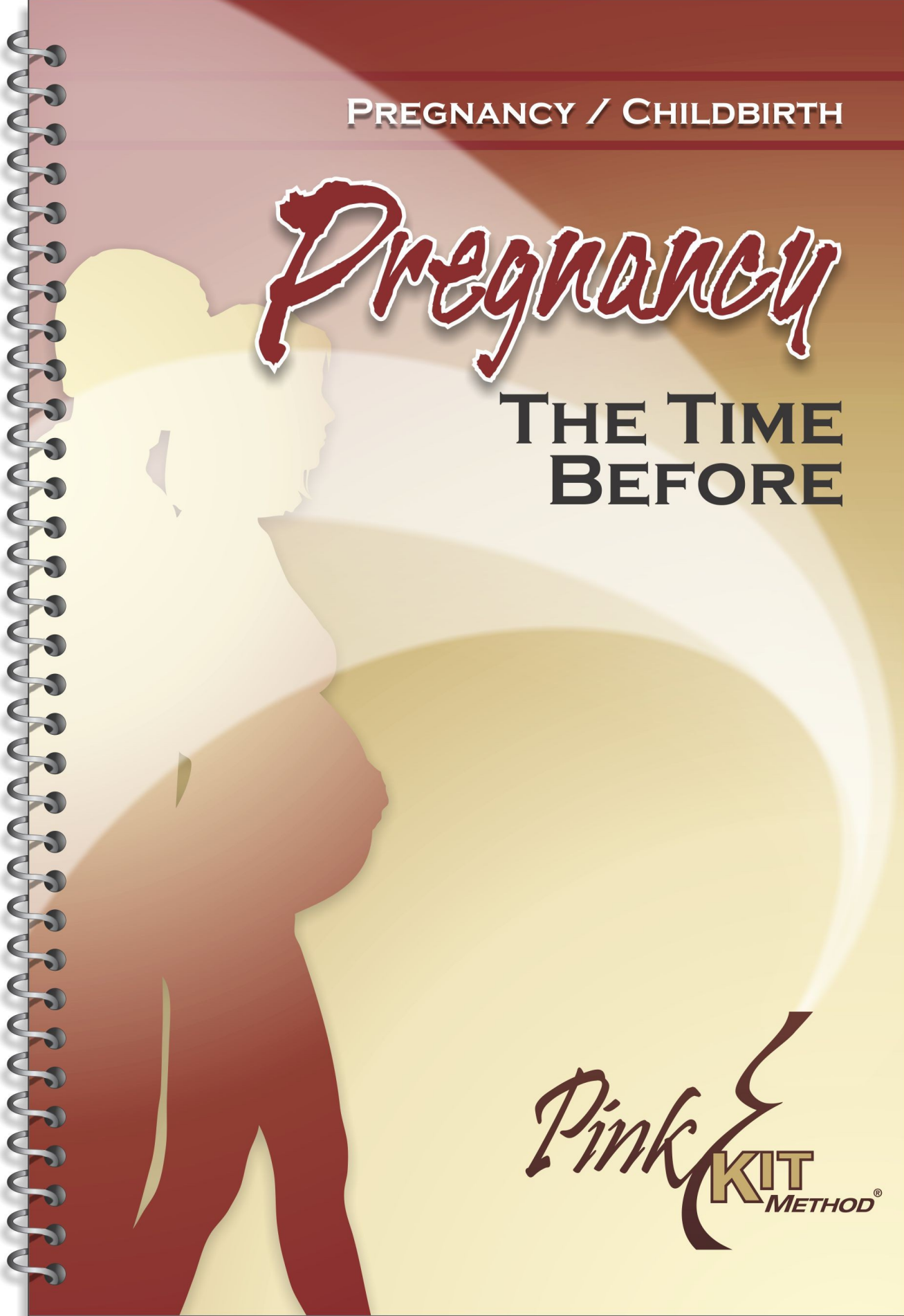


PREGNANCY / CHILDBIRTH

# Pregnancy

THE TIME  
BEFORE

Pink **KIT**  
METHOD®



## Pregnancy: The Time Before

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Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method®  
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The information in Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® is not intended to be used for the diagnosis, treatment, or prescription for any medical disorder. Please consult with your medical care provider before beginning this program.



# Pregnancy: The Time Before

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## **Pregnancy and Childbirth**

When you become pregnant, whether with your first child or a subsequent one, life changes. You are called upon to meet the emotional, spiritual, and physical needs of a new life. Both of you, mother and father-to-be, want to feel prepared for this challenge.

Don't wait until after the birth to care for this child. Parenting really begins as soon as you conceive. Luckily, childbirth doesn't take place 24 hours or even a week after conception. Who'd be ready?

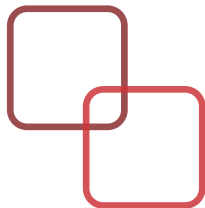
As fortune has it, we get nine months to make adjustments, preparations, and decisions and create visions for our larger family. These nine months are the "grace period" before we become parents. You get time to prepare for this new life.

Actual "birth preparation" doesn't usually happen throughout pregnancy because the inspiration to do so doesn't naturally exist. In early pregnancy, the birth seems quite far away. But, sometime around 24 weeks, as the belly gets bigger, the mind and body turn toward this one huge event. The birth begins to look like the day of reckoning. Boy, is that accurate.

After 24 weeks, the speed of pregnancy suddenly picks up and goes by very quickly. There is a direct correlation between the bigger belly and greater motivation to plan for the birth. This is Nature's way of getting you ready to both give birth and become a parent. This means that, from about the 24<sup>th</sup> week, you have a window of opportunity to prepare specifically for birth.

### **Childbirth: One of Life's Gigantic Gateways**

For all pregnant families, "the birth" literally and symbolically represents a "gateway" through which we all must pass. Because all of us humans have been



born, even though not all of us give birth, this Gateway embraces and includes the mother, father, and extended family. The arrival of a child is never an insignificant event. The arrival of a child is always life-changing.

Through this Gateway, two must physically pass: the mother and the child. For the father-to-be, the Gateway is more symbolic: a man becomes a father.

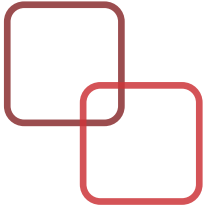
In order to get ready to pass through this Gateway, both of you parents have to adjust to your new reality.

For a woman:

- The first few months of pregnancy are spent adjusting to the actuality of another life growing within your body. However, until your baby's movements are felt sometime around 20 weeks, this other life can seem very distant. Mostly, you just feel the changes in your body.
- The middle months are often filled with the joy and excitement of pregnancy and having a baby. This period begins after any early pregnancy sickness passes and continues until your body feels unwieldy and awkward.
- In the last months, your baby, body, mind, and in fact your entire life all begin to focus on THE BIRTH.

For a man:

- The first few months are spent adjusting to the reality of your partner's pregnancy, dealing with all her physical changes and mood swings, and trying to place the surety of having a child into your own psyche.
- The middle few months can be filled with great joy and pride. You can see your wife's belly finally getting bigger. After 20 weeks, the movement of the baby begins to be felt, and each week after that your baby becomes bigger and more obvious. Many of the rapid emotional and physical changes have settled down, and your woman begins to have that "pregnancy glow."
- During the last few months, your mind and emotions also begin to increasingly



focus on THE BIRTH, particularly if you are expected to be with your partner as she physically meets the challenge of the activity that will take her (and you) through this life-transforming Gateway.

It is imperative that you pass through this Gateway *together*, with confidence and pride. Doing so will endow you with an enormous sense of achievement for a job well done and prepare you to meet the challenge of being a parent.

### **Some Common Rules for Preparing for Birth**

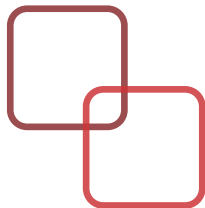
What rules do you know about getting ready to birth?

- Pick a birth provider
- Make a Birth Plan
- Read and attend childbirth preparation classes
- Talk to loads of people who've had babies
- Go to appointments
- Pick where you want to birth

All the things mentioned in the bullet points are currently the standard "birth preparations." You've probably either read and/or been told that making your Birth Plan and gathering information are taking appropriate responsibility. But you might feel overwhelmed by how best to take responsibility. Often, women say, "I don't know what I should do." And fathers often think, but don't always say, "I'll just leave it to her. She's having the baby." Listen to the voice inside you that asks:

#### **Women**

- Have I done enough?
- Do I feel confident?
- Will my husband/partner really be able to help me?
- Is there something more I need to do to prepare?



### **Men**

- She expects so much of me. Will I really be able to help her?
- What does our doctor/midwife expect of me?
- Will I be afraid?
- What if I make a mistake, a fool of myself, feel useless?

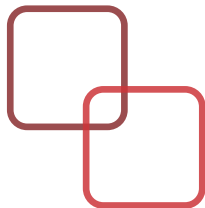
You're not alone in how you feel. There *is* something missing in childbirth: skills.

### **No Societal Expectation**

When you were taught how to make a Birth Plan and gather information, did anyone tell you that you also must learn appropriate skills so both of you can work with your baby's efforts to be born? If not, don't feel bad; most expectant mothers and fathers aren't told that birth is an activity that can be done with a set of very good skills. But, in reality, there is absolutely no expectation that either of you have birthing or coaching skills. There's more social pressure and expectation that everyone learn the skills to drive a car, spell correctly, or even make a bed. How weird is that?

Why is this happening? The explanation is a bit long, but here's the short form. Women have always given birth for as long as the human species has been around. Birth has always been considered sort of mystical, or falling into that unknown place, like love. We just have a habit in our thinking that birth is unknown, so there is nothing we can do about it. We especially think this of surgical deliveries.

But this belief is no longer working for us. An essential part of pregnancy is to learn both birth and birth coaching skills. All of the current "rules" have to do with something or someone outside yourselves and the choices available to you. These well may lead to a "better birth," but your skills will lead to birthing better — something you do for yourselves, to enrich whatever birth you plan to have and whatever birth you actually do have, including surgical deliveries. Your Birthing Better Pink Kit resources will give both of you the absolutely indispensable and best skills you'll ever need in order to do your different, but equally important, jobs well.



## Deconfusing a Confusing Word

Let's look at the word "responsibility." As a family, you naturally want to take responsibility for the birth of your child—and you might believe you are being as responsible by adhering to current preparation rules. You might have also been told that taking responsibility means to

- stop smoking.
- eat well.
- not drink alcohol.
- say yes or no to medical care.
- have a Caesarean because your baby is breech.
- have a home birth because your baby is breech.

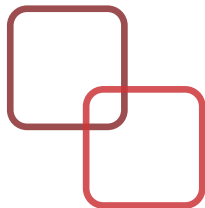
If this is you, you've come to believe—like many expectant parents—that taking responsibility means making choices and gathering information. That's certainly part, but not the whole. And this is where one simple word, *responsibility*, is used in a way that does not reflect the reality of your situation.

If childbirth was just about gathering information and making choices, everyone would have the birth they wanted or asked for—but that isn't even close to reality. You can plan all you want, but birth is unknown. It's easy to plan for practical things, but read these birth stories to get another part of the picture.

### **Where**

*"My husband and I had experienced a terrible birth with our son. This made us more afraid now that I was pregnant with our second son. We were determined to head to the hospital at the first sign of labor. Unfortunately, I went into labor during the 100-year flood! We tried to get out the door, but the winds were hurricane force, and trees were down on the road. We ended up having the baby in the hall. Funny, we had no fear. We had learned The Pink Kit skills—so much for planning where I wanted to give birth."*





### **With whom**

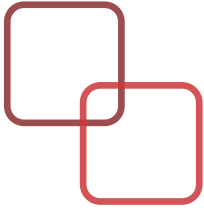
*“Our midwife was wonderful, and we looked forward to our birth with her. I went into labor when she was at another birth, and we ended up with her associate. Not only that, but our home birth also ended up in the hospital because I started to bleed. Our Pink Kit skills permitted us to just get on with the task of giving birth with a very changed situation. I still had the birth of my dreams, because I took more responsibility for my own behavior, and my husband was more capable. He would have [taken less responsibility with] our lovely midwife, and I would not have been so strong.”*

In the end, you can't control where or with whom you birth, and it's even harder to control other circumstances. Read these birth stories.

### **Pain relief**

*“My wife wanted an epidural at the first pains. In fact, she was a pain in the a\*\* when I wanted to learn some skills to help her. I went through The Pink Kit—what a sissy name—but learned heaps. While she moaned and groaned through pregnancy and felt panicked about birth, I wanted to experience everything. We had a right time of it. Come the big day, she went into labor, and I absolutely forced her to breathe well and stay relaxed. The hospital didn't want us to come until her contractions were five minutes apart and one minute long. They told her she could have an epidural as soon as she came in, but to do one sooner would just slow the labor down. She had to be at least 3-5 cm dilated. She was livid! Her doctor had told her she could have one, but she hadn't asked the right question, ‘When?’ Anyway, I worked, and she fussed for hours, but I loved it, and she did great even though she complained the whole time.*

*“Finally, we reached the magic timeframe and headed to the hospital. While we were driving the 30 minutes, she had to rely more on herself while I drove, but I kept helping as I could. We got to hospital and she said, ‘Give me the epidural NOW!’ Well, they took their time, put us in a room where we waited until the doctor came and examined her. She was almost fully dilated, and he told her it was too late for the epidural! Within half an hour, she was pushing, and, thanks to the internal massage we did from the Pink Kit, she pushed our daughter out in about 40 minutes. Do you know what she said after the birth? She crowed ‘I DID IT!’ What a hoot—now she's taking all the credit. But I didn't care. We had a great birth, and she's been changed. We've both been changed.”*



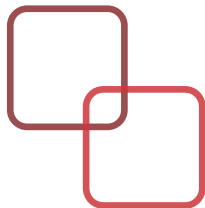
### **“Knowing” what the jargon means**

*“I read everything and could recite the whole physiological process of labor. But when my midwife told me my baby’s head was engaged and my cervix was 50% effaced and 1 cm dilated, I couldn’t actually ‘feel’ that. I didn’t actually know what it meant in my body. I realized that information and knowledge is not the same as skills. So, when I went home, I stuck my finger up and had a good feel. I could feel the curve of my baby’s head through the tissue of my vagina. I could feel that my cervix was not as long as it usually is, and the tissue of that part of my vagina was smoother, and I could just barely have put one finger into the cervical opening. Now I know what that all means.”*

### **Natural birth—or not**

*“Yes, I’m a natural birth proponent. Birth is the most natural thing a woman can do, and women have given birth for tens of thousands of years, so what could be more natural? My daughter’s birth was natural, for sure, but I’ve now expanded my understanding of that word. I started to bleed at 26 weeks into the pregnancy. My placenta had started to separate, so I ended up in the hospital on bed rest with the doctors hoping to get me to at least 32 weeks, after which my daughter had a good chance of surviving without so much intervention. I realized that bleeding might not be common, but it certainly was something that could naturally happen. And I thanked my lucky stars that I lived in a country that had a modern medical system and wasn’t one of those women working in a rice paddy. I would have lost my baby.*

*“Anyway, with time on my hands and a Pink Kit loaned from a friend, I learned the skills and used many of them every day over the next 6 weeks. The skills became so familiar that, when I actually spontaneously went into labor at 32 weeks to the day, I just birthed my daughter myself. The doctors didn’t treat the labor as having to need more medical care as long as they monitored her. They said a natural labor would strengthen her lungs and was better than a c/s. I had a relatively short labor and quite quick 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage and delivered a beautiful, 4-pound, 6-ounce little girl. Although some people might think I didn’t have a natural birth, that’s not true. I birthed her on my own, even surrounded by medical staff and stuff. My understanding of the word ‘natural’ is much more expanded now. BTW—she’s fine!”*



## Your Responsibility

So, information doesn't always make sense, and Birth Plans don't always pan out. In that light, this is how your Pink Kit defines "responsibility" for pregnant women:

- Prepare your pregnant body to let a large object out of your birthing body.
- Learn birth skills during pregnancy.
- Learn the coaching skills your partner will use to help you.
- Use your birth skills in whatever birth unfolds.

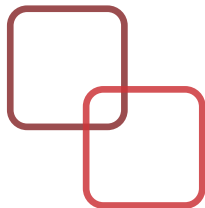
This is how The Pink Kit defines "responsibility" for fathers-to-be:

- Help your wife/partner prepare her pregnant body so the passage of your baby leaves as little trauma as possible on both her and your child.
- Learn your coaching skills so you feel confident to help in any birth situation, even an unexpected birth in the car on the way to the hospital or an unplanned-for and unwanted Caesarean delivery.
- Work with your partner throughout the birth process no matter what.
- Praise her efforts.

Even with a Caesarean birth, you can use your skills on the way to the hospital, during the prep in the hospital, during surgery, and during recovery. This is especially true of unplanned/unwanted Caesareans, for it's far better to use skills to respond proactively for yourself in an unpleasant situation than be disappointed by what you get.

## Adding Skills to the Rules

After you have learned your Pink Kit skills, you will have no nagging uncertainties, and you won't have to be disappointed if your Birth Plan changes. These skills will fill in the gaps, and you'll head into your birth with capability and competence. Excitement will replace anxiety.



You'll also understand that the word "responsibility" means to prepare the pregnant body for birth and learn the skills to help your baby get out of your body, as well as make a Birth Plan and learn as much as you can. On the big day, it's your skills that will carry you through this activity of giving birth. It's just like owning a car. Making a plan to buy a car will involve your finances and the choice of vehicle. Gathering information will include all the automotive specs and warranties. But it's your driving skills that will make you and others safe.

Birth, the Gateway into parenthood, is never a passive activity. Keep in mind, the work of letting a big object out is hard work (why else is childbirth called "labor"?), and all work is done best when you have learned the appropriate skills—and the birth of your child is worth the effort of preparing.