



LIFE BALANCE
CHIROPRACTIC CENTRE

7 PRINCIPLES OF A HEALTHIER, EASIER PREGNANCY & BIRTH

Whilst each women and each pregnancy is unique; we have seen certain patterns emerge which we want to share. It's important to note that it's not about any one thing, but how they work together in synchronicity.

'THE WHOLE IS BIGGER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS'

ARISTOLE

Pregnancy and childbirth brings with it a couple of big and common goals. A pregnancy they love and childbirth that upon delivery both mum and baby are healthy. Putting some sleep, fun and laughter back into their days. We've noticed

working with 1000s of pregnant mums that each woman has certain positive attributes that we believe are the 7 key areas that contribute to a healthier and happier mum and baby.

1. BIRTH PREFERENCES

Ideally, women will consciously choose what will work for them in their pregnancy and childbirth.

Recently I met a mum who, was trying to plan her pregnancy and childbirth to the tee. This resulted in her buying into every course on pregnancy, attending NCT and other groups, having a really in depth birth plan, attending workshops and more. This, understandably, left this woman feeling overwhelmed. She just felt like she wanted to do her best as a mum. It's no secret that she enjoys being in control.

By replacing a plan with preferences, it allows them to be informed and not to feel disappointed if things need to change. It allows them to communicate their needs and what is important to them. To make the best choices for them and their baby. Having empowering ways to discuss the risk/benefits, implications and any future consequences of tests/treatments /procedures, as well as the ability to know when to accept or decline is empowerment.



“I HAD A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT MY PREGNANCY, LABOUR AND BIRTH, SO HAVING BIRTH PREFERENCES OVER A SOLID PLAN GIVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY CONCERNS, GET CLARITY ON WHAT WAS IMPORTANT TO ME WITHOUT BEING TOO RIGID AND PLAN EVERY SINGLE DETAIL”

EMMA HEMMINGWAY, CLIENT OF LIFE BALANCE. MUM OF 4

A Mumsnet 2016 survey of 1,100 mums, who had babies in the last 3 years found that of the 1,100 mums;



Here are some examples of questions you should consider when thinking about your own pregnancy:

WHAT

have my past experiences been, is there anything I should let my support team know?

WHO

do I want with me in labour?

WHAT

kind of culture or atmosphere do I want?

HOW

can I get a better understanding of how my hips and pelvis work?

IN SUMMARY, A GOOD BIRTH PREFERENCE PROVIDES THEM TOOLS TO MAXIMISE THEIR CHANCES OF GETTING THE BIRTH THEY WANT, AND ALLOWS THEM TO:

1. Know the style of pregnancy and childbirth that instills the greatest confidence and which is best suited to their body.
2. Know all their options and choices available.

Asking empowering questions is the first step to creating a healthier pregnancy and birth by design.



1. THE POWER OF PSYCHOLOGY

I was recently at a pregnancy and birth conference called the artofbirth.org which brings together health professionals to benefit the mum and family. One thing that came up from the speakers was how changing our psychology can influence our outcomes.

The psyche is another word for emotional state. Our Psychology. If a mum is afraid, tense, stressed out, angry, feels unsafe or unsupported, she is less likely to do so well during birth. For some, the fear is intense enough to schedule a c-section and to avoid a vaginal birth all together.

“IT MAY PREVENT CERVICAL DILATION, FETAL DESCENT, OR PREVENT MUMS FROM PUSHING EFFECTIVELY.”

INA MAY GASKIN, SPHINCTER LAW



“WHEN WE ATTRIBUTE OUR FEELINGS (EMOTIONS, MOODS, ATTITUDES, THINKING, STATES OF MIND) TO OUTSIDE CIRCUMSTANCES, PEOPLE OR EVENTS, WE ARE OUT OF ALIGNMENT WITH HOW WE WORK. THE IMPLICATION OF THIS MISUNDERSTANDING IS THAT WE OFTEN TRY TO CONTROL, OVERTHINK, BLAME, JUDGE, STRUGGLE AND FEEL INSECURE.”

TERRY RUBENSTEIN, INNATEHEALTH

FIND YOUR LIFE BALANCE

A good emotional state helps mums cope with the pain effectively; helps her tune in to her body; helps guide her to her baby's needs and allows the other 7 P's to sync up effectively.

A mum who's psyche is healthy, strong and who has good support during labour will be more likely to experience a good birth.

Just like gravity physically grounds us, so too does the principles of Mind, Thought and Consciousness ground psychology. These principles explain the source, nature and relationships of all feelings, emotions, attitudes, experiences and states of mind. Where mind is the intelligence beyond our own. It is not the brain but the force that acts as a catalyst to turn thought, whether conscious or unconscious into reality.

Thought is the constant power through which life is experienced, it is not self created.

It is at the very core of all psychological functioning, it is invisible and overlooked. There is no feeling without thought. Consciousness is the awareness that brings thinking to life through the senses. They realise this is an important consideration in pregnancy and childbirth because when they are grounded they have both feet firmly on the ground and have a sense of security, balance and perspective. They can see everything around them with clarity, enabling sound, responsive and responsible decisions and instill positive behaviours.

Some simple practices they regularly do is to just be. To leave self space to do this are just being. As It's in these moments they listen to their body

1. THEY SPEND JUST 5 MINUTES A DAY SITTING AND FOCUSING ON DEEP BREATHS. ON THE SOFA OR A BOUNCING BALL CAN BE HELPFUL

2. THEY LEAVE MORE SPACE IN THE DIARY BY SAYING NO MORE.

3. THEY TAKE THE TIME TO REFLECT AND REFRAME THEIR BELIEFS.

- WHAT DO I BELIEVE?
- WHY DO I BELIEVE IT?
- DOES THIS BELIEF SERVE ME?
- WHAT I AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
- WHAT MUST I BELIEVE ABOUT? SO I CAN DO? AND HAVE?

They stop trying to control their outer world and instead focus on the reconnection with their body and breath. It's in these moments that allow them to discover what they need in that moment and trust that their body will show them the next step. They allow emotions to pass through rather than holding them it or avoiding their feeling altogether.

They Speak with their health professionals and their support team, read quality sources of information to help them navigate their pregnancy and make it a special healthy and proactive time.

3. UNLOCKING THE INNATE POTENTIAL

First of all you need to understand potential in the context as a principle. **“HAVING QUALITIES OR ABILITIES TO BE DEVELOPED, SHOWING THE CAPACITY TO DEVELOP INTO SOMETHING IN THE FUTURE USEFULNESS.”** - Webster dictionary

By realising that our ancestors and families have been pregnant and giving birth for 1000s of years, so you can believe the potential of your body.

**“INTELLIGENCE IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE IN OUR BODIES...
OUR OWN INNER INTELLIGENCE IS FAR SUPERIOR TO
ANY WE CAN TRY TO SUBSTITUTE FROM THE OUTSIDE.”**
DEEPAK CHOPRA. MD.

And so they understand that preparing their body, hips, spine, pelvis and nervous system is key to ensuring their body is functioning at its optimal potential. Nurturing their innate intelligence and allowing it to express itself freely means their body is better able to deal with the stresses and strain of pregnancy and be best prepared for childbirth and beyond.

**“RESEARCH SHOWS THAT
CORRECT ALIGNMENT OF
THE PELVIS AND SPINE MAY
CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE
STRAIGHTFORWARD LABOUR
WITH LESS PAIN AND TRAUMA
FOR MOTHER AND CHILD.”**

DR IRVIN HENDERSON MD,
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The study demonstrated that women who received chiropractic adjustments in their third trimester were able to carry and deliver their child with much more comfort than those who did not. So they learn to listen and read the

signals their body sends them and they have the discipline to respond, and have an ongoing strategy for their balance, alignment and movement of their spine and nervous system knowing it shouldn't be restricted.



4. WORK WITH PHYSIOLOGY AND NOT AGAINST IT

They get that gravity is a big factor in birth and so they use gravity to their advantage where possible and move around rather than being propped up. They also realise that not all exercises were created equal when it comes to allowing the baby to move and birth. They ensure they are doing exercises that allow the baby and bump to drop like a pear and use it's space rather than tucking everything in and up. One way they do this is by softening their exercise, still being active but not feeling they need to push themselves as hard with heavy weights, extra reps or stretching to end ranges. They fill up their time with what makes them feel good, with plenty of feel good things like nutritious foods, juicy movement, lushess alignment and new adventures of working with their body.

They learn to get sleep, when they can, say no where they can and take radical care of themselves, with restorative practices like yoga and chiropractic that allow them to experience the calmer part of their nervous system (the parasympathetic - the break on the car) the more relaxed they feel. By learning to understand their body they can be sure of feeling safe, whilst also following what works for them. They allow themselves to expand with joy rather than constrict with fear and they give themselves some space to wing it.

**“EXERCISE IS NOT DANGEROUS FOR
YOUR BABY - THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE
THAT ACTIVE WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY
TO EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS IN LATER
PREGNANCY AND LABOUR.”**

NHS, ENGLAND



5. KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 'PASSENGER' IN POSITIONING

Passenger, yes the baby. By understanding that depending on what position the baby is in will affect their ability to give birth in the way they want. So they learn about the different positions a baby can present in and how to recognise these malpositions for themselves, as well as have the tools to correct them. It is now documented that intrauterine constraint (the constraint of the uterus) can interfere with the presentation of

the baby at birth and the ability to naturally deliver. Studies have now begun to look at the long term effects of constraints in the uterus and the development of infants. (Hultman C. Epiderm 2002) As well as medical reasons for constraint there are also musculoskeletal. With over 50% of all women complaining of low back pain during pregnancy, the majority being of the sacroiliac joints (the hips). (Fast A. Spine 1987)

**“MOVEMENT IN THE WOMB
ACTIVATES PRIMITIVE REFLEXES
(FOR DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES)
AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE VESTIBULAR SYSTEM
(THE HEARING AND BALANCE)”**

**DR JENNIFER BARHAM-FLOREANI
WELL ADJUSTED BABIES**

Maternal back pains have been implicated in baby fetal constraints.

The reason for this is the connection between the pelvis and the uterus. One of the ways they gain knowledge on

this area is through workshops and programs with their friends from their chiropractic support teams to learn about such things as the Webster technique and ways to get unstuck.

6. UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE (PELVIS) MUST REMAIN RELAXED

When the pelvis sits correctly the baby is able to move down into the birth canal, putting even pressure on the cervix. Even pressure and the ability to relax the cervix creates dilation and a more straightforward birth. By understanding their hips and pelvis type (there are 4) they will know the best suited way for their body to prevent birth trauma.

They get themselves assessed for signs of pelvic imbalance. Because they know by addressing musculoskeletal problems like pelvic girdle pain, symphysis pubis dysfunction and back pain (all joints and bones that play a huge part in childbirth). They are able to deal with the stresses and strains of pregnancy and childbirth.

One counter intuitive way to open the birth canal they learn is to not be on their back, with the legs wide, but actually turning their knees in. As by turning their knees inwards, it causes the hips to turn in, opening the pubis and putting the tailbone back further away to create more room and an easier passage for the baby to pass through.



7. EARLY PARENTING CHOICES ARE IMPORTANT

Arm yourselves with the knowledge you need to feel confident going into parenthood, knowing early on parenting choices influence their health, their babies future health and development.

Some important considerations to make are understanding concepts like 'seeding', 'feeding', 'moulding' and 'sleeping'. Seeding is allowing the microbiome or good bacteria to help the baby thrive and build a natural immunity. Even if the baby is born by c-section they know still the importance of allowing their bacteria to stay on the baby for as long as possible.

"Feeding is doing what they can to breastfeed, knowing that an immediate bond of skin to skin contact is critical for the babies health." (WHO)

Moulding is when the baby is able to go through the birth canal, where possible. There is a natural moulding that takesplace in the cranial skull bones. This activates the respiratory centres of the brain and helps to coordinate and modulate the muscles of inspiration and expiration, vital for their babies development. They know it's not always possible if they have had intervention, but use other methods to help mould their babies cranial bones (gentle chiropractic methods). Finally they work with a support team that they can rely on and go to if their child isn't sleeping or latching.



"IT'S NOW RECOGNISED THAT HOW A CHILD IS BORN TODAY AND WHETHER THEY ARE ABLE TO BE BREASTFED HAS A LASTING LEGACY ON THEIR HEALTH AND NEURO DEVELOPMENT."

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION.



THE AUTHOR



Dr Josh's journey into health started as a kid. His passion meets at the intersection of a love of learning, about principles that contribute to quality health and the self healing ability of the body and human potential. He sees health challenges and injuries as a way to inspire people to live a better life and is recently curious about exploring new ways to create value at this intersection.

CONTRIBUTER



Rosie started her career as a designer. Having realised her passion for chiropractic and how chiropractic can improve people's quality of life she went on to pursue her passion and co-created Life Balance Chiropractic centre.

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