

Karen Atkins

# Your Vibrant Pregnancy



## Module 2

# PREGNANCY

**What should I eat during pregnancy?** . . . w/ *Elzbieta Kosmicki*

**Which tests should I take?** . . . w/ *Dr. Lauren Brim*

**How can I be more comfortable during pregnancy?** . . . w/ *Dr. Lauren Brim*

**How can I connect with my baby before it's born?** . . . w/ *Dr. Lauren Brim*

**What if my baby is late?** . . . w/ *Dr. Lauren Brim*

**Should I take medication during pregnancy?** . . . w/ *Dr. Shoshana Bennett*

**How do I love my body through pregnancy and beyond?** PART I . . . *Adelaine Fox*

**How do I love my body through pregnancy and beyond?** PART II . . . *Elzbieta Kosmicki*

**How can I protect my baby before it's born?** . . . w/ *Dr. Lauren Brim*

**Can I safely use herbs and essential oils during pregnancy?** PART I . . . w/ *Maya Kawata*

**Can I safely use herbs and essential oils during pregnancy?** PART II . . . w/ *Maya Kawata*

**What is a normal mood vs. a disorder?** . . . w/ *Dr. Shoshana Bennett*

## What should I eat while pregnant?

### WHAT YOU BRING INTO YOUR BODY IS WHAT IS BUILDING YOUR BABY!

#### Eat nutrient-dense whole foods

- **Eat organic** as often as possible, especially when eating meat and dairy
- Supplement your diet with **whole food-based prenatal vitamins**
  - You can't get all the nutrients needed through diet alone
  - Synthetic vitamins can cause allergies and cannot be used/processed by the body efficiently
  - Take an additional herbal iron supplement if you have signs of anemia

#### Avoid processed foods

- ensure you're getting the most valuable minerals, vitamins, and balanced proteins
- **steer clear of** harmful, empty-calorie additives

#### How much should I eat?

- increased metabolism + quicker nutritional depletion= the need for more food, more often
- never go hungry and never wait too long between meals

#### it is critical for your baby's brain and organ development that you get specific, sufficient nutrition

- eat 6 meals a day
- graze on healthy snacks between meals
- If you're eating nutrient-dense foods rather than empty-calorie foods, you can eat as many calories as you want!



### DIETS YOU CAN FOLLOW

Both the *Brewer's Diet for Pregnancy* and the *Weston A. Price Diet for Pregnancy* give lots of options on how to choose from the food groups necessary for pregnancy such as:

- vegetables and fruits
  - healthy fats and oils
  - dairy or calcium replacers
  - proteins
- Include checklists to ensure you're getting the proper amount of each group
  - Include ideas for what you can prepare and what can be combined

### CONSIDER YOUR LIFESTYLE

#### Stressful life factors can interfere with your ability to assimilate nutrition

Make necessary changes in your life and your diet if you're experiencing:

- transition
- emotional upset
- medical problems

#### You'll need more calories if:

- you exercise a lot
- you're a working mom
- you're carrying twins

#### When it comes to cravings...

trust your intuition by listening to them, but be sure to look at what is underlying: **salty, fatty junk food cravings** = you need more mineral-rich salts, butter, and healthy oils / **sour cravings** = you need more minerals / **sweet cravings** = you need more protein

#### \*Brewer's Diet 3 basic principles to remember:

1. The only way to nourish baby is to nourish mom
2. Any malnutrition is dangerous
3. Life situations can create nutritional deficiencies

**Ensure you're getting the most valuable minerals, vitamins, and balanced proteins.**

## Which tests should I take?

### YOU CHOOSE WHICH TESTS YOU TAKE!

You **DO NOT** have to take every test that is offered to you, even if it's "recommended"

- Consciously consider what the test entails
- Do your own research
- Weigh the pros and cons

**Ask questions about the test:**

- Does it hurt your baby?
- Is it painful?
- What are the risks?
- What effect will it have on me?

**And more importantly... What will be done with the test information?**

Will the results of the test affect your decision to deliver or abort? If so, do you *want* that information?

If the test itself or the possible outcome worries or scares you, you have every right to refuse the test.

**Ask yourself, "WILL THIS TEST LESSEN MY STRESS... OR ADD TO IT?" Trust your intuition and only take the tests that you feel good about taking.**

### TEST ACCURACY

Many tests, such as determining the possibility of your child having down syndrome, only tell you if there's a risk; there's no way of knowing for certain.

And test results can also be incorrect. Is this information accurate enough to guide your decisions?

Are you willing to accept being told risks and carry the stress of what you're told for your entire pregnancy or would you rather trust and believe that your baby is perfect?



### NATURE'S ACCURACY

There are challenges no matter who your baby is, regardless of what is foretold, but your body is innately wise enough to nurture your perfect baby.

Miscarriages are your body rejecting genetic material that isn't working out. If your baby is carried full-term, trust that he or she is a gift exactly as is.

### ARE TESTS REALLY THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE?

Women who are pregnant often go through every given test rather than consciously preparing for birth by nourishing their bodies.

What we eat, how we live, and our state of mind all determine the quality of our DNA. If the sperm and egg are healthy and your body is healthy, the DNA of your child will be healthy.

**We forget that DNA can repair itself if enabled to do so.**

Fear, stress, and negativity are what cause complication in pregnancy.

Women need to stop seeing themselves as "high risk" regardless of age or conditions. We have awareness and control over our own bodies. We can make conscious decisions to nurture our bodies for birth.

There's no real security in tests. The security lies in taking care of yourself and in your consciousness.

***Trust your intuition and only take the tests that you feel good about taking.***

## How can I be more comfortable during pregnancy?

### PHYSICAL SUPPORT

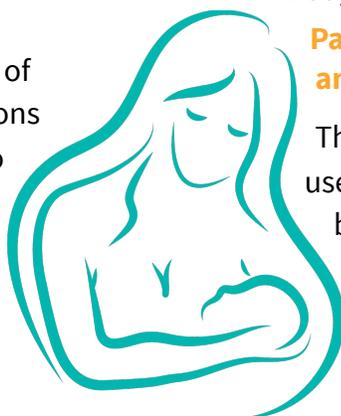
Myofascial and craniofacial therapy is highly recommended for whole-body support and improves blood and lymph circulation, relaxes contracted muscles, and stimulates stretch reflexes.

Remember that your body is naturally designed for pregnancy, so although it will expand in ways it never has before, when the baby comes out, it goes right back.

### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

In areas of the body where emotions are trapped more collagen has been produced to quickly heal the area, there will be more rigidity. This is accompanied by extra pull during expansion. When you clear stuck emotion, scar tissue, and rigidity, you will find that by nature your body is designed to carry babies quite comfortably.

The BodyTalk system and other forms of Energy work help release stuck emotions so you can claim your natural rights to comfort during this beautiful time in your life.



### MOVEMENT IS KEY

Walking, Qigong, Yoga, and Tai Chi are great ways for pregnant women to stay active and keep their energy circulating. Yogic philosophy recommends pregnant women walk several miles a day to get the baby in the right position, open up the body, and strengthen the muscles for easier labor.

When you are stationary, try to stay seated upright, not back. When you sit back, the heavy part of the baby, the back, falls on your spine. You don't want that, what you want is the back of the baby's head facing the front of you. This makes labor easier. Try using a pregnancy (exercise) ball to help with proper posture.

### HAVING FUN TO-DO THINGS FEELS GOOD

You're much more conscious of how you treat your body and what you put in it when you're pregnant. So let what you eat be medicine. Use this time to heal at a deep level, using natural methods. Take this opportunity to get a prenatal massage, have BodyTalk sessions, learn qigong.

#### **Pamper and nourish yourself with essential oils and salt baths.**

There are so many natural practices that can be used to nurture your body and therefore your baby. This time is a gift, for learning and training to be a great mom, and healing yourself in the process.

***Aim for WHOLE-BODY BALANCE and support.***

## How do I connect to my baby before it's born?

### COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR BABY

**You may not think your baby can understand you, but as beings, we all understand communication at every stage of life. The energy behind your communication will be transmitted.**

Put your hands on your belly and say things like, "Hi baby, how are you doing today?" "I'm excited to meet you."

Acknowledge kicks and say anything in response.

Make time for your partner to connect with Baby as well. Babies have a special connection to their father's voice because they can hear it clearly over the sound of their mother's heartbeat.

### YOUR BABY IS GROWING AND LEARNING

**The whole fetal life is an incredible education. It's a special opportunity to educate and connect with your baby.**

Read to and play music for him or her.

Your baby is most influenceable when he/she is still in the womb and growing the most rapidly.

Parents start noticing a baby's personality from small things such as a favorite food, how they respond to specific people and environments--this starts to develop a relationship with the baby.



### BE PRESENT IN THIS EXPERIENCE

There are a lot of things that will compete for your focus during pregnancy, but if you stay focused on and connected with your baby, your pregnancy and labor can be easier.

Make the experience about your baby and being excited to meet him/her. Your baby will feel heard and supported and you will be able to stay present.

Old birthing memories from your mother, your grandmother, etc., can surface during labor and a strong connection with your baby helps to bring you back to the moment the two of you are sharing.

### THE TIME IS NOW

**Start to establish communication and connection right away.**

Make it a priority. Don't wait until you're on maternity leave. Don't put it off until all the "other things" are taken care of. You're only pregnant with that baby once and it's for a short time.

Start putting rituals into place right away. Sit in the chair you plan to breastfeed in. Play the classical music or the music you are planning to play during labor.

Communicate all throughout the day with your baby about what you're doing, where you're going, etc. Because the two of you are doing everything together as best friends.

***Put your hands on your belly and say things like "Hi baby... how are you today?"***

## What if my baby is late?

### THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A “DUE DATE”

We can't calculate exactly when the baby needs to come out.

The more appropriate term = “Guess Date”

Due date based on woman's last period:

- Many women don't have regular cycles
- Might not remember their last period

= A lot of unknowns

### THE BABY NEEDS TO BE READY TO COME OUT

Baby may not be ready due to:

- Stress factors
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Needing to grow a little more

Trust and honor body's innate wisdom

### WHAT STARTS LABOR?

We don't really exactly know...

Oxytocin released into the system from pituitary-hypothalamus complex of the baby and mother

**THEORY — the baby starts the labor**

### BUT....

Every minute feels like an hour — I just want the baby out!

The last challenge: refinement before labor

**BEING PATIENT. BEING PRESENT**

### MEDICAL VIEW

“Let's get it over with.”

Pressure: Running out of amniotic fluid / Your baby's getting so big ...



### CARE PROVIDER POLICY ABOUT DUE DATE

**ASK in advance: “What's your policy if I go beyond my due date?”**

- There is not a standard rule for every woman, the decision is made by each healthcare practitioner — everyone has their own rules. If you are feeling pressured by a healthcare practitioner, it's never too late to change.

### OTHER OPTIONS

- Respect your body
- If it goes against respecting your body's wisdom, you don't have give over to “I'll be induced”
- Is this the right healthcare practitioner for me?
- Interviewing healthcare practitioners is a big part of preparing for your birth
- Homeopathics, long walks ...
- Most midwives don't do vaginal exams until labor (the more vaginal exams = the more likely to get an infection which can cause water to break prematurely)
- Gentle vaginal exam
- Lots of sleep
- Energy medicine (BodyTalk, etc...)

### WHY HAS THIS BECOME AN ISSUE?

**Women have to take responsibility for some of it.**

Women get anxious - I want my baby now - when you induce with pitocin, you've got things in your veins, you are hooked up with a fetal monitor, your baby's cranium pressured a lot of pain -> leads to epidural

**The natural oxytocin that induces and continues labor - same as orgasm, fall in love, bond with baby - you don't feel with an epidural**

**Trust that your baby is coming in the right size at the right time.**

## Should I take medication during pregnancy?

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE ALREADY ON MEDICATION:

- 15-20% of women are clinically depressed and many of them are on antidepressants/ mood stabilizing medication
- If possible, set up a **pre-pregnancy** consultation with a prescribing doctor **who has expertise in the pregnancy field** to discuss your options

**If you become pregnant while on medication, DON'T PANIC. And DON'T quit your medication "cold turkey"— This can be dangerous for you AND for your baby**

### HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

If you decide to wean yourself off medication, there are many alternatives/ complimentary practices that can help:

- Massage
- Gentle exercise
- BodyTalk
- Essential oils
- Omegas
- Work with a professional who is knowledgeable about the practices or products you choose to try--quality is so important



### TAKE CARE OF YOU!

**The most loving and responsible thing you can do for your baby is to do what is right for YOU.**

It is wonderful if you can achieve this through natural healthcare, but if you need to stay on your medications, so be it.

Pregnant women who are suffering tend not to care for themselves as well.

Depression passes through to your baby. The placenta constricts and the chemistry of the uterine environment is affected.

What's right for one woman is not necessarily right for another. You need to do whatever makes you feel well, first and foremost.

### LET GO OF GUILT AND STRESS!

**There is always more than just one way: Don't feel bad and stress yourself out if you need medication.**

Mood and anxiety disorders are associated with neurochemical and hormonal changes that are medical conditions. There is no shame in receiving medical treatment for them.

Stress and anxiety can be harmful to your baby, resulting in premature birth and stress after birth, so let go of the "black and white" view and feel confident with the decisions that are right for YOU.

***The most responsible thing you can do for your baby is what is right for you.***

## How do I love my body through pregnancy and beyond?

### THIS IS A SPECIAL TIME TO BE SAVORED!

This is a time of deep connection:

- to your own sacred inner goddess
- to your body, as a nurturing vessel of life
- to Creation
- to your baby

**This is the perfect time to connect to your sensuality and femininity. Before you know it, it's over... so enjoy it!**

### BE PRESENT IN YOUR BODY.

Taking care of your body by eating right and staying active will relieve discomfort

Your body is designed to expand and evolve, and will bounce back if you stay healthy

There are many creative ways to connect to your body and your inner beauty at the same time, for the ultimate “pregnant glow“...

### BELLY DANCING

is designed for pregnant women. It helps open hips & teaches body to undulate and move in ways that make labor and birth easier.



### MEDITATION

helps you to slow down & be calm & mindful to feel your baby's movements & make good choices for both of you

### BELLY ART

#### Maternity Photography

viewing the beautiful shapes & curves of your body as it expands over time allows you to see yourself from outside yourself and recognize how beautiful you are

#### Henna

connects you with the spiritual realm & is calming & sedative. Designs on the belly make you feel beautiful.

#### Belly Casts

are wonderful to make and paint near end of pregnancy

### HONOR YOURSELF IN THIS RITE OF PASSAGE

**Yes, it's about your baby, but it's also about YOU!**

**Consider a “Mommy Shower.”** Have people who love you braid your hair, massage your feet, and decorate your belly

Surround yourself with supportive, nurturing people who see your beauty and help you to do the same

**Connect to your sensuality and femininity.**

## How do I protect my baby before it's born?

### PROTECTING YOUR BABY PHYSICALLY AND ENERGETICALLY:

#### Make sure:

- Your environments are safe, quiet, and calm
- Your belly won't get hit

### YOUR BABY FEELS EVERYTHING:

- If you're stressed, your baby's stressed
- When you're constipated or sick and coughing, your baby feels the pressure. You already have "Mother's intuition"
- Eat well and keep your immune system strong

### COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR BABY

#### Talk to him:

- Let your baby know where you're going and what you're doing

#### Acknowledge your emotions:

- feelings of stress and discomfort are opportunities for communication
- talk to your baby about solutions (i.e. "let's go sit down and meditate, Baby")
- begin to develop patterns of self-care

### REALLY LISTEN TO YOUR INNATE WISDOM AND TO YOUR BABY

#### You will realize you already know:

- where to go
- what to eat
- what you and your baby need

Your baby is a gift to help you improve your skills for feeling, connecting to, and reflecting on what's going on inside.

This will help you in labor, and later on as a mother.

### THIS IS THE TIME TO BUILD GOOD HABITS

#### You're already setting an example for your child.

If you're aware that what you're doing and feeling is being noticed you can:

- ask yourself how it's affecting your baby
- use that opportunity to make a good decision for both of you



**Your environments must be safe, quiet, and calm.**

## How can I safely use herbs and essential oils while pregnant?

### Part I

#### PRACTICE COMMON SENSE WHEN USING HERBS AND OILS

##### Use the recommended dosage

One or two drops of essential oils is all you need in an application (always dilute)

##### Use as intended:

- If there is known toxicity with internal use for a particular oil, did not use it internally!
  - ▶ This does not mean that a small amount of the same oil used topically or aromatically could also hurt you
- If there are reports of adverse effects, really look at what happened in that situation:
  - ▶ Did someone drink a whole bottle of an essential oil that should not be taken internally and get sick?
    - ▶ It would be difficult to argue it was the oil's fault
- Use caution, especially in your first trimester:
  - ▶ Patch test the oils
  - ▶ Always dilute when using oil topically
- Slowly incorporate into your daily routine
  - ▶ Do not try to introduce a lot of new things all at once

#### STUDY UP ON YOUR OWN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

- Pregnancy is based on biological processes
- Know how your hormones work
  - ▶ You will be more aware of what actually makes sense and what does not
- Listen to yourself
  - ▶ Trust your body's senses, especially smell and taste
  - ▶ If you are adverse to something, do not use it



***Trust your body's senses, especially smell and taste.***

## How can I safely use herbs and essential oils while pregnant?

### Part II

#### SEPARATING MYTH FROM FACT

Some herbs and essential oils are contraindicated during pregnancy because they are considered *emmenagogues*-herbs known to bring on menstruation.

Most herbs under this category are known to bring on menses when women are not pregnant, but this does not apply to pregnancy, which is an entirely different biological process .

There are a few herbs which contain chemicals which produce oxytocin-like effects:

Blue cohosh, goldenseal, ova ursi and fenugreek — these can help stimulate uterine contractions

**A good rule of thumb: Do not start using anything super strong during pregnancy**



#### DO YOUR RESEARCH

**Remember, so much information is available to the public is based on someone's opinion or agenda**

Ask yourself:

Is the information balanced? Is it evidence-based?

Does it make sense/resonate with you?

Is it coming from a qualified source?

**Essential oils are wildly popular these days**

With extreme popularity, come more/ extreme viewpoints. It is not black and white, because everyone is different. Caution should be exercised, rather than fear or paranoia.

**Throughout history, midwives have understood the power of plant medicine to ensure healthy pregnancy, safe delivery, and infant/maternal survival.**

With more access to this knowledge than ever, every woman has the ability and responsibility to do her own research and choose her own ...

**Trust your body's senses, especially smell and taste.**

## What is a normal mood vs. a disorder?

### IT'S NATURAL TO FEEL UP AND DOWN DURING PREGNANCY

- Your hormones are rapidly changing
- It is normal to experience concerns about yourself and your baby, as well as labor and delivery, when it gets close to that time

### WHEN DOES WORRYING CROSS THE LINE?

#### ASK YOURSELF:

- Are these fleeting concerns, or are they obsessions?
- How am I sleeping at night?
- Your mind, rather than physical aches/pains or frequent urination, is what is causing sleep loss.
- Have I lost my appetite (apart from morning sickness)?
- Do these worries and thoughts get in the way of my daily function?
- The severity and frequency of your thoughts are what should be taken into account
- How can I find peace?



### DEEP-SEATED, VERY SPECIFIC EMOTIONS AND MEMORIES CAN COME UP DURING PREGNANCY

- Working with a therapist who specializes in mood and anxiety disorders for pregnant and postpartum women, rather than a general therapist, is a good idea
- Get screened by your OB or midwife at least once a trimester
  - Mood and anxiety disorders can often be dismissed as normal pregnancy hormones—it is important that the right questions be asked
  - If your practitioner has not brought up screening to you, bring it up to her
  - Ask why you have not been screened
- Take the Edinburgh Postnatal

### STAY AWAY FROM THE INTERNET

- It is easy to get false information when trying to do your own research on serious topics such as mood disorders
- Stick to professionals and resources you know you can trust

***Stick to professionals and resources you know you can trust.***

## Module 2

# Speaker Bio's



**Dr. Lauren Brim, Ph.D.**, is an Author, Mother, Coach, Sexologist, Student Midwife, and Advanced BodyTalk Practitioner. She has been practicing alternative medicine since 2004.

*More about Lauren can be found at [www.laurenbrim.com](http://www.laurenbrim.com)*

**Adelaine Fox** is a childbirth doula, childbirth educator, pregnancy coach, birth consultant, and midwifery student. She birthed five children at home and supports parents' choices in pregnancy and birth. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with her family of five. She works with clients across the country to support their increased knowledge about birth and informed decision making.

*More about Adelaine and her work can be found at [movingtomotherhood.com](http://movingtomotherhood.com)*



**Elzabietta Kosmicki** is an integrative health practitioner, BodyTalk Access instructor and Doula with a focus on childbirth education, women's care and community health education. She also has advanced training in massage therapy and structural integration, Classical Chinese Medicine and is a mother of 2 girls. Her childbirth education and integrative practices support whole healing through the child bearing year with clients and their family.

*More about Elzabietta can be found at <http://advancedwellnesspartners.com>*



**Shoshana Bennett, Ph.D.** (“Dr. Shosh”) from the popular DrShosh.com Radio Show is the author of “Pregnant on Prozac,” “Postpartum Depression For Dummies,” and co-author of “Beyond the Blues: Understanding and Treating Prenatal and Postpartum Depression & Anxiety.” She is also the creator of the new mobile app PPD Gone! Her newest book, “Children of the Depressed,” National TV shows including “20/20,” “Discovery Channel,” “The Doctors” and “The Ricki Lake Show” feature Dr. Shosh as the pregnancy and postpartum mood expert and news stations such as CNN consult her. She’s been quoted in dozens of newspapers and magazines such as The Wall Street Journal, WebMD, Boston Globe, Fit Pregnancy, Glamour, Parenting, Psychology Today, New York Post, Self, Cosmopolitan, and the Chicago Tribune.

*Learn more at [drshosh.com](http://drshosh.com)*



**Mayu Kawata, MT-BC, HHP, CBP**, has been a board-certified music therapist and holistic health practitioner for 12 years.

Her recent focus has been on individual and group sessions with children, including newborns and infants as well as children with special needs, incorporating the use of essential oils and natural remedies with various therapeutic methods. She owned a popular natural parenting store on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, and has been manufacturing and retailing natural herbal products for over a decade.



**Karen Atkins, LMT, Adv CBP, Adv CBI,  
Certified Wudang Qigong Instructor,**

Karen is a vitality lifestyle expert and singer-songwriter who specializes in helping people uncover their latent potential for optimum energy and fulfillment through transformational tools like BodyTalk, Qi Gong, Essential oils, Music, Nourishment, and other Therapeutic Practices. In her Vital Qi TV series, Karen provides practical tips and solutions to generate lasting vitality and fulfillment and create the lifestyle of your dreams.

Karen has been featured on Ted Talks and Good Morning America and is also an award-winning musician.

*More about Karen can be found at [karenatkins.com](http://karenatkins.com)*

Your Vibrant Pregnancy

