

# The Wellness Family

Dr. Harris Keeps You Informed

## Picking Your Prenatal Wellness Team

If you are expecting a baby then you probably have a lot on your mind. While it is the most natural thing in the world, having a baby has become an industry of products and recommendations; and you may be feeling a little overwhelmed with all the choices. Unfortunately, no one can make those choices for you, but your Chiropractor can help you make informed decisions.

### **Your Doctor of Chiropractic**

A properly functioning spine and nervous system is an important part of a wellness pregnancy. In addition to the noticeable changes your pregnancy will cause your body, pregnancy can also cause subtle changes in the musculoskeletal system; changes your Chiropractor is able to detect and correct.

The position of your growing baby will cause your center of gravity to shift and your spine will naturally alter itself to accommodate this change. As a result, you may experience low back and pelvic pain. The increase in hormones during pregnancy can also cause muscles, ligaments, cartilage and even bones to “soften” and become more pliable. Pelvic bones may even become displaced or fixated. Since your hips will need to spread to accommodate the delivery of your baby, fixated pelvic bones can lead to complications during delivery.

It's especially important during pregnancy for nerve impulses to flow from your brain to all the parts of your body. A slightly out-of-place vertebra can create nerve irritation, which can and will interfere with your body's communication system. By using special or modified techniques during your pregnancy, your Family Wellness Chiropractor can restore the function of your nervous system, improving your overall wellness and increasing your comfort during your pregnancy and delivery.

In fact, research has proven that:

- 84% of pregnant women treated by Chiropractic care received profound relief from low back pain
- Women who received Chiropractic care had nearly a 25% reduction in the average labor time verses the “generally accepted average labor time”
  - With women who had given birth in the past, that number rose to 33%
- Postpartum pain was relieved in 90 of 120 moms that received regular Chiropractic care

During your pregnancy, your Doctor of Chiropractic can do the following:

1. Correct vertebral misalignment and relieve nerve interference with gentle adjustments.
2. Help ensure that pelvic bones are properly aligned, contributing to a shorter and easier delivery.
3. Re-establish the natural position and mobility of the joints.
4. Provide freedom from interference of normal nerve energy.
5. Decrease the likelihood of your fetus being in the wrong position during the last trimester



*“Ask your Chiropractor today about prenatal Chiropractic care for you and your baby’s health.”*

More than just a treatment for low back pain, many mothers have come to recognize the vital role that Chiropractic care plays in a healthy pregnancy, reporting back to their Chiropractors that regular spinal adjustments helped them feel healthier during their pregnancy, decreased morning sickness, facilitated shorter labor and delivery times, and increased an overall sense of well-being.

### **A Midwife or A Non-Invasive Ob/Gyn**

The term natural childbirth has become subjective – it depends with whom you're talking. A woman who delivered her baby vaginally in a hospital without the assistance of an epidural may claim to have chosen natural childbirth; but only the woman who had her baby at home with only a midwife and her family nearby would be telling the complete truth.

The term “natural childbirth” encompasses a variety of methods. In the Lamaze method, natural childbirth means the laboring woman consciously participates in the birth while medical techniques are applied freely as considered necessary.

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The Bradley method focuses on avoiding pain medication but is open to medical intervention if necessary; but others do not consider it natural childbirth unless it occurs at home without any medical intervention.

Whatever your desire it's important to make sure that your care provider is in agreement with your wishes. While the medical community claims that they will support your decisions the facts say otherwise.

Efforts have been made to educate and inform women about healthier deliveries since the 1970's but, despite how it looks, the situation hasn't changed:

- Studies have shown that it's possible to keep cesarean sections down to between 4% and 8% of deliveries and yet they've risen to almost 25%
- Epidurals are being given during almost 75% of all deliveries

With medical personnel convinced that they're doing the "right thing" it's almost impossible to have natural childbirth in a hospital. That's why so many women are choosing homebirths or birthing centers where their choice to have a natural childbirth will not only be accepted but encouraged.

Despite rumors to the contrary, home births are no more dangerous than a hospital birth; in reality, they may be safer since a home birth setting allows the care providers to engage in nutritional and health education while eliminating exposure to anesthetics that interfere with neonatal neurological development, and to bacteria or viruses that flourish in a hospital. A home birth also means less disruption of bonding for the mother, baby and the rest of the family.

Before you make your delivery decision, ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor for a list of local midwives and non-invasive obstetrician/gynecologists. Explore your options and make an informed decision.

## ***Doula or Dontcha?***

The word "doula" is derived from the Greek word for the most important slave or servant in the household who helped the lady of the house with childbearing. Today, the word has come to refer to "a woman experienced in childbirth who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to the mother before, during and just after childbirth."

If you are considering using a doula remember that an experienced doula:

- Recognizes birth as a life experience that the mother will always remember
- Stays by the side of the laboring woman through the entire labor and assists in preparing for and carrying out the parent's plans for the birth
- Provides emotional support, physical comfort measures, an objective viewpoint and assistance in getting the information an expectant mother needs to make good decisions
- Perceives her role as one who nurtures and protects the woman's memory of her birth experience

With the recognition of their important contribution to the improved physical outcomes and emotional well being of mothers and infants, the acceptance of doulas in maternity care is growing rapidly.

## ***In Summary***

Pregnancy can be the most exciting time of your life, but concern about making the right decisions can tarnish the glow. Speak with your Doctor of Chiropractic today, if you're pregnant or considering conceiving. Just as the decision to use a doula, midwife or OB/GYN can affect your overall childbirth experience, so can your nutrition, exercise and spinal health.

<http://www.icpa4kids.org/research/chiropractic/pregnancy.htm>

*Dear Parent,*

*Dr. Harris is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care; with that dedication comes an understanding that an informed parent makes wise decisions. Take a moment today to discuss your prenatal plan with your Family Wellness Chiropractor.*

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