

\$2,500 IN FREE STUFF UP FOR GRABS! SEE PAGE 15 FOR DETAILS

PREGNANCY & newborn

Empower yourself

THE KEYS TO A
CONFIDENT
pregnancy

The latest buzz
on caffeine

**SMART
RESPONSES**
to nosy questions

**Design
inspiration
for the
nursery**

**BABYMOON
AFTER BIRTH**
Bonding with your
new arrival

**TRAINING
FOR LABOR**
Get your head
in the game

**BABY
SKIN
CARE**

**Mama
got back
... PAIN**

**TRICKS
AND
TREATS**
Costumes
for moms
and tots

October 2011

\$5.99US \$5.99CAN 10>



0 74851 08489 2

Display until October 31, 2011

There are a myriad of different situations you may find yourself in when you discover you have successfully conceived a child. You may have decided to begin trying only a few weeks prior. You may have been charting your basal temperature and tracking your ovulation for months to no avail, deciding to enlist help from specialists before finally hearing the blissful sounds of a tiny heartbeat. Or you may find yourself—after a few days of feeling “off”—staring at two pink lines in shocked surprise at the realization your life now has a completely different trajectory than you anticipated it would when you woke up that morning.

No matter what circumstances led to the moment of the discovery that you're growing a human being and will soon become a mother, it's likely that at a certain point, some level of fear will enter the picture. Housing new life is no small task, and it's normal—and actually necessary—for you to take a keen interest in details about your health and lifestyle that you may have been able to gloss over in your prebaby life. But don't let this hyperawareness take over and rob you of self-confidence. Face your fears and empower yourself as you undergo the transformation into motherhood.



Facts vs. feelings

A frequent refrain you'll hear as you navigate pregnancy and plan for birth is to educate yourself as much as possible in order to make the decisions that best serve your personal needs. But while knowledge may certainly be power, it isn't always an antidote for anxiety, and in fact may introduce new fears. In their book, *The Greatest Pregnancy Ever: Keys to the Mother-Baby Bond*, Tracy Wilson-Peters, COCE, CLE, CLD, and Laurel Wilson, IBCLC, COCE, CLE, CLD, explore the importance of acknowledging apprehension, and of not dismissing feelings when gathering facts. Says Wilson, “Becoming conscious is becoming self-aware—aware of our thoughts and emotions. Thoughts and emotions shape daily lives, affecting our health, stress levels, fertility and the growth of our babies. Studies show that our beliefs and attitudes have a direct impact on our overall health.”

The more in tune you are with yourself, the better able you'll be to interpret the information you receive throughout your pregnancy and make decisions based on what's best not only for your body, but for your overall well-being. Wilson-Peters explains, “Moving from the idea of ‘informed consent,’ which is a legal/medical term that means you accept a procedure, to embracing the idea of being in conscious agreement or ‘harmony’ with every decision we make is crucial to the health of the mother-baby connection.” This mother-baby connection will bring a peaceful atmosphere to your pregnancy and equip you with the self-awareness to confront any prenatal worries you may be experiencing.



[tip] Confined to bed for the near future? You can get some good mood-boosting mojo even without raising your heart rate. Use meditation and mindfulness as tools for feeling centered while in your stationary situation.



A setup for success

Though there are a few people who seem to come by self-confidence naturally and effortlessly, the majority of us need tools to boost our aplomb and maintain a sense of conviction in our actions. Just like any other aspect of a healthy lifestyle, self-confidence is a trait that requires a certain level of discipline to maintain.

Positive reinforcements

It may seem obvious, but it bears repeating: You are your best self when you are backed by people who care for and believe in you. Wilson asserts, "Making the choice to surround yourself in loving, supportive relationships actually changes the brain, heart patterns and overall mental and physical health. The people in our lives

transform us, for the better or for the worse. Choosing to be around people who contribute to your happiness and health will have a profound effect on your fertility and growing baby. We become mirrors of who we spend time with."

Consider your relationship with your healthcare provider. Do you feel heard? Are your concerns taken seriously? If the answer to either of these questions is no, you may want to look elsewhere until you

find a doctor or midwife with whom you feel comfortable. Similarly, who makes up your personal support system? Do you have someone you can talk to about your most embarrassing and intimate concerns? Such a thing is not a luxury—it's a necessity. If family or friends are not easily accessible, look for a pregnancy support group to lean on. Often you can find one through your local hospital or birthing center.

Eat for two, eat for you

You already know good prenatal nutrition is important for providing the building blocks for a healthy baby, but eating well can boost your emotional health also. If you are indeed what you eat, then it stands to reason that if you eat well, you will be well. The choice to focus on your diet should be as much a decision for you as it is for your growing baby. And how you view this maternity-induced modification in your eating habits can make a world of difference in the effect it has on your state of mind. Wilson asserts, "When expectant moms shift from an attitude of feeling burdened by healthy choices to seeing those choices as loving gifts for themselves and their babies, this positively affects their emotional state and, in turn, the health of the developing fetus."

Work it out

Exercise takes on a new role in your life during pregnancy. It becomes less a means for sculpted abs and a trimmed waistline and more a gateway to ease of motion, better circulation and improved mood—all of which contribute to a presence of mind conducive to self-control and confidence. "Movement, whether for exercise or stress reduction, is integral to a healthy pregnancy," says Wilson-Peters. "It offers mothers the ability to tone their muscles and organs while reducing stress, which releases beta endorphins and calms the mind." Just knowing your body is able to handle exertion and endurance can help quell fears surrounding the labor process.

“Choosing to be around people who contribute to your happiness and health will have a profound effect on your fertility and growing baby.”

—LAUREL WILSON, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., C.C.E., C.L.E., C.L.D.

