

Family Wellness First

The Growing Role of Chiropractic in Childbirth Education

It seems obvious that a skilled chiropractor can have a phenomenal impact on pregnancy, labor and birth. Despite this fact, few childbirth educators are talking about chiropractic as a way to ensure a better birth. This, however, is starting to change. I asked Donna Ryan, founder and president of Birth Boot Camp, why she included chiropractic in every 10-week series she and her instructors teach. Her answer is powerful.

“I have seen, literally, dozens of women helped by Webster-certified chiropractors during their pregnancies and labors,” says Ryan. “I have worked as a childbirth educator since 2003, but it wasn’t until I met Kristen Hosaka, D.C., a Webster-certified chiropractor, in 2009, that I really learned about the benefits of chiropractic care during pregnancy, labor and the postpartum period. She has been a regular guest speaker in my childbirth classes ever since! My couples are having more comfortable pregnancies, babies in better positions, and good birth experiences.”

Donna had seen how chiropractic improved the births of hundreds of her students. As she developed her own natural childbirth education curriculum, she included chiropractors as an important part of the birth team. “When I was writing the Birth Boot Camp curriculum, there was never any doubt that chiropractic would be a part of the program,” she says. “When we refer to the birth team, it encompasses the midwife, doula and chiropractor! Couples who take the classes online have the privilege of hearing from Dr. Hosaka and witness her adjusting a pregnant woman. Couples that take live classes will often have the opportunity to hear from a Webster-certified chiropractor when he or she visits as a guest speaker.”

Getting the chance to meet, talk with, and watch a skilled chiropractor work is a powerful part of Birth Boot Camp classes. Many pregnant women fear chiropractic, especially during pregnancy. Meeting with a doctor of chiropractic and seeing him or her in action is a powerful teaching technique and is part of the reason the students feel so comfortable seeking chiropractic care. Claire Dodge, another



Birth Boot Camp instructor, has also noticed the positive change that chiropractic can bring to her students’ births, both physically and emotionally.

“Chiropractic care throughout pregnancy, by a skilled doctor trained in Webster technique, makes a world of difference in a woman’s experience of pregnancy and birth,” says Dodge. “The common aches and pains of pregnancy are resolved, and the baby is typically able to choose an optimal position for birth. The families in my classes who chose to incorporate chiropractic care into their prenatal care have visibly happier, healthier pregnancies. Evidence has shown that women under chiropractic care report easier births, shorter labor times, and lower rates of interventions. I am always happy for families that chose to add in chiropractic care, because it often significantly impacts their pregnancy and birth experience for the better.”

Those who care for birthing women don’t just want them to survive the birth process. We want women and families to have a healthy and enjoyable pregnancy. We want these families to have a glorious and triumphant birth. We want birth to be experienced as it is meant to be: full of joy and power. Chiropractic is an essential part of not just birth, but childbirth education, and it has the ability to change birth as we know it.

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Modified excerpt from: *The Growing Role of Chiropractic in Childbirth Education* by Sarah Clark. Read more in *Pathways* at pathwaystofamilywellness.org

Making Healthy Babies: Your 10-Step Action Plan

1) Know Your Cycle When is your “fertility window”? The Sympto-Thermal Method has proved to be a very effective way to determine when you’re most fertile.

2) Replenish Your Body Certain lifestyle factors, such as poor diet, stress and the use of medication can deplete critical nutrients and minerals necessary for reproductive success.

3) Give Up Those Vices There are 4,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke, including 43 carcinogens and 300 polyaromatic hydrocarbons that can reduce fertility.

4) Hidden Nutrient Deficiencies Micronutrient deficiencies are known contributors to poor pregnancy outcomes. Certain foods can block the absorption of important vitamins and minerals.

5) Regulate Your Blood Sugar Dietary factors that affect the body’s insulin (blood sugar) sensitivity have been associated with an increased risk of infertility.

6) Go for the Good Fats Some fats are good for us and some are not. Include a high-quality, preferably organic, mercury-free DHA and EPA supplement (omega-3 polyunsaturated marine or fish oil), and utilise other great sources, such as oily cold-water fish, flaxseed oil, walnut, olive and soya bean oil, walnuts, pumpkin and sesame seeds, wheat germ, leafy green vegetables, olives and avocados.

7) Go Organic Non-organic fruits and vegetables are exposed to a significant number of insecticides and fungicides.

8) Avoid Contaminated Fish Products There has been increasing awareness about the ill effects of toxins found in fish, including mercury, antibiotics, vaccines and pesticides.

9) Keep Moving Exercise improves the body’s sensitivity to insulin and evens out blood sugar levels. Controlling insulin is an essential step in improving fertility.

10) Get Your House in Order Whether from a tap, tank or natural source, water contains hundreds of contaminants, including natural organics, salts, harmful bacteria and viruses. Chlorination of tap water and its harmful byproducts must be filtered out.

BONUS TIP! Get Your Spine Checked

This is critical to any pregnancy. The body’s nervous system is the master control for healthy functioning. When our nervous system works well, we are better able to adapt to our environment and its stressors, which in turn influence our capacity to reproduce.

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Modified excerpt from: *Making healthy Babies: Your 10 Step Action Plan* by Jennifer Barham-Floreni, DC. Read more in *Pathways* at www.pathwaystofamilywellness.org

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