'ham). March - June meetings are at Suzanne's home, 304 S. BC Ave, Lynden (1 block south of Christian Nursing Home.) July - October meetings are at Brenda's home. November - December meetings are at Suzanne's home. Call phone numbers below for information.

We invite you to join us at our La Leche League meetings. These informal meetings are open to all women interested in breastfeeding and mothering. Babies are always welcome.

L.L.Lovingly yours,
Your Whatcom County La Leche League
Leaders

Terry Thalhofer	595-2403
Pam Ames	592-5052
Judie Zersen	715-2020
Suzanne Stratford	354-8278
Brenda Dunford	398-1741
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We are always available for telephone help!



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When I first moved to Bellingham we knew no one. Soon after we arrived, our family was blessed with our second pregnancy. I quickly started to look for resources, this pregnancy jump-started my need to connect. I found the Birthing Newsletter which pointed me to many of the services I was in need of, including the library video night. I attended many of these nights and gained support, information, and filled my need for connection to other like-minded parents. I also saw many films that I most likely would not have had access to. A huge bonus was that the environment and people were totally child and baby friendly, it was a family affair. Every one there either had kids with them, or in their bellies! And it was FREE!!! What more could I ask for? Many of the doulas, childbirth educators, and advocates of normal birth host these special nights. Hallelujah!!! - Stephanie Fleishman



THE FARM Continued from page 1

change.” For those on The Farm, the language they used was that of the 1970s drug culture. One can’t read *Spiritual Midwifery* in the 21st century without noticing the anachronistic “hippy lingo” that pervades the work. The following are some examples of the lexicon of The Farm when *Spiritual Midwifery* was written (see table)

Though the language seems strange now, it was culturally appropriate to a group of hippies living on a commune in 1971. Using different words—to describe not only birth, but also emotions in general—was a powerful tool in creating the unique birth culture on The Farm.

A New Culture

While the hippies on The Farm were rejecting American social mores of religion, grooming, education, and “appropriate” career choices, they also rejected the allopathic medical model wholeheartedly. They not only



Pamela Hunt and Deborah Flowers

couldn’t afford to pay for it, but they didn’t see the need for interference in natural processes.

The Farm midwives did not see birth as a pathological process, but rather as a normal life event. They considered birth to be a spiritual, indeed a holy, event for all included:

“Every birth is Holy. I think that a midwife must be religious, because the energy she is dealing with is Holy. She needs to know that other people’s energy is sacred.”¹¹

Respecting the Woman, Respecting the Child

When one juxtaposes the birth culture of The Farm with that of allopathic medicine and even some forms of midwifery care, the most striking element is also the most basic: *respect*.

Jan Tritten wrote that she never felt objectified when she lived on The Farm:

“Most of us who lived on The Farm chose to go braless, but the men of the community did not harass us. I wasn’t a mere collection of body parts to be ogled or analyzed. I was woman, beautiful creator.”¹²

The Farm women were treated as strong and capable people—strong enough to birth their babies easily, strong enough to make informed decisions about their care.

Contrary to most of the disempowering and disrespectful common birthing routines in hospitals at the time, Farm women were free to do the following during labour:

- Eat or drink at will
- Labour and birth in any position that worked for her body
- Keep her pubic hair intact (no shaving)
- Receive an enema by request only
- Receive her baby as he is born with skin-to-skin contact
- Labour at her own pace, be that quick or slow
- Keep her perineum intact (no routine episiotomy)



The Pregnancy Clinic Sign at The Farm

• Have her partner and other support people with her as she chooses

Some of the disrespectful medical practices, such as enemas, shaving, episiotomies, and keeping family in the waiting room are no longer routine. Women like those on The Farm have had no small part in insisting that these routines be discontinued.

It is clear that the profound respect given to the birthing mothers on The Farm was not just extended by the midwives, but by everyone there, an example set by their leader, Stephen Gaskin. In one of Ina May’s own birth stories, she describes Stephen’s deference to her during her birthing process:

“Stephen wanted to know if it was okay with me that he was sitting in a chair at the foot of the bed, not actually touching me. I knew that he would move if I wanted him to, but I felt best with him being where he was. I felt very high and one with him just looking at him. I felt very grateful that Stephen and my friends were there helping me do this; I loved them all a lot for being with me while I was tripping so heavy.”¹³

The Farm midwives displayed radical changes in another area of birth that has long been ignored—respect of the newborn.

Word	Definition	Example
Giving some	Being emotionally generous ("nice")	At a birthing, the mother is the main channel of life force. If she is cooperative and selfless and brave, it makes there be more energy for everyone, including her baby who is getting born. Giving everybody some make you and everyone else feel good. (p. 234)
Heavy	Scary; momentous, meaningful	They got really strong and it was heavy, but I was really grateful to be doing it. (p. 59)
High	Exalted and pure; altered by a mind-expanding drug	I had never seen Valerie put out so much effort as she did pushing the baby out. It was getting us both very high. (p. 215)
Integrate	Process or handle an event	When I would try to relax and remember that I should have faith that the best thing was happening, it was much easier to integrate. (p. 100)
Paddy-ass	Coward	If you be a total paddy-ass... they're going to have to knock you out when you have your kid... you're going to be too chicken to have it. (p. 87)
Psychedelic	Etymology: irregular from psych- + Greek dEloun to show, from dElos evident; akin to Sanskrit dIdeti it shines; effect of hallucinogenic drugs	She is going to get more lovely and psychedelic as the months go by, and it is a blessing to be in her presence. (p. 229)
Rush	Contraction	I rubbed her back and breasts, and we smooched in between the rushes to keep it loose. (p. 215)
Stoned	See high.	I'm so grateful to... all the midwives for helping my children have a safe and stoned entry into the world. (p. 129)
Tantric	Telepathic in the language of touch	Be tantric with your partner... be subtle enough in touch with her that when she tries to steer you, you feel it and follow her like a good horse follows a rider. (p. 228)
Trip	Verb: to move through something, to be on a drug trip	We tripped through the night. As the rushes got stronger, Bruce helped me by pressing on the small of my back real hard. (p. 104)



The Farm Midwives (L to R) Carol, Ina May, Joanna, Pam and Sharon

Farm newborns are not treated roughly or separated from their mothers routinely. They are treated, instead, with reverence. *The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative*, created by the Coalition for Improving of Maternity Services (CIMS) in 1996, says: "Babies are aware, sensitive human beings at the time of birth, and should be acknowledged and treated as such."⁷⁴

Ms. Gaskin participated in the drafting of this initiative. It is clear from her own writing that she holds very solidly to this principle:

"Brand-new babies are gorgeous. Being with a new baby, giving the baby your whole attention feels like giving your soul a drink of fresh pure water."⁷⁵

Stephen Gaskin taught a similar principle to his followers at The Farm:

"The child's state of consciousness is not to be rejected or replaced, but supplemented by the growing knowledge that you can't get what you want by force... This is what we have to teach children with the utmost patience we can muster."⁷⁶



Ina May Gaskin

Birth Is a Sexual Act

Farm midwives are very comfortable with the inherent sexuality of giving birth. They encourage "smooching" between the birthing woman and her partner, as well as fondling, caressing, and sweet talk to ensure a smooth, pleasurable birth. Farm midwife Cara Gillette says, "Over and over again, I've seen that the

best way to get a baby out is by cuddling and smooching with your husband. That loving, sexy vibe is what puts the baby in there, and it's what gets it out, too."⁷⁷

Body-Mind Birthing

The Farm midwives believe that a woman's psyche has great power over how a birth will go. Ina May wrote that "body and mind are One"⁷⁸ and that often a midwife can correct a deficiency in one by affecting the other. She speaks of managing the birthing energy as part of the midwife's job and cautions us to "keep the energy high" and be truthful if something doesn't feel right: "Not talking about what is really going on will make you dumb, and you need to be one hundred per cent alert and intelligent at a birthing."⁷⁹

The reason the women who give birth on The Farm are able to do so easily and with such excellent statistics is in large part because the birth culture at The Farm steeps everyone in the belief that women's bodies can birth babies easily. Ina May has now brought this message to an even wider audience with her latest book, *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, published in March of 2003. Most of the "hippy lingo" has been replaced with commonsense terms, but the message is still loud and clear:

"Remember this, for it is as true as true gets: *Your body is not a lemon*. You are not a machine. The Creator is not a careless mechanic. Human female bodies have the same potential to give birth well as aardvarks, lion, rhinoceri, elephants, moose, and water buffalo. Even if it has not been your habit throughout your life so far, I recommend that you learn to think positively about your body."¹⁰

It's Not Just a Job

Ina May Gaskin teaches that midwives need not only be religious, learned in health issues, a couples counsellor, a nutrition counsellor, a humorist, and a diagnostician, but also that she be a master of gently directing the energy that courses through a birth.

She sees pregnant women as elemental forces—like gravity and thunderstorms: "In order to understand the laws of their energy flow, you have to love and respect them for their magnificence at the same time that you study them with the accuracy of a true scientist."¹¹

The spiritual midwife sees the sanctity of each birth, each mother, each baby, regardless of any worldly factor. She must be a special person, set apart:

"...the midwife must keep herself in a state of grace. She has to take spiritual vows just the same as a yogi or a monk or a nun takes inner vows that deal with how they carry out every aspect of their life."¹²

Into the Future

The Farm community is not as large as it once was, but the Farm Midwifery Center is a busy place, as women travel

from all over the United States (and even further away), not only to have their babies there, but in many cases to learn midwifery skills from The Farm's midwives.

Ina May's books are widely held as must-read material for midwives and childbearing women and she is an internationally sought-after speaker—at midwifery schools and medical schools alike. The little community started by her and her visionary husband is a grand example of what a small community of like-minded people can do to make a big difference in the world.

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The Story of My First Home Birth

Saralee Sky

co-owner of Womb To Grow LLC & www.babynut.com

It's time to get back to where it all started, for me at least. My first pregnancy – and my first home birth – is what started me on the path that led to the creation of Babynut. It's a story about rediscovering the power within me – and all women – to create, sustain, and birth a new being in the world.

It was 1974 and I was 25 when I became pregnant for the first time. I was pretty much on my own, living in the coastal mountains of northern California. I was living alone – but near my friends – in a converted chicken shack! I was waiting for a road to be built to the 40-acre parcel of land I just purchased so I could build a house and live there. I was part of the “back to the land” movement that was happening in the early 70's. I owned a treadle sewing machine, a sleeping bag and a VW van. Get the picture?

When I decided to have the baby, I knew that I, too, needed to do a lot of growing and developing to become the mother I truly wanted to be. As with all important decisions in my life, once I committed to being a mother to this baby, people and opportunities began to manifest to support my choice.

I met a woman who posed for the pictures in a book about prenatal yoga. She gave me the book to use and practice the poses. The book was Prenatal Yoga and Natural Childbirth by Jeannine Parvati Baker. Doing the poses every day, I began to tune in to the being who was growing inside me. I felt so connected to this being and not just physically. I knew how dependent he was upon me for his very life, but I also knew that a central part of him was his and his alone. I was honored to carry his life inside me.

I met a spiritual teacher – guru – from India who gave me a mantra and told me to repeat the mantra and rub my belly at the same time. As the baby grew, so did I. I was scared but I also began to feel within me the power and strength that was inherently female. I felt connected to all women down through the ages who had conceived and nurtured life. I felt so lucky to be able to experience this incredible closeness with another being. I never wanted this pregnancy to end!

The baby's father, Richard, and I were no longer a couple, but were still friends. He wanted to be a part of the baby's life as well. He moved up from San Francisco three months before the baby was born. By this time a group of us were camping out in tents on my friend's land.

On my doctor's advice, I toured the local hospital and was appalled at the “delivery room” – which was an operating theatre, full of bright lights and a table with stirrups. The miracle of birth was discarded in favor of a medical procedure. Birth was something that was done to a woman and baby, not an event in which mother and the baby were the main participants. I knew I would only go there in the direst emergency, but I wasn't sure how to go about giving birth outside a hospital. My doctor said home births were possible, but he would not be able to assist me unless I gave birth in the hospital.

Another back-to-the-lander was a nurse named Sherry, who was learning to be a midwife. She and another midwifery student, Susan, offered to support me through my pregnancy and assist with a home birth. They would be accompanied by their teacher when I went into labor, who was an experienced midwife. And I had friends and Richard who were there to help in any way they could. So it was



Saralee, Joe and Gabe - 1981.

settled. We'd do it at “home”, but home was now a tent on my friend's land, adjacent to my 40-acre parcel. I still had no road. I had hoped to be on my own land by the time the baby was born, but time was growing shorter – and I was growing bigger – by the day.

A month before the baby was due, Richard and I decided to rent an apartment in a nearby town with running water and electricity. We'd move up to the land after the baby was born and we would have the time to build a little cabin. As the time for the birth grew near I was increasingly uncomfortable. I knew it was nature's way of saying “this, too, must end”. On August 27th – right on my due date! – I went into labor.

It's a story about
rediscovering the power
within me – and all
women – to create,
sustain, and birth a new
being in the world.

When labor began I was blown away by how much the contractions hurt! I felt betrayed by Dr. Bradley who described contractions in his book about natural childbirth as waves of intensity. All my preparations went out of my head. I was scared and not at all sure I could do this!

The midwives kept in touch by phone, and – as the contractions increased from 25 minutes apart to 15 minutes apart – they decided to come on over to our little apartment in the redwoods.

As soon as they arrived I asked them for something to numb this pain!!! They smiled and said they didn't have anything and helped me to relax and refocus. I settled in for what was to be a 12-hour athletic event! The midwifery teacher was away in Grass Valley on another birth. Sherry, Susan and I would have to do this without her. We were

breaking new ground and recreating an ancient pattern all at the same time.

The major lesson for me during my labor was all about learning to open up and let this being go, just like the Egyptian Pharaoh with Moses and the people of Israel. Since it was a home birth, friends drifted in and by the time the baby was born, about a dozen people were on hand.

The first stage of labor proceeded slowly, with contractions going from 25 minutes apart to 15 minutes to five minutes to three to two. The pain was intense and the rest in between contractions glorious. Eight hours into labor I entered into transition. Words of advice – don't argue with a woman in transition! Contractions were doubling up – no more delightful rest periods. And the pain was worse, though how this could be possible I really don't know!

This lasted a few hours. I write this now matter of factly, with the distance of 28+ years. This baby wanted out and I could either get in the way or open up and let this baby go! My dear friend Ira helped me through the toughest contractions by holding a picture of my guru in front of me to give me strength. I suffered through this situation mightily until I finally got it and let go and opened up. And then it was time to push.

Pushing is when all the power of being a woman is concentrated into gut wrenching growls and muscles bearing down and energy pouring into and out of the womb – the tiny womb now grown huge and swollen with the life it must release. I pushed and I grunted and I bore down for over an hour and then – glory of glories – the head began to crown!

This is the time when you're supposed to stop pushing and let the midwives help stretch the vaginal opening so you don't tear. Forget it! The midwives were rookies and I was on a huge birthing, pushing roll. I pushed that head out! And there he was, just his head was born and his eyes were open and he was looking around at everyone in the room, I swear! (After the birth and 20+ stitches later, I would honestly not recommend anyone pushing the baby out like I did!)

A few more contractions and there he was, all 8 pounds, 3 ounces of him, brand new baby and wise, ageless being. They put his wet, slithering body on my belly and I laughed and cried with every ounce of my spent, emotional self. This, indeed, was a peak experience. I was alive in every atom of my physical self. I was connected with every other atom in the universe. I did it! We did it! We were a great team: me and the baby, with a great supporting cast of the midwives, Richard and all our friends. If we could do this we could do anything!

I believe pregnancy and childbirth is a metaphor for what we will have to face, endure and learn during parenthood. The way the baby is carried in the womb and birthed will give you insights into how he/she will be as a child and how you will relate to each other. But that's another article!

You can reach Saralee at saralee@babynut.com www.babynut.com provides natural and alternative products for pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, babies and toddlers. We celebrate all kids of families and believe strongly in the importance of the first three years of a child's life.

Update



Julie & Caleb Samms

Julie Samms

Greetings everyone!

Spring is almost here and what a beautiful season in this part of the country! In my neighborhood the trees are in flower and the earth is being turned in anticipation of summer gardens to come. I myself have been busy planting flats of vegetable starts and preparing the soil for new varieties of tomatoes, basil, beans and corn just to name a few. The children have been busy rediscovering the outdoors and playing in the sun.

New Website

The biggest thing that I have to report is that the new website is up and ready to go! You can read all about it on page 2... or better yet, go check it out yourself! We're in the midst of getting the discussion boards up and running which reminds me that I have a message from the forum administrator on that subject...

Hello to you out there in Cyber-space!!

I want to introduce you to the new Birthing on-line discussion group. Julie has handed me the reins of the forum on the Birthing Alternatives Website and I am doing my best to set up a place where we can all talk, get advice or just vent our frustrations... We really need moms, dads, birthing professionals and you to join us here and make the forum really work. We are the real experts! We've been there!

Please log on to birthingalternatives.com and join in the discussion!

Hope to see you there!

The HotelDetective

The Addition of Classified Ads

In addition to the website, next issue we will be adding a classified ad section to the newsletter. In addition to the standard classified sections there will be a listing for events and announcements (yes birth announcements are included!). The only limitations on these classified ads is that they must be birth or family related. See the box below for more specific information about classified ad placement.

Birth Center in Bellingham!

In other exciting news, Bellingham's brand new birth center has been approved by the city and is currently undergoing remodeling on the corner of Cornwall and Alabama. What a breath of fresh air to see a birth center finally going up in our community! The grand opening is slated for June 7th and will be an exciting event featuring a special appearance by Ina May Gaskin to speak to the community and christen the new center. So mark it on your calendar and plan to come and celebrate with us. For more info call Catriona or Christine at (360) 734-1560.

Midwifery Study Group with Gloria Lemay

On the student midwife front, we are actively looking for pregnant models to come attend our study groups on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 once a month. These are practice prenatal clinics for us and involves nothing invasive for you. If you are pregnant and interested in coming give me a call at (360) 756-6585.

Birthing Retreat

For all you birth professionals, there is still space available for the Birthing Retreat 2004 with Ina May Gaskin on Orcas Island coming up June 1-6 2004. Join us in the beautiful San Juan Islands for six days of education, relaxation and fellowship with premier midwife Ina May Gaskin. Enjoy the beauty of Orcas Island at one of the country's oldest YMCA camps. Come prepared for swimming, hiking, boating, climbing, singing, dancing, and relaxing on the beach. Your full accommodations are included in your registration fee.

Registration Options:

Dederer Conference Center Accommodations:

Our cabins are very modern and sleep four to a room with two full bathrooms and a full kitchen in each cabin. Vegetarian meals will be provided. There is parking nearby.

Registration fees:

Before April 1st - \$825* Before May 1st - \$925*

A \$200 deposit will hold your space until May 15th when the full balance is due.

*\$200 of your registration fee is non-refundable Cancellations after May 1st will not be refunded Register early because space is limited!!!

Single Day Option

For those of you who can't make it for the entire week we are offering a single day option for Saturday June 5th. Our day will begin at 9am and end sometime in the evening (see schedule outline). Your registration fee of \$125 includes lunch and dinner.

Discount offer

We are looking for people to lead small group community-building activities in the morning or afternoon. If you are interested or have something special or unique to offer please let us know on your registration form. We will contact you and if your activity is approved you will receive a \$100 discount off your registration. Please contact us early because there are only a few slots for these activities.

On a more personal note, my baby is turning one this month.

It seems like the time runs through my fingers like water. Wasn't I just writing about his birth not long ago? On that note I found a poem recently that I think fits my mood just perfectly. Especially on days like these when I am rushing to put out this newsletter and I have to remind myself what is really important.

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd finger-paint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run more fields and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.
I'd model less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.

- Diane Loomans

100 - Wanted

Baby Jogger 20 or 16, good condition, B'ham area.
Julie360-756-6585

Pregnant models wanted for prenatal with student midwives. Once a month on Sunday afternoon. Julie 360-756-6585

700 - Services

800 - Events

birth video & discussion night, 7-9pm, Mon Apr 12, May 10, June 14 B'ham Library lecture room. Julie 360-756-6585

Doula Sharing Circle, 2nd Sunday of every month. Location varies.
Traci 360-671-7967

ICAN (International Cesarean Awareness Network) B'ham group meeting - 2nd Tuesday YWCA. Steph 360-733-3535

Birthing Classifieds

- FREE CLASSIFIEDS: available to individuals selling personal items and to non-profit organizations that do not charge for the events or services listed. 15 words (first three words in bold).
- PAID CLASSIFIEDS: ads promoting a business, paid event, professional service or employment. 15 words for \$10. Add'l words, \$0.25ea
- DISPLAY ADS: contact us for more information about display rates. advertising@birthingalternatives.com or (360)756-6585

YOUR INFO.

Required - remember to include your contact info in your ad. Ads are due by: Winter - Nov 25, Spring - Feb 25, Summer - May 25, and Fall - Aug 25 respectively.

Your Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

- Category**
- 100 - Wanted
 - 200 - For Rent
 - 300 - For Sale
 - 400 - Trade
 - 500 - Free
 - 600 - Employment
 - 700 - Services
 - 800 - Events
 - 900 - Announcements

Ad Text: (first three words in bold)

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
\$0.25	\$0.50	\$0.75	\$1.00	\$1.25
\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.50

Total:

Free 15 word ad
Add'l wds \$ _____
 Paid Ad:
15 wds for \$10
Add'l wds \$ _____

X Number of issues =
(Birthing comes out 4x a year)
\$ _____
Birthing reserves the right to refuse to print any ad for any reason. Editor had the right to move ads when appropriate. Publisher is not liable for incidental or consequential damages.

Mail to: Birthing Classifieds PO Box 3107 Bellingham, WA 98227-3107 • E-mail: advertising@birthingalternatives.com • Online: www.birthingalternatives.com

Resource Directory

Island

Aquatic Bodywork
 Wenner, Therese Bellingham (360) 220-3748

Breastfeeding -Support-

La Leche League of Whidbey Island
 Meets second Tuesday monthly
 6:45 p.m.
 Oak Harbor Lutheran Church
 1235 NW 2nd Ave

Jen (360) 279-1940
 Bonnie (360) 679-6785
 Liz (360) 679-8362
 Laura (360) 678-8019
 Julie (360) 679-3562
 Pregnancy Aid of South Whidbey Langley (360) 221-4767
 Whidbey Island Breastfeeding Coalition

Meets Second Friday of the month
 9:00-10:00am
 Law & Justice Center in Coupeville
 Room 131

Johnson, Dori (360) 679-7351
 Miranda, Marilyn (360) 257-8049
 Women, Infants & Children (WIC) (360) 240-5554 x 7670
 S. Whidbey (360) 221-8490
 Camano (360) 387-0184
 Out of County (800) 841-1410

-Lactation Consultants-

Whidbey General Hospital (360) 678-5151 x 1300
 (360) 321-5151 x 1300

Cook, Wendy RNC-IBCLC
 Cochran, Charlene RNC-IBCLC
 Lett, Barbara RNC
 Lodell, Monica RNC
 Ownbey, Kathy RNC

Free 24 hour phone counseling

Clinics

Camano Island Healthcare Center (360) 387-0184
 Coupeville Nursing Annex (360) 679-7351
 North Whidbey Family Resource Center (360) 240-5554 x 7676
 Planned Parenthood Oak Harbor (360) 679-3404
 Langley (360) 321-4455
 South Whidbey Health Services Center (360) 221-8482

Classes

-Breastfeeding-

Women, Infants & Children (WIC) (360) 240-5554 x 7670

-Childbirth-

Island Hospital Anacortes (360) 293-6973
 Moore, Shellie Langley (360) 221-6477
 Whidbey General Hospital Coupeville (360) 678-5151
 Karen ex. 4005

-Infant Massage-

Fallows, Suzie Clinton (360) 579-2596
 Wenner, Therese Bellingham (360) 220-3748

-Natural Birth Control-

Fertility Awareness Samms, Julie Bellingham (360) 756-6585

-Parenting-

Island Hospital Anacortes (360) 299-1367
 Pregnancy Aid of South Whidbey Langley (360) 221-4767

-Yoga-

Bikram's Yoga College Of India Langley (360) 221-8979
 Deer Lake Healing Arts Langley (360) 221-4010
 Integral Yoga Center (360) 579-3735
 Sacred Cow Yoga Center (360) 221-8979
 Yoga Lodge on Whidbey Island (360) 678-2120

Doulas

Bennet-Williams, Taria Clinton (360) 579-1296
 Britton, Callie Greenbank (360) 678-0255
 Dolan, Kim CD Coupeville (360) 678-6007
 Johnson, Tammy Clinton (360) 341-7968
 LeMay, Becky CD Oak Harbor (360) 675-5070
 Moore, Shellie CD, CBE Langley (360) 221-6477
 Rivera, Elizabeth Oak Harbor (360) 678-4272
 Robertson, Mary M.Ed. Oak Harbor (360) 941-0744
 Thatcher, Annie Anacortes (360) 420-2314

Turner, Heather CD Oak Harbor (360) 279-2069

Midwives

Jaffe, Cynthia B, LM Greenbank (360) 678-3594
 McNamara, Winni ARNP, LM, CPM, Bellingham (360) 734-9500
 Burlington (360) 766-6686
 Women's Wisdom Midwifery Care Everson (360) 966-0314
 Gesner, Leslie LM

Naturopaths

Faye, Hope Langley (360) 221-6010
 Clinton (360) 579-4673
 Freeland (360) 331-6470

Nutritionists

Coupeville (360) 678-1361
 Reiki Sumas (360) 988-0533

Reiki

Supplies

-Belly Casts-

Oak Harbor (360) 279-2069

-Birth Balls-

Freeland (360) 331-2582

-Birth Tubs-

Clinton (360) 579-1823

-Herbs-

Coupeville (360) 678-8865
 (360) 398-9951
 Oak Harbor (360) 679-2646

-Homebirth-

Bellingham (360) 966-0314
 Green Homebirth Kit Gesner, Leslie

-Lactation-

Pregnancy Aid of South Whidbey Langley (360) 221-4767
 Women, Infants & Children (WIC) (360) 240-5554 x 7670

-Maternity and Baby Supplies-

Baby Bunz & Company Catalog Lynden (360) 354-1320
 Babynut.com Bellingham (866) 671-3679
 Little Tykes Freeland (360) 331-7797
 Pregnancy Aid of South Whidbey (free) Langley (360) 221-4767
 Pregnancy Care Clinic Oak Harbor (360) 675-2096

Wholistic Family Care

Whidbey General South Clinton (360) 341-5252
 Marthaller, Toni ARNP

San Juan

Aquatic Bodywork

Wenner, Therese Friday Harbor (360) 378-3744

Breastfeeding

-Support-

Women, Infants & Children (WIC) San Juan & Lopez (360) 378-4474
 Orcas (360) 376-4563

Classes

-Infant Massage-

Friday Harbor (360) 378-3744

-Natural Birth Control-

Bellingham (360) 756-6585

-Yoga-

Friday Harbor (360) 378-5737

Clinics

Lopez (360) 468-4117
 Orcas (360) 376-6406
 Friday Harbor (360) 378-5246

Cranio-Sacral Therapy

Wenner, Therese LMP Friday Harbor (360) 378-3744

McDonald, Annette IBCLC Young, Paula
 Affiliated Health Services
 Island Hospital Young, Jan
 Edmunds, Judy CH, RNC, CPM, LM Bellingham (360) 647-1220
 Wenner, Therese Bellingham (360) 220-3748

Fertility Awareness Samms, Julie Bellingham (360) 756-6585
 Catholic Community Services (360) 416-7546
 Community Mental Health Services (360) 416-7500
 Families That Work (360) 424-1015

Doulas

Roche Harbor (360) 378-8742
 Friday Harbor (360) 378-9426
 Orcas (360) 376-4490
 (360) 378-9609
 Friday Harbor (360) 378-3316
 Lopez (360) 468-3577

Midwives

Eastsound (360) 376-4267
 Everson (360) 966-0314

Naturopaths

Friday Harbor (360) 378-6374
 Olga (360) 376-5454
 Friday Harbor (360) 378-5660

Reiki

Sumas (360) 988-0533
 Lopez (360) 468-3577

Supplies

-Herbs-

Eastsound (360) 376-6599
 (360) 398-9951
 Eastsound (360) 376-8272
 (360) 378-2939

-Homebirth-

Bellingham (360) 966-0314

-Maternity and Baby Supplies-

Baby Bunz & Company Catalog Lynden (360) 354-1320
 Babynut.com Bellingham (866) 671-3679

Skagit

Aquatic Bodywork

Wenner, Therese Bellingham (360) 220-3748

Breastfeeding

-Support-

La Leche League of Skagit County Kelly La Conner (360) 466-1027
 La Leche League of North Snohomish

Meets Third Monday monthly
 10:30 a.m.
 Stanwood City Library
 9701 271st St NW

Elise Skagit County Breastfeeding Network (360) 629-6189
 Meets 4th Wednesday monthly
 Town and Country restaurant in Mount Vernon

Elise Skagit County Breastfeeding Network (360) 629-6189
 Meets 4th Wednesday monthly
 Town and Country restaurant in Mount Vernon

Elise WIC (360) 416-7595
 (360) 336-9392
 (360) 856-7318
 (360) 466-3163
 (360) 856-4200

-Lactation Consultants-

McDonald, Annette IBCLC Anacortes (360) 293-4066
 Young, Paula Sedro Woolley (360) 856-6927

Classes

-Childbirth-

Mt. Vernon (360) 428-2424
 Anacortes (360) 293-6973
 Sedro Woolley (360) 856-6927

-CPR & First Aid-

Edmunds, Judy CH, RNC, CPM, LM Bellingham (360) 647-1220

-Infant Massage-

Wenner, Therese Bellingham (360) 220-3748

-Natural Birth Control-

Fertility Awareness Samms, Julie Bellingham (360) 756-6585

-Parenting-

Catholic Community Services (360) 416-7546
 Community Mental Health Services (360) 416-7500
 Families That Work (360) 424-1015

Resource Directory

North Cascades Health Council (360) 856-0846
 Kundalini Yoga Anacortes (425) 761-3101
 (360) 588-1223

Doulas

Dolan, Kim CD Coupeville (360) 678-6007
 Healy, Landis Bellingham (360) 752-3195
 McLaren, Shanie CD (425) 258-6128
 Railing, Hannah CD, ICCE Burlington (360) 421-1227
 Robertson, Mary M.Ed. Bellingham (360) 941-0744
 Sedwick, Jackie Bellingham (360) 756-0914
 Thatcher, Annie (360) 420-2314
 Werner, Jenny Sedro Woolley (360) 854-0816

Herbalists

Edmunds, Judy CH, RNC, CPM, LM Bellingham (360) 647-1220

Midwives

Antonich, Michelle ND, LM Anacortes (360) 336-5658
 Edmunds, Judy CH, RNC, CPM, LM Bellingham (360) 647-1220
Gentle Hands Midwifery
 Munro, Catriona LM Bellingham (360) 734-1560
 Gibbs, Christine LM
Ruth's Midwifery Clinic
 Gerhard, Lynette L, CNM Mt. Vernon (360) 419-9916
 McNamara, Winni ARNP, LM, CPM Bellingham (360) 734-9500
 Burlington (360) 766-6686
Women's Wisdom Midwifery Care
 Gesner, Leslie LM Everson (360) 966-0314

Naturopaths

Mische, Magda Anacortes (360) 293-4718
 Skagit Naturopathic Clinic Mt. Vernon (360) 424-3460
 Skagit Natural Family Medicine Anacortes (360) 336-5658

Reiki

O'Brien, Kristin Sumas (360) 988-0533
 Sedwick, Jackie Bellingham (360) 756-0914

Supplies

-Herbs-

Lake Danuta Anacortes (360) 299-9312
 Mother Bloom Botanicals (360) 398-9951

-Homebirth-

Green Homebirth Kit Bellingham (360) 966-0314
 Gesner, Leslie

-Maternity and Baby Supplies-

Baby Bunz & Company Catalog Lynden (360) 354-1320
 Babynut.com Bellingham (866) 671-3679

Whatcom

Aquatic Bodywork

Arne Hanna Aquatic Center Bellingham (360) 647-7665
 Wenner, Therese Bellingham (360) 220-3748

Breastfeeding

-Support-

La Leche League
Bellingham
 Meets 2nd Wednesday Monthly
 10 a.m.
 Garden Street Family Center
 1231 N. Garden St.
County
 Meets 3rd Tuesday Monthly
 7 p.m.
 Various Locations

Ames, Pam (360) 592-5052
 Dunford, Brenda (360) 398-1741
 Malquist, Bridget (360) 715-8507
 Stratford, Suzanne (360) 354-8278
 Thalhofer, Terry (360) 595-2403
 Zersen, Judie (360) 715-2020

Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

Bellingham (360) 738-2505
 County (360) 384-1633

-Lactation Consultants-

Auerbach, Kathleen Bellingham (360) 384-1755

Brotherton, Jeanne Bellingham (360) 671-3935
 Jimenez, Barbie Bellingham (360) 647-1544
 Telfer, Holly Bellingham (360) 715-4170
 Zersen, Judie Bellingham (360) 715-2020

Classes

-Breastfeeding-

Bellingham (360) 715-8350

-Childbirth-

Bellingham (360) 224-9838
 Bellingham (360) 738-9015
 Bellingham (360) 733-3535
 Bellingham (360) 756-6585
 Bellingham (360) 671-7967
 Bellingham (360) 715-8350
 Bellingham (360) 758-9854
 Bellingham (360) 715-2020

-CPR & First Aid-

Bellingham (360) 647-1220

-Infant Massage-

Bellingham (360) 220-3748

-Natural Birth Control-

Bellingham (360) 756-6585

-Parenting-

Bellingham (360) 738-0221
 Bellingham (360) 734-4616
 Bellingham (360) 734-4616

-Yoga-

Bellingham (360) 656-6596
 Bellingham (360) 734-8663
 Bellingham (360) 647-0712

Clinics

Planned Parenthood Bellingham (360) 734-9095
 Whatcom County Pregnancy Center Bellingham (360) 671-9057

Counseling

Bethany Christian Services Bellingham (360) 733-6042
 Brigid Collins Bellingham (360) 734-4616
 Lynden Human Life Lynden (360) 354-3862

Cranio-Sacral Therapy

Bates, Robert B. DC Bellingham (360) 398-7466
Free Cranio-Sacral Therapy for infants less than 1 month old
 Bellingham CranioSacral Therapy Center Bellingham (360) 734-1560
Free Cranio-Sacral Therapy for infants less than 3 months old
 Wenner, Therese LMP Bellingham (360) 220-3748

Doulas

Bellingham (360) 224-9838
 Lummi Island (360) 758-9934
 Everson (360) 988-6704
 Lummi Island (360) 758-2646
 Bellingham (360) 650-1331
 Bellingham (360) 756-1265
 Bellingham (360) 738-9015
 Bellingham (360) 398-9951
 Bellingham (360) 733-3535
 Bellingham (360) 398-1105
 Bellingham (360) 392-0610
 Bellingham (360) 752-3195
 Bellingham (360) 756-9944
 (866) 608-7999
 Bellingham (360) 756-1819
 Bellingham (360) 733-5684
 Bellingham (360) 756-0914
 Bellingham (360) 671-7967
 Bellingham (360) 738-6915
 Bellingham (360) 734-7010
 Bellingham (206) 919-0213

Herbalists

Edmunds, Judy CH, RNC, CPM, LM (Or) Bellingham (360) 647-1220
 Nagler, Suzanne La Conner (360) 466-1357
 Quintana, Linda Bellingham (360) 733-0157
 Sothman, Amy Bellingham (360) 715-8123
 Sprague, Bonnie Bellingham (360) 756-9793

Midwives

Birthroot Midwifery
 Tive, Ann LM Bellingham (360) 734-2182
 Edmunds, Judy CH, RNC, CPM, LM Bellingham (360) 647-1220
Gentle Hands Midwifery
 Munro, Catriona LM Bellingham (360) 734-1560
 Gibbs, Christine LM Bellingham (360) 734-9500
 McNamara, Winni ARNP, LM, CPM Bellingham (360) 734-9500

Schickler, Barbara CNM, ARNP Bellingham (360) 647-1544
 Willis, Susan CNM, CFNP Bellingham (360) 715-4170

Women's Wisdom Midwifery Care

Gesner, Leslie LM Everson (360) 966-0314

Naturopaths

Arvidson, Steven B.Sc., ND Bellingham (360) 647-8103
 Elliott Patricia ND Bellingham (360) 647-0228
 Grobe Mystique Dr ND LAC Bellingham (360) 527-2812
 Healing Ways Clinic Bellingham (360) 733-1693
 Herdman Rachelle Bellingham (360) 734-0045
 Knickrehm Whitney ND Bellingham (360) 734-1560
 Leonard Jessica Dr ND Lac Bellingham (360) 647-1340
 Littleton, Dennis ND Lac Ac Bellingham (360) 676-5337
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