

Happy Pregnancies



Andi at 29 weeks

Andi Lew, author, TV presenter and *Australian Natural Health* personality, is ready to deliver her first baby. Join her as she discusses the best ways to enjoy a happy, healthy pregnancy.

Be-coming pregnant is the most wonderful thing that has happened to me so far. Recently, it felt like I gave birth when the book I co-wrote with my husband *7 Things Your Doctor Forgot to Tell You* was finally released. Though the process took three years and there were no contractions, it was definitely a labour of love and one I got to share with the man I love – Dr Warren Sipser. Warren is a South African born paramedic who has become a paediatric chiropractor. In our book, he shares wonderful insights about what health is and how to achieve it. I felt compelled to share it with the world, much like a new mother.

Now, just months later, we are about to really give birth. In fact, by the time you read this, it would have already happened. I've enjoyed pregnancy so much.

BY CHOICE, NOT CHANCE

My husband always says "health happens by choice, not by chance!"

The choices you make pre-pregnancy and during can help you to enjoy the journey so much more than you ever imagined.

My friends tell me that I'm blessed to have my husband do what he does because I get 'chiro on tap'. No appointment necessary. Yes, it's true I get to have regular chiropractic care from my husband, but even if I didn't I would certainly find a way to get it. It's the chiropractic lifestyle, or

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wellness philosophy, that makes a difference. So allow me to share Warren's expert advice on how you can have a happier, healthier pregnancy, naturally.

MORNING WELLNESS

We've all heard of the term 'morning sickness'. In fact it can be the one thing that women claim time and time again they don't look forward to when being pregnant. They sometimes complain more about this than the birthing process itself! For some it can be a very challenging time, but what if the reason you have morning sickness is because you are actually well? What if it's a sign your hormones are really strong and healthy? Let's call it morning wellness now, and as well as changing our perception of what it is, discover how we can minimise symptoms.

Consider it a type of 'cleanse', and eat clean. Some research has

suggested that the act of vomiting while pregnant is actually a way of bringing up something you have ingested that your baby doesn't like in order to protect it. During my first trimester, I only ate fresh food and hardly any packaged food containing preservatives. My body was telling me this new human growing inside of me wanted only high quality nutrition. Eating simple, clean and even organic foods ensured that I was giving the growing baby excellent nutrition and nothing complicated for its delicate and developing nervous system.

PREGNANT APPETITE

When the healthy hormones kick in, you may not feel like eating much at first. Opening the fridge can be the last thing you want to do, especially when your sense of smell heightens and you are turned off strong-smelling foods. When you are not pregnant and you are

nauseous, you can choose not to eat. But having a baby means you can't afford to do that. While pregnant, I soon learned that forcing myself to eat very small amounts regularly would mean that my body wasn't producing too much bile from having an empty stomach. Sometimes it can be the over-production of bile in your gut that makes you feel nauseous, so find something you can handle and make sure it's there first thing in the morning.

YOU'RE SWEET ENOUGH

Another reason for 'morning wellness' may be consuming foods containing artificial sweeteners. In some cases, being sick after consuming processed food may be your body's way of once again protecting your developing baby. Artificial sweetener can be found in chewing gums, light yoghurts and many other packaged foods like diet soft drinks that have 'no



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sugar' on the label. Some people consume them because they believe an artificial sweetener is actually healthier and better for them than sugar. It is not – all artificial sweeteners are exactly that: artificial!

You might have thought these sweeteners would help you control a healthy weight. But do artificial sweeteners help us fight the battle of the bulge? A recent study found by US Dr Joseph Mercola suggests not. There are no studies proving diet drinks assist weight loss. In fact, the opposite may be true. The sweetness of the soda tends to stimulate appetite, especially for more sweets. Some believe artificial sweeteners are even linked with cancer.

FORGET FOODS FROM THE 'LAB'

Eat fresh, healthy, unadulterated, wholegrain foods during your pregnancy. The key is to eat foods that are as close to nature as possible. Read the ingredients on labels. If there are numbers or scientific words you don't recognise, it usually means it is disguising something that has been made in a lab.

The only way to be sure you're only having morning sickness because of hormones and not because of artificial foods is to



remove them completely from your diet. That way, if you still feel sick, you can refer to your morning sickness as 'morning wellness', knowing you are just experiencing healthy hormonal changes that are providing the right environment for your baby.

MAGICAL MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is vital for normal muscle function. Together with calcium, magnesium acts to cause muscle contraction and relaxation. A balance of both is imperative for a healthy mum and baby.

Most people meet their calcium requirements but often fail to consume optimal amounts of magnesium. Some mothers do complain of muscle cramping in their legs during pregnancy, especially at night. To avoid muscle cramps, consider taking magnesium supplements or up your levels with foods like artichoke, barley,

almonds, beans, banana and tuna. Your uterus is a muscle too, so it will benefit from a magnesium-rich diet. Keep it functioning well as it houses your baby, and for when the time comes to contract at its best to push your beautiful bundle out into the world.

Of course, ensure you're getting optimum levels of calcium. Good quality powder form is best and can be obtained from your naturopath or chiropractor. Some foods high in this wonderful mineral are nuts such as almonds and green leafy vegetables such as kale, spinach and silverbeet.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR LIFELINE

A huge part of enjoying my pregnancy has been about looking after my lifeline – my spine! Your spine houses your delicate nervous system that controls and coordinates every cell, tissue and organ in your body. If your nervous system is functioning at its best, your body is sending healthy signals to not just your body, but also your baby. Keeping your spine aligned and moving well is imperative for a healthy pregnancy. Research posted by the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association showed 84 per cent of women receiving chiropractic care during pregnancy reported relief from back pain. Labour tended to be shorter, and there was less need for pain medication during birth.

Warren says it's important to remember that as your body changes shape with the increased load of being pregnant, your joints have to work harder. So, to prevent back pain or pelvic instability during pregnancy, it's



ALL PICS ISTOCK

well-worth getting a chiropractic check-up beforehand.

SLEEPING SIMPLE

Sleep is underrated. It sounds like a simple thing to do to make your pregnancy happier and healthier, but it's really so important! Cells replenish when you sleep. What's more, your baby gets to move more and become more active when you sleep too, and this actually helps its brain to develop and grow. That means your resting makes your baby smarter.

Sleep has been shown to decrease food cravings, increase your feel-good chemical levels and endorphins, and make you less moody during pregnancy, which can be good news for your partner. Remember that you have a person breathing, feeding, growing and even hanging off you, so all of this expends extra energy and requires more rest than usual. Listen to your body and schedule in naps. **NH**

You Might Like To Try

GAIA Belly Butter

This Belly Butter (\$17.95) was developed during the third pregnancy of GAIA Natural Baby creator, Michelle Vogrinec. She was determined not to get any new stretchmarks, and was pleasantly surprised when this formula, containing pure cocoa butter, organic shea butter and organic rosehip and wheatgerm oils, did just that. It also faded the colour of her existing stretchmarks. Belly Butter is free from petrochemicals, mineral oil, lanolin, parabens, vitamin A and artificial fragrance.

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Milly pillow

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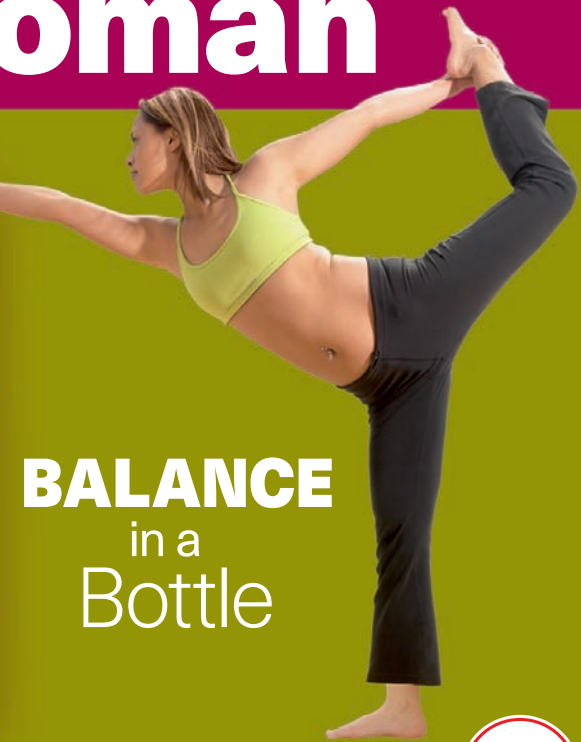
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