



February E-Newsletter, 2010

Topic: Loving Yourself Through the Childbearing Year

Can you feel it? Love is in the air! Happy Valentine's Day to all you lovely pregnant ladies and new mommies. To celebrate we will explore just how to love yourself and your body through one of the most exciting years of your life. So grab a cup of tea, sit back and take a moment for yourself.

Enjoy,

Nurse Wendy

Loving Yourself through the Childbearing Year

The pregnancy test is positive and immediately the list starts..."don't do this, don't eat that, don't, don't, don't!" Ugh!!! The lists of "don'ts" can become overwhelming to say the least. Now that you know what you can't do, let's talk a bit about just what you can (and should) do...

It is so important to take a moment and realize what an incredible miracle is happening inside your body. From a few simple cells comes the beginning of a new life. In a matter of mere months, you will welcome a beautiful child who will bring you more joy than you can ever imagine. This little person will develop thoughts, feelings, and opinions, and he or she will become a productive member of our world, and only you can grow, nurture and give birth to this baby. WOW! What an amazing thought. Keeping all that in mind, you deserve to be honored and rewarded for the incredible job you are doing for your child, so let's explore a few ways you can put yourself center stage and take advantage of this special time!

For starters it is an excellent idea to embrace your body. While it is counterintuitive in our society to celebrate an expanding waistline, this is exactly what you should be doing. Each week, begin taking photos early on in your pregnancy. Focus on your body and your belly. In a few months, you will see how your body has changed to accommodate your precious passenger. Growing and nurturing your baby is a miraculous event. I would also recommend that you find a way to memorialize your pregnancy by scheduling a pregnancy photo shoot with a photographer that specializes in pregnancy photography, or have your belly artistically casted to provide you with a special souvenir to remember this amazing time in your life!

Another fun way to track this special time is to start journaling about your pregnancy on a daily or weekly basis. Here you can capture your thoughts, feelings, cravings, joys and struggles. A close friend of mine did this by writing a letter to her unborn child once a week throughout her pregnancy. When her own daughter became pregnant with her first child, she presented the journal to her. It was a very special time of mother-daughter bonding and a keepsake that will last for generations.

Your pregnancy is also the best time to teach yourself just how to relax and enjoy the "little moments." It's easy to do this by developing a few new (and very simple) habits. For example, every time you take



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your prenatal vitamin, speak an affirmation to yourself to thank your body for doing a stellar job by growing your baby another day. Another way is to acknowledge the “little things” is to take a deep and relaxing breath (great practice for labor) and connect with your baby every time your baby kicks. You can also use your prenatal visits with your care provider as a special time of pampering. After your appointments, take the rest of the day off and spoil yourself. Have lunch with your partner, go shopping, take an afternoon nap, or indulge in a bubble bath. You are one appointment closer to holding your baby in your arms, and that should be celebrated!

As your pregnancy progresses, you may also nurture your emotional side by addressing your dreams and fears. Most pregnant mommies have at least a few fears about pregnancy, birth and parenting. Try to carve out some time for yourself and put pen to paper. Make an honest list of what makes you nervous, and don't leave anything off the list, even if it seems silly to you. Once your list is complete, let's take each point head on. Typically fears are rooted in the unknown, so the antidote is education. For example, if you are afraid of the birth process, then this is the perfect time for you to take some classes and learn all there is to know about childbirth. If you think that taking care of your new baby will be scary, take a baby care class and become an expert on everything from bathing to diapering (*PacifiCord can help, as they offer a full schedule of free prenatal classes offered all over Southern California*). By taking each fear and learning all you can, you can develop a systematic approach to conquering that fear and bolster your confidence. Before long, you will be the confident and successful mom you know you can be!

As you can see, there are many ways to love and nurture your body and yourself throughout your pregnancy. However, this should not come to a crashing halt once you give birth. The postpartum adjustment brings its own unique challenges. Giving birth is one of the most challenging and rewarding things a woman can do. While your physical needs may be quite obvious, including the immense need for sleep, some of our other needs might be more subtle. Now is the optimal time to reward yourself on a daily basis for all that your body has accomplished. And while some women seem to snap back into shape more easily than others, you must remember that it took you 9 months to get here, so it will likely take you just as long to return to your pre-pregnant you.

Celebrate yourself! Buy a super-sexy nursing bra or some fun new clothes that fit exactly the size you are now...not where you hope to be in the future. You could also ask dad to watch the baby and spend an hour indulging in a postpartum massage to work out the sore muscles from birth and nursing your baby. Or better yet, put the baby to bed and have your partner give you a candle light massage to help you relax and unwind after a tough day of diaper duty! You can even take a short break while partner gives the baby a bath or takes him or her out for a walk. Take a mental escape on the couch by reading a book or magazine while sipping on a cup of tea. Even a short break, such as this, will help in recharging your batteries, and keep your fluctuating postpartum hormones in check. A new parent's job is 24/7, and you should feel proud of all you are doing to care for yourself and your baby.



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As I noted before, this is one of the most *exciting* years of your life. Don't miss a moment of it by not recognizing the incredible work you are doing for yourself, your partner and your family. You only get one chance to carry this baby, so you should be center stage and enjoy all the wonderful things your pregnancy will bring to your life. *Celebrate each moment!*

Until next month, be well!

Nurse Wendy

QUESTIONS?

Email me at: AskNurseWendy@PacifiCord.com