

*Thoughtful childbirth  
for everyone*

**EXPECTANT**  
mothers guide

Expectant Mother's  
Guide Journey App  
 

**THOUGHTFUL  
CHILD BIRTH**

Chela-Preg<sup>™</sup>

Reuterina<sup>™</sup>

**BABY  
CITY**  
we know you care

# Creating the best Birthing Opportunities

Giving birth is an adventure. Join us as we go through this exciting and amazing journey together.

1. Know your real options. Write your own birth plan.
2. Enjoy the fun and adventure of childbirth education classes.
3. When labour begins on its own, mom and baby's bodies are prepared and ready for birth. Trust and listen to your body.
4. Stay as upright as you can during labour and keep moving. Work with gravity.
5. Choose someone to be your support person to labour with you.
6. Use as many natural comfort and pain control measures as you can to avoid as many interventions as possible.
7. Listen to your body during labour and especially when pushing. Push naturally and not the purple pushing (holding your breath) way.
8. By allowing your baby to go through the nine instinctive stages immediately after birth you increase the bond between you and your baby as well as having a higher success rate with breastfeeding.
9. Practice skin to skin to maximise the benefits for baby, mom and dad at birth and beyond.

## Make informed decisions



I am  
calm  
and in  
control

## 8

### facts to take into account

**Myth** Every type of birth is equal.

**Fact** The type of birth impacts you and your baby.

**Myth** You need an obstetrician gynaecologist at every birth.

**Fact** Only high-risk births need a gynaecologist present at the birth.

**Myth** Caesarean births are less painful than vaginal births.

**Fact** Vaginal births experience pain during the labour, caesarean births are painful after the birth (major abdominal surgery pain).

**Myth** If you are pregnant with twins you have to have a caesarean.

**Fact** If the first twin is presenting head down in a good position, they can be born vaginally.

**Myth** My birth plan is the only way!

**Fact** The unexpected and unplanned can happen – be prepared for both. Our ultimate goal is to have a healthy mom and healthy baby.

**Myth** There is only one “right way” to give birth.

**Fact** It is ok to have expectations, but there is not a one size fits all solution for giving birth. Your medical history and your body are unique and your needs might dictate one birthing method over another.

**Myth** If I have a caesarean, every birth thereafter will have to be a caesarean.

**Fact** VBAC (vaginal birth after a caesarean) can be an option to investigate. Even a VBA2C.

**Myth** Every intervention in birth is separate and isolated from another.

**Fact** Every intervention potentially leads to the next intervention – that is why it is called a cascade of interventions.

# Pathway to a healthy birth



How to help your hormones do their most wonderful work from pregnancy ... to birth. Staying on the right path means helping your body's natural hormones work well for you.

## Pregnancy, Labour and Birth are a Journey

Our birthing hormones are made up of

1. Oxytocin – the Love hormone.
2. Endorphins – the pain relieving hormone.
3. Catecholamines – the stress hormones – fight or flight.
4. Prolactin – the mothering hormone.

## During Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time to plan for a safe, smooth childbirth.

Low levels of stress hormones help you and your baby stay healthy.

### What will help you stay on the pathway?

Choose the care provider and birth place that supports your body's abilities while avoiding unneeded tests and treatments.

Find a doula to help you stay calm while you give birth.

Limit stress during pregnancy when possible.

### What can pull you away from the pathway?

Choosing the care provider and birth place that intervene in natural processes when you and your baby are healthy.

Not having skilled personalised support while giving birth.

Feeling stressed during pregnancy.

## Towards the end of pregnancy

Hormones prepare you for safe and smooth childbirth, breastfeeding and bonding.

### What will help you stay on the pathway?

Let labour begin on its own when possible.

### What can pull you away from the pathway?

Inducing labour (or having a caesar) before your body is ready to give birth and your baby is ready to be born.

## Early labour

Hormones prepare you for a smooth labour and birth.

Hormones help avoid unneeded interventions and side effects.

### What will help you stay on the pathway?

Stay home until labour is strong (active labour) while staying in touch with your care provider.

Stay calm and relaxed.

Get support from a doula.

### What can pull you away from the pathway?

Going to the hospital too early before labour is strong (active labour).

Feeling stressed and anxious.

## Active labour

Hormones prepare you for a safe birth and the time after birth.

Hormones help avoid unneeded interventions and side effects.

### What will help you stay on the pathway?

Use comfort measures such as baths, showers and birth balls.

Stay upright and move around for good labour progress, be patient during labour.

Stay calm and relaxed.

### What can pull you away from the pathway?

Getting an epidural may slow your labour and make pushing difficult.

Getting synthetic oxytocin to strengthen your labour can interfere with your body's hormones.

Feeling stressed and anxious.

## Early hours and first days after birth

Hormones help you and your baby feel calm, connected and ready to breastfeed.

### What will help you stay on the pathway?

Stay in skin to skin contact with your baby in the hours after birth.

Let your baby go through the 9 instinctive stages – latch and breastfeed when your baby is ready. This can often take over an hour – so be patient and be on baby time.

Limit distractions, stay calm, and focus on being with your baby in the days after birth.

### What can pull you away from the pathway?

Being separated from your baby after birth.

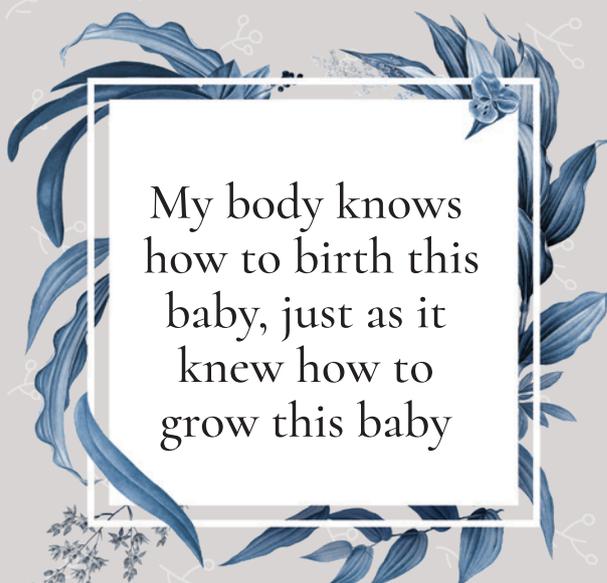
Not breastfeeding shortly after birth and when your baby is interested in feeding.

Being distracted with other people and activities in the days after birth.

## A – Z of Comfort Measures

**A** agile, affirmations, aroma  
**B** birthing ball, back rub, baby dance, breathing  
**C** cold pack, candles, counter pressure  
**D** drink frequently, doula, dance  
**E** encouragement, eating, effleurage  
**F** fan, flowers, food  
**G** goal – cope with 1 contraction at a time, grunt  
**H** heat packs, hugs, humour  
**I** ice, imagery, intuitive  
**J** jokes – keep your sense of humour, jiggle, jump  
**K** kindness, kisses, kegel  
**L** loose fitting shirt, love, lemon scent  
**M** music, massage, movement  
**N** nutrition, nurse support, nurtures  
**O** oil for massage, open-mindedness, open glottis  
**P** pillows, praise, position change, pressure  
**Q** queries, quiet, treat like a queen  
**R** relaxation, rest reassurance,  
**S** support – emotional and physical, smells, stretch

**T** tens machine, touch, tension release, talk  
**U** unbelievable concentration, urinate, upright  
**V** visualisation, vocalise, view  
**W** water, walk  
**X** xclude interventions, xcellent, xcited  
**Y** yahoo – another contraction gone  
**Z** zoom-in – your baby is nearly here, zzz



My body knows  
how to birth this  
baby, just as it  
knew how to  
grow this baby



## Childbirth education classes

**Childbirth education classes make a difference.  
Enjoy the fun and adventure.**

It is a funny phrase in a way – but so apt – “You don’t know, what you don’t know”. Many pregnant moms and dads are missing out on essential information that is vital in order to make informed decisions about their pregnancy, birth and parenting experiences.

Don’t be tempted to be part of the instant generation in childbirth, where everything must be available at a click of a button, one takes note of what “strangers” are saying as everybody has an opinion on social media – and takes their advice instead of professionals in their field of expertise. Don’t be too busy to attend a full course of childbirth education classes – because it is “not necessary and after all we have the internet for our answers”. Don’t opt a quick fix and do a short crash course. This all often leads to making poor choices about birth options, increasing interventions in birth and causing complications to rise. We need to go back to basics, and really learn about options to experiences. Learn properly about making informed decisions based on the knowledge of alternatives. Let us turn our attention away from ourselves and think about what is best for our baby!

So what should we be learning at childbirth education classes – we should be looking at all options that are available for labour and birth – the facts, pros and cons of each option. The practical ways of coping with the pain of labour – relaxation, massage, visualisation, breathing techniques (in other words the skills for coping with a stressful life in general). It should be a fun-filled way of stretching our minds, our beliefs and thoughts and making educated decisions about our lives. What should birth be all about? So, don’t short-change yourself and try to do classes in a crash course style – this experience makes a difference to the rest of your life as well as impacting your baby’s direction of health for ever.

Yes, it does make a difference whether your baby is born vaginally or by a caesar, yes it does make a difference whether your baby is breastfed or not. Find out what the evidence about these options actually says so you can make wise decisions.



**Find a childbirth educator  
near you [https://www.  
expectantmothersguide.co.za/  
listings/childbirth-educator-  
listings/](https://www.expectantmothersguide.co.za/listings/childbirth-educator-listings/)**

**Virtual classes are also available which is a safer  
option with Covid around ...**

## Purple pushing

### holding your breath pushing



My body, my baby and I  
are working as a team

#### Breath holding

Maternal effects  a closed pressure system in chest   
 venous return,  cardiac output,  
 blood pressure.

Also  in peripheral stasis of blood (head, face, arms and legs)  red face.

Reflex vasoconstriction in peripheral blood vessels can't overcome intrathoracic pressure   blood flow to the placenta.

Mother CO<sub>2</sub> levels ,  gasping for air, sudden  in blood pressure   
capillaries in face, neck & eyes bursting.

#### Foetal effects of purple pushing

Drop in maternal blood pressure   
 O<sub>2</sub> content in her arterial blood and  
 blood flow to placenta   
 O<sub>2</sub> available to foetus (foetal hypoxia).

**Rather follow your body and push as it tells you to**

#### Brought to you by

#### EXPECTANT mothers guide

**Expectant Mothers Guide** – Factual, educational publication to aid in making informed decisions about pregnancy, birth and parenting  
<https://www.expectantmothersguide.co.za>



**Childbirth Educators Professional Forum** – professional group for childbirth educators, midwives, well baby clinic sisters and lactation consultants in private practice  
<https://www.expectantmothersguide.co.za/listings/childbirth-educator-listings/>

#### THOUGHTFUL CHILDBIRTH

**Thoughtful Childbirth Webinars**  
<https://www.thoughtfulchildbirth.co.za>



**Chela-Preg**  
For baby's best start, visit  
<https://chelapreg.co.za>

#### Reuterina™

**Reuterina**  
The probiotic for life.  
<https://reuterina.co.za>



**Baby City**  
South Africa's leading baby hyper  
<https://www.babycity.co.za>