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Age appropriate body safety education

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postnatal fitness,
emotional support,
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floor health, mothers
groups

For the toddlers

clothes, toys, sleep
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Benefits of being barefoot

Dropping the mama guilt

Baby essentials

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Welcome

As the world grows noisier, and the weight of others' opinions becomes heavier, it is more and more important to seek the support you need to become the kind of parent you want to be.

So much of parenting is re-parenting ourselves, learning new ways of being, and allowing ourselves to trust our inner tuition. It can help to remember the voice of our intuition is the one to listen to above all others, especially when it comes to our children and our families.

Yes the world is a big place, and while we are all unique individuals with different values, we are also here to connect with and care for one another.

These pages are full of so many beautiful people ready to support you and your family. All the businesses here are heart centred and are waiting with open arms to listen to what your needs are and how they can help you meet them.

Remember it is always okay to ask for help, we are not meant to 'do it all', and when the humaning gets hard is when we need to reach out to others for support.

Reach out. Reach out. Reach out.

love Natalie



*Sunshine Coast Baby acknowledges the Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi) and Jinibara people of the Sunshine Coast Region. We acknowledge your deep spiritual connection to the land and all the living things here. With our heart we accept and know it's a powerful bond that can never be broken. To the Elders past & present, and to the old people, we wish to pay you great respect. To the wonderful Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi) and Jinibara community, we acknowledge the amazingness of your continuing culture and the contribution you give to the vibrance of the Sunshine Coast Region.
Written by Louise O'Reilly*

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BABY, IT'S ONLY NATURAL provides new mums with practical advice and up-to-date information so they can confidently introduce new foods to their baby's diet.

This book emphasises the importance of building your baby's natural immunity, gut health microbiome, and the prevention of food intolerances and behaviour disorder. Including a week-by-week guide to introducing foods, explanation of baby-led weaning vs purees, food introduction guidelines, information about allergies and intolerances and recipes.

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To complement her book, Karen has created an online course for you and your partner to build your own Pregnancy Action Plan. She guides you through the strategies you can use including choosing a positive mindset, practicing pregnancy yoga, ensuring there's plenty of space for your baby, getting your partner onboard and educating yourselves about healthy, positive birth. You can start preparing for a fabulous birth today.

The book and online course are available at
www.birthisandbabyvillage.com.au www.birthandbabyvillage.com.au

Karen Shlegeris is a childbirth and parenting educator, pregnancy and postnatal yoga teacher, birth doula, infant massage instructor and birth debriefing counsellor. She has over 25 years' experience working helping women prepare for the birth of their dreams.

"An empowering MUST read for every mother and mother-to-be"
— HELEN SWIFT, WOMEN'S HEALTH PHYSIOTHERAPIST AND MOTHER OF TWO



Inspired Pregnancy

Joyful Birth



Pregnancy action plan PLUS
35 positive birth stories of triumph and joy

KAREN SHLEGERIS



“Shhh, my baby’s listening”

By Karen Shlegaris

Imagine if you told people you'd become engaged to be married, and they congratulated you, then asked you if you were scared about the wedding? What if they said that it was lovely to get married but that you shouldn't get your hopes up about your special day because things can go wrong and it's best to go with the flow and be prepared for it to be a bad experience, but that doesn't matter because at least you'll have a husband at the end of the day?

We wouldn't accept this for a moment about our wedding, but somehow it's become acceptable for people to tell us this sort of thing about giving birth.

Well I say "No more horror birth stories!" If you're pregnant and someone starts to tell you their horror story, you are so welcome to say, "No thank you, I'd prefer not to hear your story. My baby's listening."

People who have wonderful positive births don't just go with the flow. They are proactive and choose to take specific actions during their pregnancies to stack the cards in their favour to achieve the great births they desire.

What do they do? Things like attending pregnancy yoga and Calmbirth or another independent childbirth course with their partner, and choosing a care provider and place of birth which matches their values and wishes for birth. They choose to take in positive messages about what podcasts they listen to, the books and websites they read, the social media they follow, the people they hang around with. They have their body checked by a women's health physio, osteo or chiro to ensure their pelvis is balanced to allow plenty of room for their baby to pass through.

All of these strategies increase your chance of having a positive experience of pregnancy, of giving birth to your precious baby, and of

having a smooth transition to parenting. Why does it matter? Because you deserve to feel comfortable and enjoy your pregnancy. To feel close and connected with your partner. To prepare for your birth together. You have the right to bring your baby into the world safely, calmly and joyfully. Many women do, and you can too. And when the birth is smooth, the first days, weeks and months of life with your new baby are likely to be more manageable too.

So my advice is to say, "Shhhh, my baby's listening!" when people want to tell you their negative stuff. Find your positive birth community and hang out with them, to soak up all the positive messages and vibes that you can find, and prepare a pregnancy action plan so that your months of pregnancy are useful and enjoyable. You might even become a lover of all things birthy like me!



The wonderful birth of my first son 28 years ago awoke a passion for childbirth within me and I've been working with pregnant and postnatal women and their families ever since. I've taught childbirth and parenting education classes, Calmbirth courses, pregnancy and mums & bubs yoga, infant massage classes, birth debriefing sessions and I've supported births as a doula. Birthwork is fabulous. You get to hang out with divine people who want to have fabulous births and be amazing parents. People like you. I've chosen 35 of my clients' beautiful, positive birth stories and put them in my new book Inspired Pregnancy, Joyful Birth to show you that birth can indeed be safe, healthy and joyful. Check out page 49 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer. www.birthandbabyvillage.com.au.



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Practicing yoga during pregnancy can be an engaging, rewarding and comforting experience for pregnant women!

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You will be given several tools and techniques to help you feel empowered during your pregnancy through to your birth, and help you make the right choices about your body and your baby.

Join us to get the opportunity to share your pregnancy and birth experience with other like-minded mothers, and be supported and inspired on your journey!



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The beauty of pregnancy yoga

Pregnancy yoga is a valuable and important practice for women at all stages in their journey towards motherhood.

Through yoga, more and more women are now receiving the support, knowledge and tools that can help to alter their perspectives about pregnancy. Feeling strong, supported and empowered throughout your pregnancy can also change the way you approach childbirth.

Pregnancy yoga coach Kate, who runs the BEarth studio on the Sunshine Coast, says regular practice can help prepare expectant mothers for the rollercoaster journey of birthing and becoming a new mother.

"When I was pregnant with my first baby, I was terrified and overwhelmed with the idea of giving birth," Kate says. "I couldn't understand how anyone could be prepared for such an unpredictable event. I started researching the prenatal process and through my reading, discovered the philosophy of pregnancy yoga."

According to Kate, practising yoga can help ease the discomforts of pregnancy, as well as assist with circulation and blood flow. Learning pelvic floor toning and relaxation exercises may also contribute to a more controlled birthing experience.

"Labour is an inner marathon that requires a pregnant woman to stay focused while remaining calm and relaxed. Women who are strong and attentive to their mind and body during this time are more capable of facing the challenges of labour and birth," Kate says. Through regular practice, expectant mothers can gain valuable insights that can easily be incorporated during labour and birth. These tools include affirmations, visualisations and meditations as well as knowledge about how your body works during birth.

"The beautiful thing about practising yoga during pregnancy is the opportunity to

reconnect with your body, and to connect with your baby and your inner guidance," Kate says.

"My classes provide a space for women to feel nurtured, supported and educated throughout their sacred journey into motherhood. I love seeing like-minded women connecting through yoga and sharing their pregnancy and birth wisdom with each other!"



Kate is a yoga teacher who is passionate about supporting and guiding pregnant women throughout the unforgettable journey of meeting their beautiful baby! She loves getting to know all the women who attend her classes and is excited to be building a beautiful community of like-minded mummies-to-be!

www.earth.com.au



Aramania is a fun place for baby and you. I specialise in kangatraining classes and babywearing support as well as selling a range of baby carriers and other fun and useful items for baby and you.

Kangatraining is a multi-award winning activity for mums and bubs. You get to exercise with your baby in a way that is safe and fun, while building strength and fitness. Classes run each week so come along for a trial class.

As a Kangatrainer I am not only trained in rebuilding strength and fitness post pregnancy but in safe baby wearing. I offer 1:1 or small group help as well as stock a range of carriers available for sale.

Babywearing Support

Looking for help with a specific carrier to get the fitting just right or wanting to try a range of carriers before you purchase? Then book one of my 1:1 sessions and I can come and help you out.

If you are interested in a social babywearing group checkout Sunshine Coast Babywearing on Facebook.

www.aramania.com.au



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Your baby will love being close to you as you have fun dancing and exercising...

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or email Tamara your local trainer for more info.



All Wrapped Up in Love

Have you heard? Carrying your baby can help increase your postnatal fitness and strengthen your pelvic floor. Tamara from Aramania tells us how.

The faint sounds of a groovy baseline are emerging from a building on the Sunshine Coast. Open the door and you'll find a group of sweaty mothers, each carrying a baby snuggled tight against her chest.

Welcome to Kangatraining, a combination of babywearing cuddles and a safe return to exercise for postnatal mums.

Kangatraining classes offer a gentle workout that concentrates on re-strengthening the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles, designed specifically for new mothers. The exercise classes combine low impact interval training with floor work and a variety of dance style tracks.

And perhaps best of all, unlike most exercise classes, mums don't need to worry about finding a babysitter or keeping their baby settled. As the babies are worn during class, they often drift off to sleep, soothed by the rhythms of the music and the movement.

"Kanga classes are fun and light-hearted and are as much about the "Mum Friends" and connections as the exercise," says Tamara, Aramania owner and registered Kangatraining instructor. "Having said that, we still work up a sweat and as your baby grows, so does your strength!"

Babywearing is one of the simplest and greatest tools for parenting, providing both freedom for the parents and security for the baby. It is practised across many cultures around the world. There are many different techniques available, from fabric wrapping to material carriers to structured front packs.

Like many second-time mothers, Tamara was worried about how she would juggle a toddler and a newborn. Then a friend introduced her

to a local babywearing group and a new world of opportunity emerged.

"I fell in love," Tamara says. "I could snuggle my baby and chase my toddler. I could hang out the washing or even do some work while still holding my baby tight. I even learnt to feed in the carrier, which makes for a great story about when a nosy stranger wanted to see the baby while I was feeding in the grocery store."

"These days, the selection of carriers is exceptional," Tamara says. "It is important to have the ability to try out different styles before purchasing and to figure out what works for your family and you."

"Having carried my own children for over eight years, I decided to train to become a certified consultant so I could help other families work out what helps them."

Developing her babywearing business led Tamara in turn to Kangatraining.

"I did Kanga with my second until he was two and a half. But when I wanted to find a class to do with my third child, I couldn't find an instructor on the Sunshine Coast," Tamara says. "So I decided to do it myself."

"I completed the Kangatraining Australia instructor course and have been running classes in Maroochydore and Nambour."

If you are looking for a fun, easy and safe way to return to fitness, and to meet some mama friends, Kangatraining ticks all the boxes.

With a wide selection of baby carriers, nappies and other fun products for your baby and you, Tamara at Aramania offers a wealth of babywearing advice. For information about carriers and Kangatraining classes visit her website. Check out page 49 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer.
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Perineal Massage - yay or nay?

By Bernadette Lack

For the majority of my career, I hated talking about perineal massage. Despite there being good evidence for it, I didn't believe in it. I believed that the body was made for birth full stop. It didn't need any extra help, thank you very much.

I still very much believe the body is made to birth. I also now know a lot more about how the pelvis works during birth and how the state this space is in can impact our outcomes.

Let me explain a little more....

The pelvic floor needs to contract and then lengthen 3.5 times its size in order to get out of the way as your uterus pushes your babe out (yep, it's your uterus that pushes your babe out and no you don't have to strain or force to get it out). This is something it is totally capable of.

However, the pelvic floor can often hold a lot of tension due to our modern ways of living. Think lack of/restricted movement, emotional stress, previous investigations and procedures that can cause adhesions and scar tissue.

Now if our neck is tight and sore, we often hold it quite still. Restricting its movement. We wouldn't encourage it to lengthen and extend 3.5 times its size. And if we did, what do you think would happen?

Yep! You guessed it. It would most likely get more injured.

If muscles and/or connective tissue are tight, they have a higher chance of tearing when they are being asked to lengthen/stretch/perform. We know this from sports injuries.

Now what do we do to soften a tight muscle?

That's right! We massage it and try to eliminate the cause of tension. The pelvic

floor is no different. In preparing for sports events, we'd cater to our muscles needs.

Birth is a physiological event.

I now see perineal massage as a really epic way to connect with our body and prepare it for birth. There are however more ways (and much less intrusive methods) to do this than just traditional perineal massage. Over the years I've gone from loving a deep "oh yeah, right there, make it hurt" massage to now being more of a "hardly touch me and let my body do the work" type person.

Say what? #YoureWildB

So here is what I've learnt as I've epically aged...

- The body responds to kindness a whole lot more than hard and fast. Especially our vaginas.
- The body is super responsive. If it feels safe it will soften. If it feels threatened it will harden and protect itself. Vaginas are epic at telling you to go away if they don't like you.
- The point of massage is to facilitate the body to soften and release. The masseuse facilitates an opportunity for the body to do the real work and to keep doing it afterwards
- All that stuff my yoga teachers used to go on about around the breath was right #ItsSoPowerful

As I always say "do you". Don't do it, do it, do it harder or softer. Do you and what you believe in and need to do for you.

For more info on preparing your pelvic bowl for birth, head to @coreandfloorstore on Instagram or book a consultation. Check out page 49 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer.
www.coreandfloor.com.au



BIRTHING

ENERGY

Hi, I'm Bec! I'm a Registered Midwife, Calmbirth Educator and Prenatal Yoga Instructor. I started Birthing Energy to provide women and their families with education and services which positively enrich their transition into parenthood.

Calmbirth is one of the most holistic, thorough, unbiased and collaboratively designed childbirth education courses that addresses all the needs of birthing couples on an emotional and physical level.

My offerings include; group and private Calmbirth courses on the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane, weekly pregnancy yoga classes, and free online resources via my website. I look forward to sharing this really special time with you!



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Dropping the mama guilt

By Aimee Rothnie

Mama guilt, it's something we have all felt. Perhaps even hearing that word took your mind back to a specific time where you felt the intense weight of mama guilt. The crippling kind. The kind that happens in the pit of your stomach, that you dwell on, and beat yourself up about, whilst also telling yourself stories like "I am not a good mama" or "I am such a failure".

Most of our beliefs are formed from birth through to age seven. This period is fundamental in creating our entire belief system and is influenced by the people and environment around us, our primary caregivers and also societal expectations. The societal expectations placed on mothers are likely heavily contributing to the collective experience of mama guilt.

For example, if you had a mother who was "doing it all" and was incredibly burnt out and neglecting time for herself because she believed it was selfish of her to do so, there is a strong likelihood that you will have similar beliefs around work and self-care.

Additionally when you have the belief and thought patterns, "I am not a good enough mama", or "I am not worthy of this journey of being a mama" or "I am a failure", your reality is influenced by these beliefs. This is because your brain is always looking for information to prove that these belief systems are true, so it will start creating scenarios to continue to prove that... until you decide to rewire your beliefs.

Your subconscious mind is the home of your beliefs, and is responsible for 95% of your life - from your bodily functions like breath and digestion, to memory creation and belief forming. It is so important to become clear on your belief systems, to challenge the ones that aren't serving you and to change them at the subconscious level. Re-wiring at this level creates a long-lasting change.

When you begin to bring awareness to your own belief systems, patterns and behaviours, you can start modelling change for yourself and your own family.

In overcoming their limiting beliefs and re-wiring new ones, women come to know their value and worth. It is in speaking from this place of worthiness that they are able to get their needs met without feeling such mama guilt. Building selfworth is one of the greatest antidotes to mamaguilt.

Furthermore, when women feel empowered to start choosing themselves amongst the patriarchal system in our society and stand true to their own values and beliefs, they can raise a generation of children who aren't afraid to use their voice and are ready to challenge the societal norms placed on them.

So Mama, you are the absolute core unit of the family, it all starts with you, and the sooner you choose you, the sooner your entire family will benefit from it. You can be the one that breaks the cycle and starts getting your needs met by letting go of the beliefs that are no longer serving you.

When we value and believe in ourselves and we change our belief systems the effects ripple out to the world around us. This is the work of breaking generational cycles. And the ripple effect will be felt by your grandchildren's grandchildren.

My mission is to have a society filled with "badass mamas" that aren't afraid to know their value and worth. I am a mentor for the mamas and I use a combination of proven modalities to work with you to overcome the beliefs that are affecting how you show up in motherhood. I help you to rewire your subconscious mind, become emotionally resilient, and give you the tips and tools to support your healing by moving it energetically through your body whilst also integrating it into motherhood. Reach out to me on Instagram @aimee.rothnie

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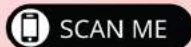


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The business of birth: rising induction rates and the monetisation of labour

By Caitlyn Parry and Ash Rasmussen

The 2020 Mothers and Babies report was released earlier this year and the results are disappointing. Up from 35.5% in 2010 the recent statistics show that 46.8% of first-time mums were induced, with no change to perinatal mortality rates (AIHW 2020). Is this telling us that humans have evolved as such so that 46.8% of women cannot birth their babies?

Even though we know about the cascade of intervention and the increased likelihood of a caesarean (major surgery), infection and bleeding that comes from an induction (Coates et al 2020; Girvell et al 2012), these stats continue to rise.

While we are privileged to have access to the modern maternity care we do, could it be it is this very system that is creating the narrative that women's bodies need to be managed? Is an unfortunate side effect of modern healthcare the belief that we are inherently incapable of growing and birthing our babies without intervention?

Like many things in our world today, monetisation (and liability) has changed the landscape of birth. Let's follow the money.

Each hospital in Australia is its own private entity, publicly funded by the state and federal government. A component of this funding is activity based funding whereby the hospital is paid for each procedure carried out. Every intervention is a procedure, so anything that is done in the pregnancy and birth space awards a bonus, from a cannula to a caesarean.

The more procedures carried out, the more incentives and bonuses the hospital receives – "cha ching".

There are also the fines, or "hospital acquired complication adjustments". A hospital will

receive a negative monetary adjustment for not intervening if a woman sustains a third degree vaginal tear, whereas if they perform an episiotomy they are awarded a bonus.

The publicly available QLD Health Funding Guidelines show a 5x greater monetary reward for a caesarean over a vaginal birth. Perhaps this could help to explain the 37% caesarean rate?

Ultimately what the report reflects is that the system is working like a well-oiled machine. But this machine is not considering all of the specific intricacies of each individual birthing woman's circumstances nor the cascade of intervention. And it is likely instilling a distrust in women and their bodies, and planting doubt that they are not able to do innately what their bodies are so perfectly designed to do.

Put simply, the stats show that the system is failing too many women.

So where to from here? There will not be change within the system in a hurry, therefore it is the women that need to change, to adapt and to rise up. Knowledge is power, and empowering yourself with the knowledge needed to navigate the system will be your greatest asset. Most of all give yourself time and space, both while pregnant and preparing for birth, and also while birthing. Time and space to make informed decisions that are best for you and your family.

Cait and Ash provide education and loving support to women and their families through pregnancy, birth and postpartum. They have curated a menu of support packages from maiden to mother that create space for deep connection, community, and support, the kind the world has left behind. "To bring humanity back to the human experience we need to start with birth". Head over to their birthkeeping page to book a free coffee and chat meeting www.birthmamas.com.au



FANTASTIC futures

I recognised a few years ago that I had been crushed, beaten by the buildup of transfers in my life. The transition from maiden to mother, the transition from mother of children to mother of neuro-divergent teens, and the transition of working in my passion to working in the corporate world.

Then a miracle happened for me. I discovered The Richards Trauma Process (TRTP), and it changed my world. A new life began to grow, and I found myself again; I dove headfirst back into living a passionate life in the field that makes me sparkle.

The change was so profound for me that I trained in TRTP in order to share it with others. Now I help women to have empowered first, second and third births and parenting journeys. I mentor parents in their VBACs, and I support mothers in finding their sparkle again. So don't let the transitions of life rob you of your sparkle. Reach out and let me support you to step into your best life.
- Pippa Scott

"Working with Pippa created freedom and a sense of calm that released me to launch into my own business, connect with my children on a deeper level and reveal more of who I really am"
Mel James

TRTP Certified Birth trauma specialist
Doula
VBAC mentor



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The ripple effect of resolving birth trauma

Imagine a world where birth is not feared, where it is a celebrated pivotal moment in a woman's life. Imagine a world where mothers are strong, confident and connected, and able to bond with their babies, trusting their own abilities and intuition.

In western culture, birth is not as honoured as a rite of passage from maiden to motherhood as in other cultures around the globe. Very little is celebrated in the journey of women's reproduction, despite it being such a huge part of our lives. Fear is generated by the media, through stories from friends and family, and sometimes from our own birthing experiences. Hospital attitudes and the way women are treated during their care often imply deficiencies in a woman's decision-making capacities. Women who have amazing birth stories often don't share them for fear of triggering women who have had trauma.

Some 30% of new mothers experience birth trauma. Many more also feel alone, unheard and are often overwhelmed. Postnatal depression is sometimes misdiagnosed PTSD. Women are told by well-meaning family and friends to be grateful that they have a healthy baby, creating further doubt within the woman about her mothering abilities. For some new parents, past trauma caused by absent or abusive parents may also be an issue.



But what if it didn't have to be this way? What if as individual people, mothers, fathers and care providers, we made other choices? Would the world be different if we created a nurturing atmosphere that allowed for an empowering birthing experience for everyone involved?

In this world, there are mothers who are confident in their intuition and are connected to their feminine strength and power, sharing questions and answers with other mothers while knowing the exchange of information holds value, support and love.

There are strong, grounded men who live without the pain of their past and are connected, present partners and fathers. Men who become rocks of strength for their families, able to aid in the healing and nourishment of our culture in dynamic and positive ways. And there are communities that encircle these new families, aiding with meals, cleaning and childcare, and allowing parents to bond with their baby in this sacred time.

Achievable? Yes!! I know it is, I have lived it! While the journey is different for us all, our shared experiences of releasing pain, trauma or periods of stress from our past are fundamental. Be it generational issues, childhood abandonment or trauma from a history of bullying, abuse or betrayal, it is important that we all face our concerns head-on.

Whatever it is that triggers you and keeps you in a state of anxiety or depression, it is stopping you from enjoying a life in which you can truly thrive. We can create a better world—one woman, one man, one family at a time.

Pippa Scott is a doula of nearly 20 years, birth trauma specialist and TRIP practitioner. She has a passion for supporting people to live pain free so that they can be the best versions of themselves as people and as parents. Check out page 49 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer. www.fantasticfuture.com.au

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Founder
Rosi Ngwenya

Going With the Flow

Tina Kirkham Smith from Akiki Spinal Flow talks us through the importance of releasing built-up stress from the body, especially during pre-conception, pregnancy and the all-important postpartum healing period.

The incredible process of creating a baby truly is a miracle.

Did you know that the brain and the spinal cord, the conduit of consciousness, are formed in the very early stages of pregnancy?

The spinal cord connects to every organ, gland, muscle, fascial tissue and blood vessel, supplying information, oxygen and nutrients. In fact, you could describe your nervous system as the “grand coordinator” that controls thoughts, movements, emotions and desires, as well as your body’s daily systems.

Unmanaged physical, chemical and emotional body stress experiences can build up in the body, creating blockages – think of it like a kink in a hose - which in turn lead to more serious issues such as brain fog, headaches and migraines, problems with spinal alignment, slipped and bulging discs, sciatica, insomnia, fatigue and infertility. Spinal Flow Technique™ is a gentle, hands on, clothed modality that assists the nervous system to find these blockages and release the body forward for long term health and wellness.

In terms of pregnancy, when the body is in prolonged stress or trauma, it may not feel safe to bring new life into the world. By reminding her body to step out of its fight or flight and return to its innate healing state, intensive Spinal Flow® may enable a woman to conceive.

Pregnancy and Birth

Once pregnant, dedicating regular time to embody a state of calm and wellbeing throughout this period of incredible change may reduce anxiety and lessen fears. Your body expands with greater ease and comfort when using this technique and using

specialised pregnancy pillows gives you time lying face down so you can fully relax your whole body.

Postnatal

Although every birth experience is unique, all bring an element of stress which may impact the flow of energy within your newborn baby. This can potentially anchor life-long stressors, leading to on-going health, behavioural and concentration issues and learning difficulties.

Inviting an infant's body to release these early kinks and encourage the optimum flow of oxygen, nutrients and communication throughout the nervous system helps to minimise symptoms such as colic, reflux, sleep and settling issues, eczema and breastfeeding difficulties and also improves digestive health.

During a woman's emotional postpartum recovery, her mental, physical and spiritual rejuvenation are also in need of healing support. For example, a common cause of future back pain, such as herniated disks, is repetitive movements while pelvic ligaments are still so elastic, therefore supporting the pelvis to contract efficiently is paramount.

As humans, we are complex, holistic beings with bodies that require on-going maintenance for the demands of life. Understanding that the body contains all it needs to release the stressors that create dis-ease is the key philosophy to healing with the Spinal Flow Technique™

Tina is a certified practitioner of the Spinal Flow Technique™ - gentle touch to the access points in the areas of your sacrum and cranium to communicate with your neural tissue reminds your brain to release your stressors - your blockages - with ease and flow. Tina believes ANYTHING is possible as the human body is designed to heal no matter what and when given the opportunity it activates its own in-built healing potential.

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Ayurvedic tips for the fourth trimester

By Johanna Lucia

"The future of our children's mental health and wellness starts at birth with the mother".

After birth, the greatest thing we can do is heal the body from within. From an Ayurvedic view point, the postpartum period is known for an imbalance of the air and space elements. A large space filled with air remains where your growing baby, placenta and amniotic fluid once were. Combined, air and space are cold and drying. Left untreated, this imbalance can often cause over-thinking, anxiety and insomnia, and even lead to postpartum depression. In this time, new mothers need to nourish and replenish with warm, moist, nutritious foods and plenty of loving care.

During the postpartum healing period, the digestive system is very weak, like a slowly dwindling campfire flame. This flame needs to be slowly re-fired to get our digestive system working properly. Without the digestive system, how does our body receive nourishment and healing? There is a significant link between gut health and mental health. By eating correctly, we know we can heal quicker, with a more positive outcome on our future physical and mental health.

Here are some Ayurvedic tips for the fourth trimester:

- Stick to the traditional recipes from our mothers before us, choose simple recipes to nourish and replenish.
- Food should be cooked slowly. It's a great time to dig out the slow cooker from the back of the cupboard and make soups and casseroles. This is easy for other family members to do also.
- Pre-cook, or cook double amounts of food and store in the freezer. As much as we encourage eating freshly cooked foods, you

also need to weigh up the stress and busy-ness of a new family. Do what works best for YOUR household.

- Use warming herbs and spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, turmeric, black pepper and nutmeg in your cooking.
- A massage with warm herbal oils will not only relax the body, but will also help with mental and emotional healing.
- When planning your Baby Shower or Mother Blessings, instead of presents, consider asking for donations towards a Postpartum Doula.
- Rest as much as you can in the first few weeks. In some Asian cultures, there is a firm belief that the first 42 days post-birth influence the next 42 years of wellness.

Mumma's Oats

1c oats
 2 ½c water
 Large 1bbsp ghee
 ½ tsp good quality salt
 1tsp cinnamon powder
 1tsp ginger powder
 ½ tsp turmeric powder/oil
 1 or 2 dates to sweeten or a handful of raisins.
 Nuts or seeds to top

Put everything (except the toppings) in a pot and bring slowly to simmer, stirring until the mixture is creamy and thickened. You may want to add more water as you go. The porridge should be well cooked to a 'sloppy' but not runny consistency. Serve with a topping of nuts and seeds.

Johanna Lucia is a Kiwi with Indo-Dutch ancestry (she thanks her Oma for passing on her cooking skills). She has over 17 years massage experience and has studied Ayurvedic philosophy in India which she incorporates into her postpartum doula work. Her life's purpose has always been to be a mother, and she adores being able to mother the mothers. Check out page 48 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer.

www.solacemassage.com.au

Dear Mamas,

Please exist in photos.

There you are with your phone, capturing every last detail of your children. From the moment they are earthside, to their first foods, first steps, first day at school, first missing tooth, recording each milestone.

I see you; I see how proud you are of your children and how important it is for you to capture these memories.

But what about you?
What about when your children are older and they look back and none of the pictures include you?

I am guilty of this. For my newborn daughter's session, I insisted I did not want to be in any photos. My hair was awful, I was so tired, I was unhappy with my body. Any excuse really. Now I look back and it is truly a huge regret to not have this moment photographed. The way I looked lovingly at her and nothing else in the world existed. That connection of pure love and happiness of mother and newborn. A moment too fleeting to ever get back.

Why do mothers always put themselves last?

Why do we scrutinise every last physical detail?

For all of this, it does not matter. Because to your children you are perfect.

You are a nose-blowing, lunch-making, tickle-fighting superhero.

Your children don't care if you haven't cleaned the kitchen or if you wear the same clothes two days in a row. All they want is you.

And when they are grown up what they will treasure more than anything is photographs that include you.

I want you to know how valuable you are. To your family and children. You should be remembered. You should be photographed. Not a filtered selfie. A real photograph that is the legacy of your existence and how much you matter. Don't leave it until it is too late.

Love, Megan.

PS - My top tips for getting in photos:

1. Just ask someone to grab a snap for you! Remind your other half to take photos of you with your kids from time to time. Ask a stranger if you're out and about.
2. Self portraits. Set up a phone-self-portrait session. Does not need to be perfect or fancy. Set up your phone using the back camera, use the timer, and pop it on burst mode.
3. Hire a professional. Invest in your memories.



Megan Willis is an award winning professional photographer specialising in newborn, maternity and family photography. Inspired by your brand new little person, and the love you have for them, she'll capture their first days; a moment in time which passes too soon. Check out page 48 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer.
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Megan Willis

PHOTOGRAPHY

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“You ate what?!”

Natalie from Placenta Vitality reflects on 10 years of encapsulating placentas on the Coast.

To be honest placenta encapsulation is not what I imagined I would be doing when I “grew up”. It's one of those things I kind of fell into. After attempting to ingest placenta unsuccessfully after my first baby (I tried smoothies, but couldn't stomach it), I then tried capsules with my second. The difference was night and day in terms of how I felt both physically and emotionally. Seeing that for herself my lovely midwife at the time convinced me to start offering it to others. Now 2 qualifications and 10 years later it is something I am well known for on the Coast.

My favourite part of the job is seeing the new parents in their post birth glow. It can be such a head trip having a baby, one part of you is like “WTF just happened to my body/ my partner's body!?” and another part is like “OMFG we made a human!”. It feels like such a privilege to enter a room a few hours after a new life has arrived.

Most of the midwives know me now. In the early days I sometimes had to explain what I did or why I did it, but now they all know all about placenta encapsulation, and I have encapsulated for many of them too.

The Kardashians helped. When Kim got her placenta encapsulated it brought it into the mainstream. These days it's super rare that someone hasn't at least heard of placenta encapsulation. There are also more people offering it as a service. Which on the one hand is great, on the other hand it is slightly worrying as it is a self regulated industry. So you really need to make sure your encapsulator knows what they are doing. It is always okay to ask where they trained (unfortunately some organisations have very minimal or sub par training), the dates of their most current certifications (should be annual), what their sanitation protocol is (probably the most important part of this job) and if they are

insured for placenta encapsulation (hopefully they answer yes).

Recently I found out about a new medication for postnatal depression. One of my favourite midwives told me about it. In the past PND has been treated with regular antidepressants. But now they know that PND can be quite different biochemically, and of course should be treated accordingly. This new medication is based upon, low and behold, a compound that is naturally found in the placenta! Of course I can't make any claims about the effectiveness of placenta encapsulation for PND, but I can say that I have had many clients with previous PND history report that they avoided PND when they took their placenta capsules.

Once I was in my car stopped at a pedestrian crossing. I smiled at the couple with a pram who were walking across, in return she smiled the biggest smile back at me, then elbowed her partner in the ribs and I saw her say “it's the placenta lady”. Her partner looked back at me with recognition and gave me the biggest smile as well. I tend to be known as ‘the placenta lady’ by a lot of people.

1400 is a crazy amount. I can't believe I have encapsulated so many placentas. My clients come from all walks of life, there are home births, hospital births, freebirths, and caesarean births, there are medicated and unmedicated births, high risk and low risk births. I have lots of second and third time clients too. I have encapsulated many twin placenta, but not yet triplets.

People often report the capsules helping them with their grief process. I have encapsulated for people who have recently lost a close family member, a child, partner or parent, sometimes expected, other times suddenly, and/or traumatically. I believe our bodies are so wise. It wouldn't surprise me if in the future we learn that the placenta formulates itself not only for what the baby needs while inside, but for what the mother is

going to need postnatally too.

I have tried many flavours of capsules over the years: mint, orange, lime, strawberry, grape bubblegum. The most popular is Berry, so I always have that in stock. The placenta itself doesn't really taste once it's been processed and put into capsules, so the flavoured capsules are more for psychological purposes.

Pete posted a picture of my placenta in a sandwich on Instagram. If you know Pete this won't surprise you. He is a Heston trained chef. The evening after I gave birth at home he fried a couple of thin slices of my placenta in olive oil, made an amazing sourdough sandwich, with rocket, horseradish mayonnaise and micro herbs. He shot it artfully with his Nikon and then edited and posted it. The response was unsurprisingly mixed. He said he felt 'high' after eating it. He has been sober for 20 years and is super sensitive to things. Many mothers report feeling almost 'high' on their placenta too. I may or may not have had people ask me if they can just get the capsules without providing their own placenta. (The answer is most definitely no).

My mother recently told me my own placenta pretty much cumbled when it came out. I was tiny - premature size, but 10 days over my EDD. When I heard this about my placenta it felt like a full circle healing moment, and it kind of made sense that I was now working with placentas. I was also a c-section baby. Another of my favourite midwives told me about how she believes babies who choose to come via c-section are doing so in order to break a generational cycle, and not come into the world carrying their mothers' baggage. I have often felt like the odd one out in my family so this resonated too.

Covid was weird. There were lots of Rona babies of course. In the social distancing days I would meet partners outside the hospital. I really missed meeting the mums and seeing the bubs. I loved it when they would text me a photo of them with their baby. In a strange way it's kind of intimate work, and I really like to know whose placenta I am encapsulating.

The grandparents are the best. The ones who have stored a fresh placenta in their fridge, or played placenta chauffeur and met me somewhere to give it to me. They are a beautiful mixture of proud and bewildered at the same time. Proud that they are helping their child, bewildered at what exactly it is they are helping them with.

I create placenta art as well. I trace around the shape and then build many layers of watercolour to look like a cosmos. When I took my first one to the framers she thought it was a stingray. I like that it's not an actual placenta on the wall, rather it is more of a symbolic representation of birth. There is something magical and cosmic about birth and placentas.

I love what I do. It's not your usual kind of job, but I love how it supports mothers in their postnatal. My biggest values in life are connection, compassion and communication. My background is psychology, and while I have one foot firmly in all things science, the other more than toe-dips in all things 'woo-woo'. Like many things, placenta encapsulation falls into both camps.

We all have words we live by. For me, life is about experiencing and living and loving. So drink the wine with your bestie into the wee hours. Give yourself full permission to go after your deepest desires. Birth however you want. Don't give a damn what they think. Eat the cake. Laugh until your belly aches. Romance yourself. Be an ally. Speak up. Share your resources. Let your heart grow so big there's no room for anything petty or shameful or judgemental. Above all, be nice to yourself. "Life is short. Make it sweet".

Natalie Stokell has encapsulated over 1400 placentas. She is fully trained, certified and insured. She loves talking placentas, so please feel free to reach out with any questions. Check out page 48 for an exclusive Sunshine Coast Baby discount.

www.placentavitality.com

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Benefits of being barefoot

By Nikiesha Martin

Did you know that getting outside to ground at least once a day not only gives you beautiful fresh air and vitamin D but has also been proven to improve your mental wellbeing.

If you are having a baby or have recently had one, looking after your mental health is very important. Unfortunately when in the newborn days (daze), your mental health can be one of the last things you have the resources for - it can take time and energy and money, and often these are things you may not have much access to while getting your head around raising a new human. However, getting outside is one of the easiest (and cheapest - it's free!) ways to look after yourself.

Grounding, otherwise known as earthing, is simply walking on the ground or earth barefoot. You don't actually need to be walking, simply sitting down in the sun can have just as many benefits. Just as long as your skin is touching the earth or grass (concrete doesn't count!).

We were born barefoot and being barefoot is the best way to connect to our earth. Being barefoot has both physical and mental health benefits. Firstly, you're outside in the fresh air getting sun, and the physiological effects of vitamin D for our health are now well documented.

Secondly, being barefoot stimulates thousands of nerve endings in the feet, and this not only stimulates the brain but helps with balance and coordination. Thirdly it can reduce inflammation, enhance immunity and improve sleep. We all need more sleep!

It's also beneficial to get outside with your children to ground, being barefoot is extremely regulating. Grounding can help calm an overstimulated baby and balance

a toddler's emotions. It's like skin to skin contact.

Skin to skin contact with a newborn helps calm and regulate them, and is important in terms of also stimulating nerves, improving immunity and increasing emotional connection. When you and your child ground yourselves to mother earth, it's just like that skin contact. You receive the same benefits, it's crazy hey? The earth isn't called our mother for no reason.

You don't need to be outside for long to receive the benefits, even just half an hour a day you will notice the difference. Half an hour is doable for everyone, it's your morning coffee sitting in the garden, hanging out washing, sitting on the grass during your lunch break, taking a walk along the beach or a swim in the ocean/river (yes it counts). Simply think of something you do inside and take it outside.

So get outside today, and tomorrow, and the next day. Let mother earth regulate your nervous system and help you to be the parent you want to be.



"There's only one way to be and that's barefoot and salty"

BAREFOOTANDSALTY.

Nikiesha Martin owns Barefoot and Salty, she says "Barefoot and Salty isn't just the name of our brand but it's our way of life, the best way to be!" Barefoot and Salty have a beautiful range of Australian designed children's clothing. Check out page 48 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer.

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Interview with Martha from Martha Grace Photography

Why do you do what you do?

In 2011 I had my first baby. His birth was hard. I felt really unprepared, out of control, and fear took over the whole experience. I remember one of the midwives asking me where my camera was and that she would take a few photos for me. I told her not to, but she insisted, and to this day I'm so glad that she did. I was so focused on getting through the pain that I had little recollection of all the beautiful moments in between - The way my husband's hands gently cradled my belly or how I buried my face into his chest and closed my eyes when there was a break between surges. She captured my strength as I pushed my baby into this world, and the sheer joy and relief as I pulled him up and into my arms. These are transformative, life changing moments that you can never re-do. Even though most of the photos she took were blurry, I still cherish them dearly. These are the moments I love to capture for clients, letting them see the magic of their own story through the photographs I take, to feel the love and emotion of that moment again and again. Being invited into these incredibly intimate spaces to document such a sacred time in life is an absolute honour. I'll admit that I am a bit of an empath, and will laugh through their joy and cry alongside them too. I just care deeply about my clients and their experience, and respect each and every space that I have the privilege to hold.

What do you love the most about your work?

I love that I get to show women how incredibly powerful they are. Birth stories are full of raw human emotions, life changing transformations, healing, and unconditional love. Documenting these stories allows women to see their power during some of the most challenging and vulnerable moments of their life. This is why I get up at 2am, this is why I stay for 6 or 12 or 24 hours supporting and honouring the needs of the labouring woman. Birth work is soul work and I want every woman to have lasting memories of their transformation, their healing, and their power. I want them to see their bodies for what they

truly are: divine bearers of life.

What has been your greatest challenge with your work?

The greatest challenge has probably been getting used to the on call life. Being on call means I don't travel more than 30 minutes from my home, I try not to book any personal appointments (it's probably not ideal to turn up to your birth with half a haircut!), I carry my camera bag everywhere, and keep my phone on me at all times. Sometimes I miss out on my own children's events, sometimes I have to leave mid dinner time or just as I'm hopping into bed. Birth is also unpredictable, so when I leave my family to attend a birth I don't know when I'll be back home. I might be there for 4 hours or 10 or 30. It's definitely an adjustment that I needed to get used to but I honestly can't see myself doing anything else. And when I have a client giving me a great big blubbery hug because they are so grateful that I was there to capture the best day of their life – well all the sacrifices are absolutely worth it!

What's your best advice to a first time birther?

Being mentally prepared for birth is just as important as being physically prepared. Work through any fears you may have beforehand, surround yourself with people who trust, support, and believe in you. Read positive birth stories and don't allow others to place their own fears onto you. You can't always plan for birth but you can educate yourself and knowledge is power! You will feel more in control of your birth if you know your options. Trust your body, surrender to the intensity of birth, and don't forget to get loved up with your partner – oxytocin is a powerful and wonderful hormone!

Martha is an award-winning, professional birth photographer. Every journey into Motherhood is unique, sacred, and deserving of celebration. Regardless of how your journey unfolds, Martha will be there to show you the beauty of it all. Check out page 48 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer. www.marthagracebirthphotography.com.au

Age appropriate body safety education

By **Natalie Stokell**

Being proactive, rather than reactive, with regards to body safety education can begin at a very young age. When you teach your child the differences between privacy and secrecy you are giving them the tools to recognise the difference and the confidence to act accordingly.

Privacy is about keeping information and experiences to yourself.

Secrecy is about hiding information and experiences from others.

Here are some quick tips so you can begin to teach this age appropriately with your child:

Pre-school

At this age the use of story is a great way to teach children. Some great books are:

- No Means No!
- My Body! What I say goes!
- Only For Me
- My Underpants Rule



Primary school

As your children become increasingly aware of the world around them you can be more explicit and direct and say things like:

- "You can tell me anything, even if some one has told you not to, or you are afraid of what might happen".

- "A good secret feels good, like when you are going to surprise someone, and a bad secret feels bad. If someone asks you to keep a secret and it feels bad it's important to talk to me or another grown up you feel safe with".
- "In our family we only have good secrets, not bad".

Twens

At this age you can introduce some problem solving conversation starters. A great time to do this is at meal times or when you are both engaged in a shared activity together like dishes, or some craft. You can even agree beforehand with another adult who will be present at dinner about some stories you'll each share to prompt the conversation:

- "When I was your age (this happened, and this is how it felt...)"
- "What would you do if a friend told you.. (a bad feeling secret)."
- "Who are three grownups you feel comfortable talking to?"

Teens

Teens are a tricky age as suddenly your 'authority' as a parent slips away. Teens are also beginning to explore their own boundaries of personal privacy. So step back and allow them to lead the way with exercising their right to privacy, like knocking and waiting before entering their bedroom or the bathroom.

Fortunately teens are naturally curious and may be keen to hear more stories about when you were a teen yourself (especially ones where you made mistakes or were extra human in your dealing with a situation!). Stories from your own youth are a great way to teach them about the emotional weight of secrets.

The teachable conversation moments are best for times like a car journey where you don't have to make direct eye contact and they have to listen, (obviously gauge this well



and don't traumatise your child by forcing them to talk about things when they can't walk away!).

You can also remind them you are a safe adult to talk to, or encourage them to lean on their safe adults if it is not yourself (- there is no shame in not being the emotionally safe adult for your child, remember how awkward it felt talking to your own parents sometimes!).

Media is a great gateway to tap into some teachable conversations with teens:

- Let them to choose the songs when you are driving and listen carefully to the lyrics and pause the music when a teaching moment comes up
- Show them a social media post from some of the accounts you follow that explore the nuances of consent and ask what they think
- Watch a teen movie or Netflix show with them and chat about it afterwards. Or in a few days if the timing feels better: "Hey I have been thinking about when X happened in Y, what do you think you would do if you were in that situation?" or "I can't stop thinking about that moment when so'n'so did xyz, what are your thoughts about how they handled it?"

Above all remember:

Yes it can feel awkward talking about such things, but it's so important to have these discussions and to foster a relationship with your child where they know they can come and talk to you about anything.

The worst mistake you can make when it comes to your child's body safety education is keeping your head in the sand and hoping somehow they'll pickup what they need to know along the way, and that nothing bad will happen to them in the meantime - 95% of sexual abuse in children and sexual assault in young adults is from someone they know.

So be proactive, get the books, watch the shows, have the conversations.

Are you concerned about age appropriate sex education for your child?

Do you fear what your tween may be exposed to via social media?

Are you hopeful that your teen will feel empowered when it comes to intimate relationships with others?

I would love to hear your concerns, fears, hopes and thoughts. Scan to fill in the short anonymous parent survey and receive a 20 page Parent's Glossary with all the acronyms and slang you need to know these days.

Your answers will inform my parent education and tween and teen workshops. Thank you!



Scan to fill in the short survey and receive the 20 page glossary for parents

Natalie Stokell is passionate about age appropriate body safety education and age appropriate body positive sex education. She runs both parent education classes, and workshops for tweens and teens.
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Interview with Vivian Edwards from Deknot

Postpartum belly binding is a centuries old ancient tradition, commonly practised in Asia. Only recently have Western women discovered its genuine benefits. Vivian, founder of Deknot Bodywork and Massage is a massage therapist on the Sunshine Coast who provides this treatment. We were excited to chat with her and find out more about it.

What is postpartum belly binding?

In short, postpartum belly binding is the ancient Eastern art of wrapping the abdomen of a woman who has recently given birth. I apply a special technique that uses a long, thin piece of non-stretch fabric that is wrapped around the whole torso from hips to breasts. It can help bring your muscles and connective tissues back together as your organs move back into place following pregnancy and birth. It also provides the perfect lower back support. The wrapping is typically done daily, 8 hours per day for 4-6 weeks. It is a wonderful physical support for new mothers. To enhance the technique's effectiveness, during the wrapping I conduct an abdominal massage with my own special essential oil blend that helps to ease any stretch marks. I call it the Art of Slowness in a fast-paced world.

What are the benefits?

Other than pulling separated abdominal muscles (diastasis recti) back together, belly binding helps to remove that "empty" feeling post birth. Wearing the belly bind provides constant support to the hips and can reduce discomfort. It also prevents slouching while nursing your precious baby. Posture is so important. A sore back post-labour is very common for a variety of reasons, but can be avoided!

When is the best time to start the practice of binding?

For caesarean section delivery mums, binding can start after the wound has fully healed (about 6-8 weeks' time). For vaginal birth, usually binding can begin two weeks postpartum (based on your care provider's recommendation).

Why is pre and post-natal care so important?

Pregnancy is a very demanding process for both our bodies and minds. It is important that we prepare for the changes in our own bodies and support the space our babies will be calling home for the next nine months. After giving birth, most mothers focus on the needs of their newborn and neglect themselves. It is crucial that new mums regain their strength quickly and maintain their health as they adjust to life with their babies.

What's your best advice to a new mum?

Sleep as much as you can, especially in the first month postpartum. After a wakeful night, take advantage of your baby's nap time to snooze yourself. Keep your body nourished with a well-balanced diet, especially for breastfeeding Mums. Always keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water. If possible, arrange at least 20-30 minutes "me time" daily—go for a walk or have a long shower. Don't be afraid to ask for help when in need. If you don't have family and friends living close by, there are a lot of local community groups providing support for new mothers.

What drives your passion to work with pregnant women and new mothers?

As a mother, my pregnancy experience was one of the most precious and unforgettable times of my life. I love to ignite an "attitude of gratitude" with every pregnant woman I have the pleasure to work with. I believe women in pregnancy are at their most gracious and beautiful. As we know, women go through a dramatic change both physically and mentally with each passing trimester. As a massage therapist, I can assist with releasing stress and soothing discomfort. My work is so special for me personally. It's my calling.

Vivian is a qualified massage therapist and baby massage instructor, specialising in female wellness that includes post and pre-natal care. Check out page 48 for a Sunshine Coast Baby exclusive offer. www.deknot.com.au.




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They say it takes a village to raise a child. Whilst this is true, we also think it takes a village to raise a mum. Not all women are surrounded with the support they need during their journey into motherhood. It can sometimes be quite overwhelming to wade through the masses of information out there from doctors, industry professionals, well-meaning family members, friends and other mums on social media. This is what Raising Mamas is all about.



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New mama, new baby, new isolation

By Kailah Cuckson

When you become a parent, everything changes. You can read all the books, watch all the movies, and listen to all the Ted Talks—but the realities of parenthood often still come as a surprise—even for parents who already have kids.

Movies would have you believe that having a new baby is all cuddles and a total lack of sleep. While this is true, you might be surprised to see just how many other changes there are. When you're running on "Newborn Time", you might find yourself struggling to remember when you last spoke to someone other than your baby. With all of the nappies, naps, and feeding times, it is easy to fall out of touch with the people that you used to speak to daily and it's during the postnatal period that you are likely to fall out of contact with the people you love during the time when you need them the most.

Having a baby in the house can shake things up and during these strange, unusual, and beautiful times, you need a community that you can depend on.

Parenthood comes with so much beauty, but it is not without its challenges. New mamas find themselves running on barely any sleep. You're more likely to be more low on energy, and things like taking a shower and eating a full and balanced meal can go out the window. A study with postpartum women found that energy levels for women can stay low for up to 19 months after giving birth!

What happens when we don't eat well, don't sleep well, and don't have time to talk to the people we love? Well, we can end up pretty unhappy. Fortunately, a social circle might just be the difference between you being able to enjoy motherhood and you having a fairly pessimistic attitude about it. Studies show that mothers

with more support feel happier and more optimistic about parenthood in general.



Since community can have such a big impact on how women feel about being mothers, women should absolutely be striving to build a community to see them through their new journey. The question is: how?

The truth is that everyone has a different support network. You might be able to explain these studies to your loved ones and get them to rally around you—or you might need to connect with some other mamas who actually understand what you are going through. Whether you find an online circle, connect with friends and family, or sign up for a weekly yoga class for new mums, you want to find your village. Support makes us happy—and it reminds us to focus on the good.

Life after having a baby is something that you can really only understand if you have been through it. For many new mamas, this can be fairly isolating. No matter how high that pile of nappies gets or how little sleep you get, you want the right people to help support you through it.

Raising Mamas help mums to find their village and get support during their postpartum journey. They know just how much a tight-knit community can mean during those early months, and would love to help you find one of your own!

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Together, we provide a warm and friendly space that caters to individuals and families throughout the challenges and life stages faced by families. We offer individual sessions and group sessions. Our groups include our six week Circle of Motherhood and our monthly Mother’s Drop-in Clinic with psychologist, midwives and lactation consultant.

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
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Much love, *Ellie*

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