



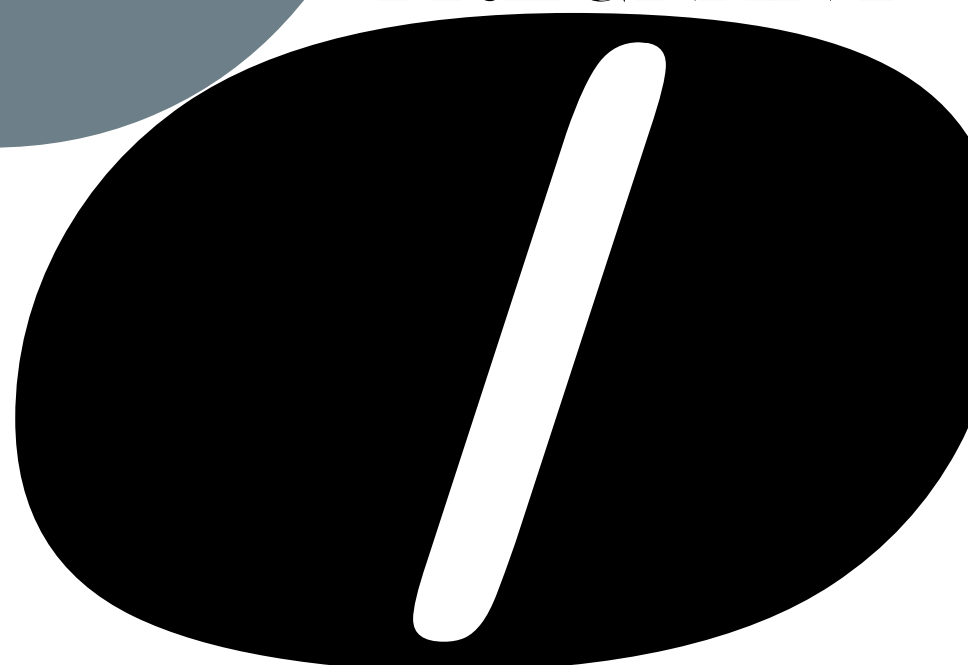


*REASONS
WHY
now
IS THE
best TIME
TO BE
PREGNANT*

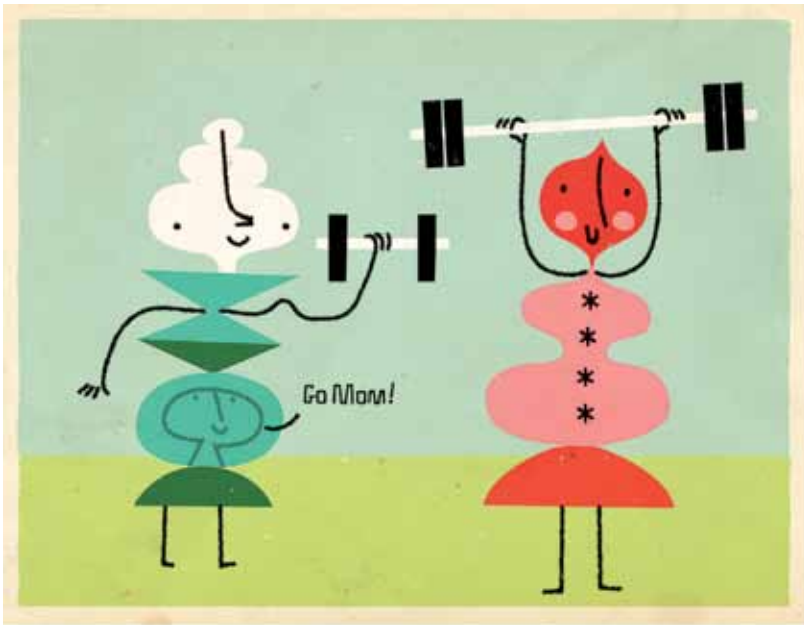
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC COMSTOCK



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CATHERINE LEDNER



congratulations! You're pregnant. And a hearty congrats to us as well—*Fit Pregnancy* turns 20 this year and we couldn't be more thrilled to celebrate with you. Why? Well, we think it's an amazing time to be pregnant. For starters, as an expectant mom you can choose an OB-GYN or midwife—or both; there's an abundance of well-researched information to help you have the healthiest pregnancy possible; and you've got plenty of great-looking baby gear to pick from. It's an incredible time to be sporting a baby bump, and to prove it, we've compiled 20 reasons why now is the best time ever to be a mom-to-be.

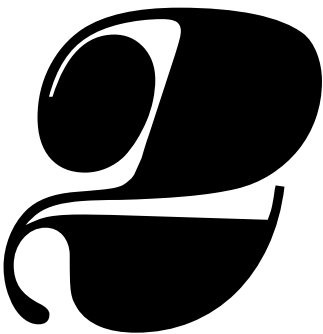


1

Baby bumps on spin bikes are commonplace

Just because you're expecting doesn't mean you should expect to stop exercising.

"When it comes to exercise during pregnancy, there are no longer any 'one size fits all' prescriptions," says Michelle Mottola, Ph.D., director of the exercise and pregnancy laboratory at University of Western Ontario, Canada. Sure, you need to steer clear of risky activities like rollerblading and horseback riding, and you should avoid lying on your back after 16 weeks to avoid compromising uterine blood flow, but jogging, Pilates, weightlifting, spinning and Zumba are all fair game for women with uncomplicated pregnancies who've received an OB's go-ahead. The payoffs: loads more energy, a reduced risk of gestational diabetes and constipation, healthier body image, a speedier labor and delivery, and a quicker bounce back to your preconception weight. Your mini gym bunny will benefit, too: Babies born to fit moms have healthier hearts and a reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's later in life. Check with your doctor if you have any concerns, always make sure you can carry on a conversation while exercising and stop if you feel any pain or discomfort. — LESLIE GOLDMAN



Dads are full-time parents, too

A recent study from the Pew Research Center finds that most men are struggling to juggle work and family, just like moms. But believe it or not, that's a sign of progress. Our grandfathers' generation showed their love by going to work every day and providing for their families—and woe to the man who dared change a diaper, for he'd be told he was doing woman's work. Today, more men than ever have access to paid or unpaid parental leave, thanks to policies like the Family and Medical Leave Act. Better, over the past two generations, women went to school and went to work, and many gained the ability to support families. That put new demands on men—your turn to make dinner, buddy!—but it also created new possibilities.

Enter the stay-at-home dad. Most men won't become one, but we've all gained the opportunity to train on skills like patience, empathy and peeing while holding a crying infant. We have to succeed on the job and at home—and the mothers of our children are often struggling with the exact same problem. But we're doing great. We spend more time with our kids than any previous generation of fathers, and we're embracing our new identities as competent parents. We're also learning to practice kindness, compassion and forgiveness for ourselves and for our wives. That's good, and good for our kids. — JEREMY ADAM SMITH IS THE AUTHOR OF *THE DADDY SHIFT*

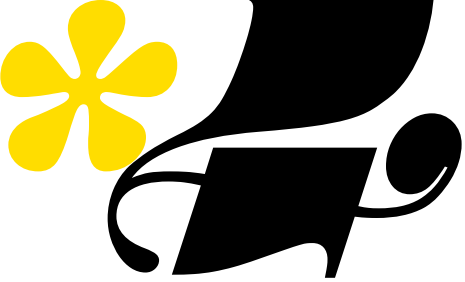




Breastfeeding is getting the attention it deserves

When *Time* magazine put a photo of a mother breastfeeding her 3-year-old son on its cover, it not only ignited a tempest of controversy, it got people talking about a taboo topic. The image was just one of a flurry of nursing-related news highlights (see also: Facebook yanks breastfeeding pics; military moms chastised for nursing in uniform; women's studies professor feeds baby while lecturing) that have fueled a national dialogue and led to enhanced awareness and greater support for moms who want or need it. Lactation consulting is now covered by insurance under the Affordable Care Act, online communities like The Leaky Boob (theleakyboob.com) offer a sense of sore-nippled camaraderie and the U.S. surgeon general has called on employers, health providers and family members to support nursing women as best they can.

"We are moving away from pressuring moms to breast-feed and putting the emphasis on removing barriers, setting women up to succeed and improving access to information," says Danielle Rigg, co-founder of the Best for Babes Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to eliminating institutional and cultural obstacles to nursing. And women do need support: Eighty-five percent of those who want to breast-feed exclusively intend to do so for at least three months, but only 32 percent reach their goal. Whether you're a diehard lactivist, a shy Hooter Hider-type or an exclusive pumper, the point is this: Options exist, and you deserve to have the tools you need for success. — L.G.

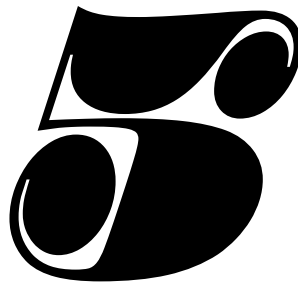


The media loves baby bumps

The “preggorazzi” are on constant bump watch, letting fans know who’s got a bun in the oven, who’s sporting 5-inch heels in her third trimester and who named her kid Rosalind Arusha Arkadina Altalune Florence Thurman-Busson (Mazel tov, Uma Thurman!). Thanks to movies like *Juno*, *Knocked Up* and *What To Expect When You’re Expecting*, we’re exposed to a rainbow of possibilities when it comes to welcoming a little one, and such belly-centric TV shows as *Call the Midwife*, *A Baby Story* and *Pregnant in Heels* let us live vicariously while we prepare for what’s to come. Famous bumps ... they’re just like US! — L.G.



(Clockwise from top left) The sassy expectant heroine of *Juno*; a positive pregnancy test in *Knocked Up*; a tale of two pregnancies in *What to Expect When You’re Expecting*; and cycling midwives in *Call the Midwife*.



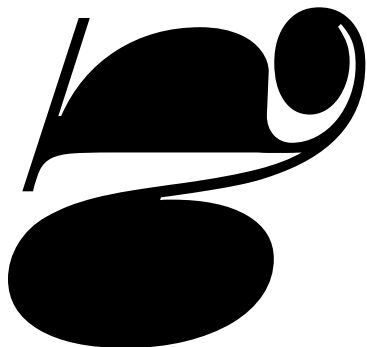
OB-GYN, midwife, doula or all three? The choice is yours.

Armed with information about the pros and cons of various child-birth practices (thank you, Internet), women have more control over where, how and with whom they experience childbirth. Documentaries, such as Ricki Lake and Abby Epstein’s *The Business of Being Born* and stories from the Farm Midwifery Center run by legendary midwife Ina May Gaskin in Tennessee, have opened many women’s minds to a less medicalized delivery; in 2009, a record-high 11 percent of all vaginal births in the U.S. were assisted by certified nurse-midwives.

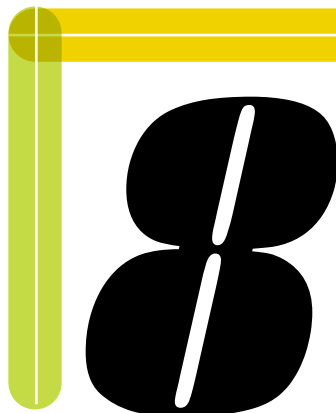
Like the idea of continuous labor support from a midwife, but want an epidural? Many hospital-based midwives will accommodate you. Crave a homey atmosphere and natural childbirth, but want to be near a hospital “just in case”? A birth center located nearby or even on the same grounds as a hospital could be a good fit. The best part? Your birth plan can include what feels right to you. — KIM SCHWORM ACOSTA



There’s a parenting style made just for you Attachment. Tiger Mom. Bringing up Bébé. No matter how you decide to raise your baby, there’s a movement out there that will work for your family. The best part? If your first choice fizzles, you can always try another. — JENNIFER CAROFANO

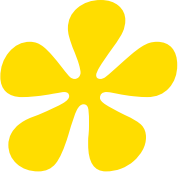


Need a name? No problem. The name of the baby moniker game: individuality. You could blame celebs for the boom. Ever since Bob Geldof named his daughter Peaches, even fruit is fair game (and you thought Gwyneth started it). And there's no shortage of inspiration. Yep, there's an app for that (Kick to Pick lets baby's movements make the call), plus professional baby-name consultants, online databases, way out-of-the-box celeb names (remember Moxie Crimefighter?) and pop-up polls. One couple even let a Facebook poll decide their baby's name. The winner: Madelyn Rae. — ALLISON YOUNG



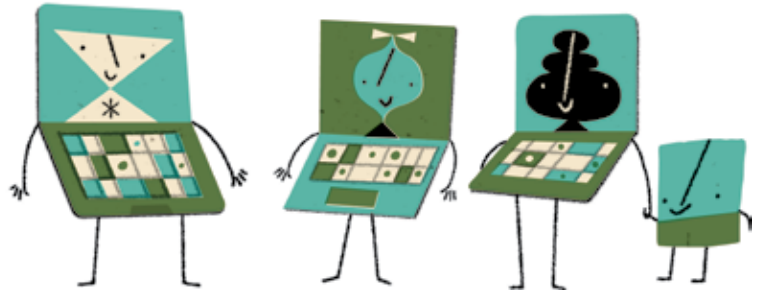
Folic acid rocks!

The Beyoncé of pregnancy nutrients, folic acid is more than a triple threat. The B vitamin helps prevent birth defects of the baby's brain and spine, produces new cells and guards against breast cancer in mom. Studies also show that taking folic acid supplements a year before conception can cut the chance of preterm birth by 50 percent (wowsa!), plus recent research has linked it to a 40 percent lower risk of having children with an autistic disorder. And folic acid's not alone—calcium, iron, omega-3s and protein are all proven powerhouses for prenatal nutrition, making menu planning for moms-to-be easier than ever. (See "Five-Star Nutrition," pg 96.) — A.Y.



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① IN ③ BLOGGERS is a MOM!



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Baby gear is beautiful

Clunky stroller, be gone! Baby gear has gone from cumbersome to über-chic—and practical, too! Space-age strollers transform faster than Lady Gaga, and even come with bragging rights. Highchairs look avant-garde, nurseries are haute couture and trendy messenger-style diaper bags mean hipster dads can look cool while on diaper duty. Even eco-friendly is more sassy than earthy due to design-driven organic toys and sustainably stylish cribs. —A.Y.

11

SIDS is on the decline

Since the American Academy of Pediatrics began its Back to Sleep campaign almost 20 years ago, the rates of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in the U.S. have declined by 50 percent. Parents now know to place infants on their backs for naps and at bedtime (as well as to use a firm mattress, a snug-fitting sheet and to take all toys and pillows out of the crib). — NANCY GOTTESMAN





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Getting pregnant is getting easier

With 1 in 8 couples experiencing difficulty conceiving, infertility is at an all-time high, and that's nothing to celebrate. But what is worth cheering is the abundance of possibilities and resources—some high-tech, some old-school—that now exist to turn wannabe moms and dads into parents. From Clomid to IVF, adoption to surrogacy, frozen eggs to donor sperm, fertility patients have options, and that can be comforting during what is typically an emotionally painful and physically draining process. — L.G.

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You can find out what your baby's made of—in the first trimester

Eager couples can learn "it's a girl!" long before delivery day, thanks to impressive strides in prenatal testing. More importantly, developmental issues can be detected (and sometimes remedied) in utero via advanced ultrasound machines, blood tests and surgical techniques. The latest breakthrough? A screening that gleans precise fetal chromosomal abnormalities with a simple prick of mom's finger as early as nine or 10 weeks' gestation. So long, amnio! — K.S.A.



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Depression is no longer a dark secret

Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, out of control, angry or all of the above? “A pregnant or postpartum woman who is depressed can find specialized help and expect a total recovery,” says Shoshana Bennett, Ph.D., author of *Postpartum Depression for Dummies* (For Dummies). That’s a far cry from the prognosis Bennett faced in the early 1980s, when the condition was largely dismissed. Help yourself and your family by talking to your doctor or a therapist, download Bennett’s free PPD Gone app or visit Postpartum Support International (postpartum.net) for info and local resources. A variety of treatments exist, including medication, support groups, individual therapy and lifestyle changes. “Women are still tempted to wait too long to get help,” says Bennett. “But the most responsible and loving thing a mom can do is make sure she’s well.” — K.S.A.

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Need trusted information? These five mom- and baby-centered organizations have got you covered

⇒ American Academy of Pediatrics

Founded in 1930 by 35 pediatricians, the AAP now boasts 60,000 members, the largest pediatric publishing program in the world and a fervent belief in access to health care for all children. aap.org

⇒ **Childbirth Connection** Dedicated to promoting safe, evidence-based maternity care practices long before it was de rigueur—since 1918—this nonprofit is a voice for pregnant, laboring and postpartum women nationwide. childbirthconnection.com

⇒ **Every Mother Counts** Moved by the shocking number of largely preventable deaths worldwide due to pregnancy and childbirth complications, model-turned-advocate Christy Turlington Burns formed this nonprofit in 2010. everymothercounts.org

⇒ **La Leche League** With its international network of mom-to-mom breastfeeding support groups and active online forums, La Leche League International is the go-to resource for those seeking nursing advice or camaraderie. lalecheleague.org

⇒ **March of Dimes** The largest nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing birth defects, prematurity and infant death, March of Dimes’ education efforts and funding for research have saved untold lives. marchofdimes.com — K.S.A.



MOMS ARE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN THE WORLD.



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Toxins are getting the ol' heave-ho

Lead. Mercury. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Phthalates. Parabens. Formaldehyde. Bisphenol A (BPA). A mama bear knows her environmental toxins and goes to great lengths to protect her cubs from potential harm (think birth defects, developmental delays, lowered IQ and cancer). All this awareness has sparked industry-wide change and safer products for baby and mom. BPA has been banned from baby bottles and cups, and brands such as Graco have pledged to remove flame-retardants linked to cancer from all their products. No, we can't live in a contaminant-free world, but avoiding toxins is easier than ever, thanks to organic crib mattresses, chemical-free bath products and nontoxic cleaning products. I am mother, hear me roar! — A.Y.

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Corporate America is finally recognizing the needs of working moms

Companies are starting to make important changes in policy for moms-to-be and working mothers, but there's still room for improvement, says Jennifer Owens, director of the Working Mother Research Institute (workingmother.com). Here, Owens reveals the best ways to support all working parents.

! | What are companies getting right when it comes to maternity leave?

|| The best practices start with fully paid maternity leave. But another great practice we've seen increasing is phase-back returns from maternity leave: A small but growing number of companies are making these temporary part-time, phase-back work schedules automatic for all returning moms, which is a great way to help them make the transition back to work.

! | What are companies doing well for working moms?

|| The best companies are all about flexibility, giving employees the power to control how and when work gets done. Flexibility can come in many forms, from flextime to compressed workweeks, all the way to career flexibility, where you can step on and off the fast track without stigma. Secondly, companies are offering backup childcare, often in home as well as at child care centers. This is a great safety net for parents who juggle a two-career family. The third top practice is support and transparency for working parents. Some of the worst stress that new working parents face comes from feeling isolated, like they're the only person facing work and home challenges. More companies are not only offering flexibility and other benefits to their working parents, but also talking about these benefits openly to help dispel any stigma that might have once been attached to them.

! | What is the most important thing that companies need to do better for expectant and working moms?

|| Manager training, whether on how to work with flexible schedules, how to give and receive feedback, or how to advance women. Managers are the ones who put policies into action. Executives who support flexibility, for example, make it possible for all employees to be more productive, more engaged and more loyal, all the while finding work-life satisfaction. — J.C.



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Facebook is the new baby book

Thanks to social media, you can instantly share pics of your growing belly, tout your baby's arrival and celebrate every milestone—from first smiles to first steps—with family and friends. Or, start a mom blog, craft a tweet or post your favorite pic to Tumblr. — KATY ELLIOTT

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Fashion is for moms-to-be, too

Goodbye muumuu. Hello skinny jeans. Gaining a baby bump no longer means you have to lose your sense of style. No matter if you're haute couture or on a budget, you can show off your fashion sense *and* those newfound curves. — J.C.





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Holistic has gone mainstream

Remember when having a midwife or doula was fringe? Now they're as common as Kardashian references. Ditto for prenatal yoga, meditation, acupuncture, hypnotherapy, eating organic and avoiding toxins. That's because holistic mamas-to-be aren't hippy dippy, they're just plain hip—and more mainstream than ever. "A holistic pregnancy is about awareness," says OB-GYN Joel Evans, M.D., author of *The Whole Pregnancy Handbook* (Gotham). "Women now realize they have input into the quality of the pregnancy and the health of the baby." Taking a mind-body-spirit approach to pregnancy can empower your body, your birth and your baby. "Plus," adds Evans, "you're cultivating healthy habits that can help you as a parent—and for the rest of your life." — A.Y.

