



## The Missing Prescription In Pre And Postnatal Care



P A R E N T H O R O E D G N A N C Y C A T E G O R I Z E D  
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*Maike Bernstrom Photography*

The day I found out I was pregnant was the happiest and scariest day of my life.

My emotions ranged from excitement to fear, from love to anxiety, to a sense of comfort and a waterfall of uncertainty. The only thing I could focus on was getting in to see my doctor so he could ease my mind and assure me that my baby was OK.

On the day of my first visit, I practically leapt out of bed.

During the appointment my doctor prescribed a prenatal vitamin, connected me with a nutritionist and went over how to approach exercise. Leaving his office, I expected to feel a sense of relief, but instead I felt anxious.

And as my pregnancy continued, so did my worry.

I longed for doctor visits so I could hear my baby's heartbeat and know that she was ok. Yet every time I felt relief in knowing that my baby was healthy, the feeling was quickly replaced with concern that I wouldn't get to hear her heartbeat again for another stressful month.

It was during this time of emotional uncertainty that a friend recommended [Expectful](#) - a platform that makes it easy for expectant and new moms to meditate.

Desperate to reduce my stress, I signed up for their free 30-day trial.

At first, I wasn't sure if it was doing anything, but in three days I noticed an increase in my energy. A week later I was more relaxed, and within a month, I felt like a new woman.

The more I meditated, the less I worried. The random negative thoughts that led me down a rabbit hole of stress and anxiety were no more. Instead, I was filled with a feeling of deep connection to both my baby and partner.

Just as exercise kept my body feeling strong, meditation helped my mind feel more focused and energized. Just as my prenatal vitamin gave me the nutrients and minerals my body needed, meditation gave my mind the ease and self-assurance I had yearned for.

This shift transformed my whole pregnancy, and I was left wondering, why didn't my doctor ever talk to me about the health of my mind during such an important and challenging time?

Curious as to how meditation directly benefits pregnancy, I dove deep into the available research. What I found made me realize that meditation was doing a lot more than just reducing my stress, it was helping me give my baby a better start in life.

Here is a breakdown of a few of the benefits I found:

## 1. Reduced Risk Factors

As I mentioned above, meditation really decreased my stress and anxiety during pregnancy, and this did a lot more than just make me feel good... it helped protect my baby too. Research shows that high levels of stress and anxiety increase risk factors during pregnancy (1), and by keeping stress levels low(2), I was giving my baby a better environment in which to grow.

## 2. Promotes a Healthier Pregnancy

I gave birth to Annabell two days before her due date and she was seven pounds, 3 ounces. I was fortunate enough to have a full term pregnancy and a baby with a healthy birth weight, both of which are important for her development. A study that explored preterm birth found that women who participated in a mindfulness training program were 50% less likely to give birth early than women with no mindfulness education (3). I believe my meditation practice was one of the factors that allowed me to give birth at 39 weeks.

## 3. Reduced Pain During Labor

Meditation helped me breathe and be present during labor. It allowed me to focus more on my inhaled and exhaled air rather than putting all of my attention on the pain, which only would have increased that sensation. A study of a group of people who attended a four-day mindfulness meditation training found that they were able to decrease the intensity of a painful stimulus by 40 percent (4). Not only was pain reduction a helpful tool during birth and labor for me, but it was also beneficial during my pregnancy and recovery when Annabell needed me more than ever.

## 4. Enhanced Immunity

I was lucky that I never got sick during my pregnancy or as a new mother. However, this made

complete sense to me after I learned that meditation enhances the body's immune function (5). Staying healthy not only kept my body strong during pregnancy, but it also protected Annabell, too.

After seeing all this research, and how it related to my experience of pregnancy and motherhood, it brought me to the conclusion that as a society we are missing one key prescription when it comes to pregnancy: meditation.

With my own personal experience and with all the science that proves how meditation can support pregnant women, I wondered why we aren't talking more about a woman's emotional and mental health and recommending meditation during one of the most mentally demanding times of their lives. It's my hope that within the next few years that when women walk into their doctor's office looking for the tools that can support them, that meditation be right in line with prenatal vitamins, nutrition, and exercise.

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### Are you pregnant or new to motherhood?

Expectful is a digital platform that makes meditation easy for expectant and new moms. Each one of our guided meditations has been created to support you throughout your pregnancy and motherhood journey.

Our mission is to help you give your baby the best start in life. Go to [expectful.com](https://www.expectful.com) and sign up for our free 30-day meditation trail.

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### References:

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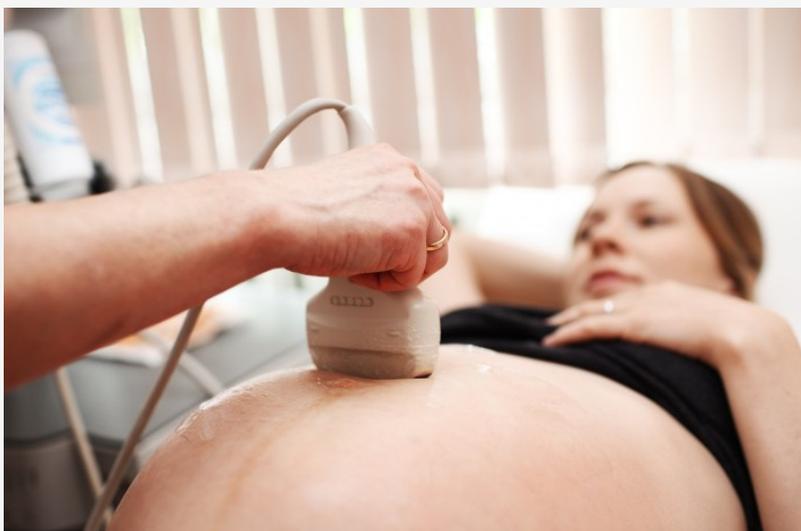
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