



Pregnancy Myths,
Truths, and Real Talk
What No One Tells You
(But Should)



www.embracingthejourney.ca

Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Chapter I: Myth-Busting the Big Stuff	04
Chapter II: Pregnancy Real Talk	06
Chapter III: Grey Areas – What’s Up for Debate	09
Chapter IV: Practical Takeaways	12

WELCOME

Hello, I'm your Full Spectrum Doula Kat Thompson.

Pregnancy is an incredible journey, but let's be honest—it's not always the glowing, magical experience we see in the movies. From conflicting advice to surprising truths no one talks about, navigating pregnancy can feel overwhelming. That's where this guide comes in.

This isn't your typical "do this, don't do that" pregnancy manual. Instead, it's a blend of:

- Evidence-based myth-busting to clear up the confusion and help you make informed decisions.
- Honest insights into the emotional and physical realities of pregnancy that don't always get enough attention.
- Practical tips to empower you to embrace your journey, whatever it looks like.

Whether you're here to separate fact from fiction, prepare for the unexpected, or simply find reassurance, this guide is designed to meet you where you are. Pregnancy is deeply personal, and there's no one "right" way to experience it.



As a Full Spectrum Doula & Wellness Provider, I'm here to support you with compassion, evidence-based guidance, and practical advice tailored to your needs. My hope is that this guide inspires confidence in your decisions, clarity in a sea of information, and peace of mind as you prepare for this exciting new chapter.

Let's navigate this journey together—one myth, one truth, and one empowering moment at a time.

You've got this, and I'm here to help.

Warmly,

- Kat Thompson



CHAPTER I

Myth-Busting the Big Stuff

Pregnancy often comes with a flood of well-meaning advice, much of it outdated, exaggerated, or plain wrong. Let's cut through the noise and tackle some of the most common myths about pregnancy, so you can feel confident in your decisions and focus on what really matters.

Nutrition Myths

Myth: "You're eating for two!"

Truth: While it's true your body needs extra nutrients during pregnancy, you're not doubling your calorie intake. Most pregnant people only need an additional 300–500 calories per day in the second and third trimesters.

What This Means for You: Focus on nutrient-dense foods like leafy greens, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats. Small, frequent meals can help manage nausea or heartburn.

Myth: "You can't eat sushi."

Truth: Sushi is safe if made with low-mercury fish and prepared hygienically. Avoid raw fish from questionable sources, but don't feel like you have to give up your favourite sushi rolls entirely.

What This Means for You: Stick to reputable restaurants and opt for cooked or vegetarian options if you're unsure.

Lifestyle Myths

Myth: "You should stop exercising during pregnancy."

Truth: For most people, exercise is safe and encouraged during pregnancy. It can improve circulation, reduce stress, and even help with labour preparation.

What This Means for You: Activities like walking, swimming, and prenatal yoga are excellent choices. Avoid contact sports or exercises that risk falling. Always consult your care provider before starting a new routine.

Myth: "You can't drink coffee while pregnant."

Truth: Moderate caffeine intake is generally considered safe. The recommended limit is about 200 mg per day (roughly one 12-ounce cup of coffee).

What This Means for You: Keep an eye on your caffeine sources (like tea, chocolate, and soda) and enjoy that morning latte guilt-free—just keep it within the limit.

CHAPTER I

Myth-Busting the Big Stuff cont.

Labour Preparation Myths

Myth: “If your mom had a long labour, you will too.”

Truth: While genetics can play a role in factors like pelvic shape, labour is influenced by many things—like your baby’s position, your physical health, and the support you receive.

What This Means for You: Focus on staying active, practicing relaxation techniques, and preparing mentally. Each labour is unique, and your story doesn’t have to match your mom’s.

Myth: “If your water breaks, you have to rush to the hospital immediately.”

Truth: While it’s important to monitor once your water breaks, labour doesn’t always start right away. Many people can safely labour at home for hours before heading to the hospital, depending on their situation.

What This Means for You: Talk to your care provider about when to come in, especially if you’re GBS-positive or have other risk factors. Otherwise, rest, hydrate, and time your contractions.

Baby Myths

Myth: “Bigger babies always mean C-sections.”

Truth: Many people deliver large babies vaginally. The size of your baby is just one factor among many that determine the type of delivery.

What This Means for You: Trust your care provider, ask questions, and remember that birth preferences and outcomes can vary greatly.

Myth: “Babies need to cry it out right away to learn to self-soothe.”

Truth: Newborns cry as their only way of communicating. They need to know their caregivers will respond to build trust and attachment.

What This Means for You: Focus on meeting your baby’s needs in those early weeks. “Self-soothing” becomes relevant much later in their development.

By busting these myths, you can feel confident in making choices that work best for you and your growing family. Remember: Your pregnancy is as unique as you are, and no one-size-fits-all advice can replace what feels right for your body and baby.

CHAPTER II

Pregnancy Real Talk

Let's face it: pregnancy isn't all glowing skin and joyful baby kicks. It's a complex journey full of unexpected twists, physical challenges, and emotional ups and downs. Here are the truths no one talks about enough—but should—so you can feel seen, supported, and prepared.

“You won't always love being pregnant—and that's okay.”

- **The Reality:**
 - While some people love every moment, others struggle with nausea, exhaustion, or the constant changes to their body. Feeling frustrated, scared, or even resentful at times is normal.
- **Why It Happens:**
 - Hormonal shifts, physical discomfort, and societal pressures to “enjoy every moment” can create a lot of emotional weight.
- **How to Cope:**
 - Reframe the experience: It's okay not to love pregnancy and still love your baby.
 - Focus on small joys—like hearing your baby's heartbeat or connecting with a supportive friend or partner.
 - Seek out community spaces where you can share your honest feelings without judgment.



“Pregnancy brain is real—and it's not just about forgetfulness.”

- **The Reality:**
 - Many pregnant people experience “pregnancy brain,” marked by forgetfulness, slower processing, or emotional sensitivity. It's more than just being scatterbrained—it's a rewiring of your brain to focus on caregiving.
- **Why It Happens:**
 - Your body prioritizes hormone production and baby-related processes, which can shift mental resources.
- **How to Cope:**
 - Use tools like to-do lists or phone reminders to stay on track.
 - Be patient with yourself and communicate your needs to those around you.

CHAPTER II

Pregnancy Real Talk cont.

“You may feel like your body isn’t your own anymore.”

- **The Reality:**

- From swollen feet to a growing belly, your body may change in ways that feel out of your control. This can lead to complicated feelings about body image and self-identity.

- **Why It Happens:**

- Hormonal shifts and the physical demands of pregnancy are transformative—but not always comfortable.

- **How to Cope:**

- Focus on what your body is doing (growing and nurturing life) rather than how it looks.
- Treat yourself to small acts of self-care like a prenatal massage or wearing comfortable, stylish maternity clothes that make you feel good.
- Surround yourself with body-positive affirmations and people who uplift you.



“Not all advice is helpful—or wanted.”

- **The Reality:**

- Everyone seems to have opinions about what you should eat, wear, or do during pregnancy. It can be overwhelming, especially when the advice conflicts or feels outdated.

- **Why It Happens:**

- Pregnancy often invites unsolicited advice because it’s such a visible and culturally significant experience.

- **How to Cope:**

- Politely redirect the conversation: “Thanks for sharing! I’m working closely with my provider and feel good about my plan.”
- Use your B.R.A.I.N. acronym (Benefits, Risks, Alternatives, Intuition, Nothing) to assess advice and make informed decisions.

CHAPTER II

Pregnancy Real Talk cont.

“You might feel overwhelmed by the mental load.”

- **The Reality:**
 - From preparing for labour to managing baby registries, the mental load of pregnancy can be exhausting, especially if you're balancing work, family, or other responsibilities.
- **Why It Happens:**
 - Society often places the burden of planning and emotional labour on pregnant people, which can lead to burnout.
- **How to Cope:**
 - Delegate tasks to your partner, friends, or family.
 - Prioritize self-care, even if it's just 10 minutes of quiet time each day.
 - Work with a doula or support person who can help lighten the load and advocate for you.

“You don't have to do it all perfectly.”

- **The Reality:**
 - The pressure to eat perfectly, stay fit, bond with your baby, and prepare for parenthood can feel like too much.
- **Why It Happens:**
 - Social media and cultural expectations often portray pregnancy as a time to “get it all right.”
- **How to Cope:**
 - Give yourself permission to do what works for you.
 - Celebrate small wins and progress over perfection.
 - Remind yourself that your worth isn't tied to how well you “perform” pregnancy.

Real Talk, Real Support

Your journey is unique, and there's no one-size-fits-all way to navigate it. If you're looking for a compassionate partner to guide you through the twists and turns, I'm here for you.

Let's make your pregnancy feel a little less overwhelming and a lot more supported.

CHAPTER III

Grey Areas – What's Up for Debate

Caffeine Consumption

What's the Debate?

- Some say pregnant people should avoid caffeine altogether, while others believe a moderate amount is fine.

What's the Evidence?

- Current guidelines suggest up to 200 mg of caffeine per day (about one 12-ounce coffee) is generally safe during pregnancy.
- Excessive caffeine intake has been linked to low birth weight or miscarriage in some studies, but risks depend on individual tolerance and other factors.

How to Decide:

- Consider all caffeine sources (coffee, tea, chocolate, soda, etc.).
- If you're sensitive to caffeine, try decaf options or herbal alternatives like rooibos tea.
- Talk to your healthcare provider if you're unsure about what's right for you.



Eating Deli Meat

What's the Debate?

- Some say all cold cuts and deli meats should be avoided due to the risk of listeria, while others argue the risk is very low with proper handling.

What's the Evidence?

- Listeria infections are rare but can pose serious risks during pregnancy. Heating deli meats until steaming eliminates this risk.

How to Decide:

- If you love a good sandwich, heat the meat before eating, or choose vegetarian or cooked protein options.
- Weigh your comfort level with potential risks against your cravings.

CHAPTER III

Grey Areas – What's Up for Debate cont.

Sleeping Positions

What's the Debate?

- Many believe pregnant people must avoid sleeping on their back at all costs, while others suggest side sleeping is ideal but not a rigid rule.

What's the Evidence?

- Sleeping on your back can compress major blood vessels and reduce circulation in later pregnancy, but occasional back sleeping is unlikely to harm you or your baby.
- Side sleeping (especially on the left side) is encouraged for optimal blood flow.

How to Decide:

- Use pillows to support your side sleeping position and prevent rolling onto your back.
- Don't panic if you wake up on your back—adjust your position and keep going.

Natural Birth vs. Medicated Birth

What's the Debate?

- Some people advocate for unmedicated, “natural” births as the best choice, while others embrace medicated options like epidurals.

What's the Evidence?

- Both approaches are valid and come with benefits and risks. An unmedicated birth may provide a sense of accomplishment and fewer interventions, while an epidural can offer significant pain relief and reduce stress for some people.

How to Decide:

- Reflect on your pain tolerance, labour goals, and preferences.
- Create a birth plan that allows flexibility—you can change your mind during labour!

CHAPTER III

Grey Areas – What's Up for Debate cont.

Genetic Testing

What's the Debate?

- Some families choose genetic testing to screen for potential health concerns, while others prefer to avoid it due to cost, anxiety, or ethical considerations.

What's the Evidence?

- Genetic tests like NIPT (non-invasive prenatal testing) are safe and can provide early insights, but false positives or unclear results can create stress.

How to Decide:

- Talk to your healthcare provider about the pros, cons, and limitations of genetic testing.
- Consider what you'd do with the information—does it help you plan, or add unnecessary worry?

Birth Settings: Hospital vs. Home Births

What's the Debate?

- Hospital births are considered the safest option by many, but others feel more comfortable and in control in a home or birth centre setting.

What's the Evidence?

- Low-risk pregnancies can often be safely managed at home or in a birth centre with a skilled midwife.
- High-risk pregnancies typically require the resources available in a hospital setting.

How to Decide:

- Evaluate your health, pregnancy risk level, and access to skilled care providers.
- Explore all your options and choose the setting that feels safest and most supportive for you.

**Pregnancy is full of grey areas but remember:
You're in charge.**

What works for someone else might not work for you, and that's okay. When in doubt, lean on your healthcare provider, partner, or doula for guidance.

CHAPTER 1V

Practical Takeaways

Pregnancy is a journey like no other—it's full of new information, emotions, and decisions. With so much advice and so many opinions, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. This section is all about simplifying what you've learned into actionable steps, so you can focus on what matters most: enjoying your unique experience.

Embrace Flexibility

- Pregnancy is unpredictable, and plans don't always go as expected. Whether it's adjusting your birth plan or navigating conflicting advice, staying flexible will help reduce stress and keep you focused on what's important.
- **Takeaway:** Create a plan, but think of it as a guide, not a rulebook. Be open to adjustments along the way.

Trust Your Instincts

- You know your body and baby best. When faced with advice, myths, or grey areas, don't be afraid to ask questions and trust what feels right for you.
- **Takeaway:** Use the B.R.A.I.N. acronym to make decisions:
 - **Benefits:** What are the benefits of this choice?
 - **Risks:** What are the risks?
 - **Alternatives:** Are there other options?
 - **Intuition:** What does your gut say?
 - **Nothing:** What happens if you wait or do nothing?

Build Your Support System

- Surround yourself with people who uplift and support you, whether it's your partner, family, friends, or a doula. Having a strong support system can make all the difference.
- **Takeaway:** Identify your support team and share your needs with them. Don't hesitate to delegate tasks or ask for help when needed.

Advocate for Yourself

- It's okay to speak up and ask questions about your care. Your voice matters, and you have the right to understand and feel confident about your choices.
- **Takeaway:** Prepare questions for your prenatal appointments.
Example:
 - "Can you explain the benefits and risks of this procedure?"
 - "What are my alternatives?"

Prioritize Self-Care

- Pregnancy isn't just about preparing for your baby—it's also about taking care of yourself. Your well-being directly impacts your ability to enjoy this journey.
- **Takeaway:** Schedule small, daily acts of self-care, like:
 - A short walk outside.
 - A relaxing bath.
 - A few minutes of deep breathing or mindfulness.

CHAPTER IV

Practical Takeaways cont.

Stay Informed—But Avoid Overloading Yourself

- While knowledge is empowering, too much information can lead to overwhelm. Focus on trusted, evidence-based sources and let go of the rest.
- **Takeaway:** Set boundaries around how much research or advice you take in. Stick to a few reliable sources or a professional you trust (like your doula!).

Reflect on Your Journey

- Pregnancy is a time of growth and change—physically, emotionally, and mentally. Taking time to reflect can help you connect with your baby and feel more grounded.
- **Takeaway:** Try these journaling prompts:
 - “What am I most excited about right now?”
 - “What’s been the biggest challenge, and how am I working through it?”
 - “What do I want to remember about this stage of pregnancy?”

Quick Reference Checklist Before Your Next Prenatal Appointment:

- Write down 2-3 questions for your provider.
- Review your birth plan for updates or adjustments.
- Pack snacks, water, and your favourite pregnancy journal or book.

Daily Reminders:

- Hydrate and eat something nourishing.
- Do one thing for yourself (even if it’s small).
- Take a few deep breaths to reset.

You’re Doing Great!

Pregnancy is a beautiful, messy, and unique journey, and you don’t have to do it alone. With the right support and mindset, you can navigate this experience with confidence and joy.

Remember, I’m here for you every step of the way.

Need extra guidance? Let’s connect!

Whether you need help planning, problem-solving, or just someone to listen, I’m here to support you.