



What to Expect When You're Expecting

Heidi Murkoff, Sharon Mazel

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A completely revised and updated edition of America's pregnancy bible, the longest-running *New York Times* bestseller ever.

With 18.5 million copies in print, *What to Expect When You're Expecting* is read by 93% of women who read a pregnancy book and was named one of the "Most Influential Books of the Last 25 Years" by *USA Today*.

This cover-to-cover (including the cover!) new edition is filled with must-have information, advice, insight, and tips for a new generation of moms and dads. With *What to Expect*'s trademark warmth, empathy, and humor, it answers every conceivable question expecting parents could have, including dozens of new ones based on the ever-changing pregnancy and birthing practices and choices they face. Advice for dads is fully integrated throughout the book. All medical coverage is completely updated, including the latest on Zika virus, prenatal screening, and the safety of medications during pregnancy, as well as a brand-new section on postpartum birth control. Current lifestyle trends are incorporated, too: juice bars, raw diets, e-cigarettes, push presents, baby bump posting, the lowdown on omega-3 fatty acids, grass-fed and organic, health food fads, and GMOs. Plus expanded coverage of IVF pregnancy, multiple pregnancies, breastfeeding while pregnant, water and home births, and cesarean trends (including VBACs and "gentle cesareans").

What to Expect When You're Expecting Details

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From Reader Review What to Expect When You're Expecting for online ebook

Ellen says

If you have to read one book on pregnancy, do yourself a favor and pick a different one than What to Expect. If you have lots of time on your hands and want to read several books, go ahead and read this one too. The general tone of this book is alarmist and condescending. Unless, of course, you planned the conception perfectly (Why, you and your partner didn't even take Tylenol while trying to get pregnant!), your diet during pregnancy is a model that the USDA would be proud of, you wouldn't dream of medicating your cold, you exercise daily, your desire to experience unmedicated birth is overwhelming, and you believe that anything other than wearing your baby 24/7 to promote attachment is akin to child abuse.

I'm not quite sure how to explain how this book makes me feel other than this analogy - it felt like going to your doctor to ask for the morning-after-pill to only receive a lecture on the dangers of multiple sex partners from the old-school nurse. While sitting on a cold exam table in a paper gown. While nursing a hangover and trying not to throw up.

Anyway, I do give the book two stars because the section "When to Call The Doctor" is a pretty useful and easy to find reference when something freaky is happening and you have lost all common sense and are panicky and don't know what to do. (Similarly, the What To Expect The First Year book has useful references for when you don't know what to do with your out-of-sorts infant. I kinda feel bad slamming this book so hard when the First Year book was my bible whenever my son was sick.) Surely though, other books must have this handy reference too?

Liz says

How do I give this zero stars? This book should be called "What to Freak Out About When You're Expecting" and, unfortunately, goes hand-in-hand with TLC's "Baby Story" for gross negligence in maternity "infotainment." It addresses everything that could possibly "go wrong" or be of concern, emphasizing rare "high risk" complications that do NOT effect the VAST majority of women. Rather than explaining normal, healthy pregnancy in a positive and reassuring manner, it talks down to women and convinces them that every new sensation or pregnancy symptom they feel is cause for alarm or a sign that their body (or their baby) may be defective. To me, this is just one more way doctors make money off of unnecessary office visits and routine interventions. UGH.

Kevin Simons says

It is unfortunate that sometimes no one tells us we are bad at something, and then we bumble on through life thinking we are good at it. That's what's happened to Heidi Murkoff, who is a terrible writer laboring under the delusion that she is a good writer and comedic to boot. This book has somehow managed to attain status as some kind of pregnancy bible, but in reality it is an unbearable slog through every worst case scenario any expectant parents could ever hope to avoid. The author looks down on her thick-headed audience, constantly stooping to explain for us morons something that was already spelled out for children in the previous

sentence. Worse, she breaks up the "flow" (hah!) of her writing with parenthetical comments ad fucking nauseam. "If you're pregnant (and even if you're not), exercise is a good idea (but don't overdo it). Start slowly (no marathons the first week!) ..." and then you want to stick a knitting needle in your eye. The whole goddam book is like that, with pointless "jokey" asides stuffing the pages until the book tries to commit suicide by bloat. Such a thing is possible, by the way. Somehow this incompetent writer has made a cottage industry of this; I hear "What to Expect the First Year" is far worse, if one can imagine such a painful fate.

Are you planning to have children? Are you and your spouse pregnant now? Find a doctor you trust in your neighborhood. Talk to your parents, siblings, and friends who have children, especially those who've had kids recently. Ask about Braxton-Hicks contractions so you don't wind up in the emergency room thinking you're having your baby at seven months when you first feel some contractions. Skim a pregnancy guide; you can't learn everything, you won't remember everything, and there's no point learning about every single terrible thing that might go wrong one out of a million times. Throw this rotten piece of trash as far away from yourself as you possibly can. Good luck.

Anne says

I got about halfway through with this back in 1999 (when I was preggo with my 1st), before I chucked it. I'm getting pissed off just thinking about it right now. There I was, a brand-new mother-to-be, and this ridiculous book had me convinced that every time I farted there was something wrong with me! And believe me, I farted quite a bit.

Trust me, if you want to be a nervous wreck, run out and buy this book. Otherwise, relax. Babies are hearty little suckers. Just because you take Tylenol for headaches, drink a cup of coffee, or opt to eat the entire chocolate cake instead of veggies, does *not* mean that your kid will be born with hideous birth defects. Here's my advice, after having four healthy kids: **Don't drink a bottle of wine for breakfast, and stay away from crack.** Ta-da!

Mayim de Vries says

For obvious reasons, I am not going to rate this book. What I can say, however, is that while it kept me company, it also kept me well informed. I grant you, this kind of comprehensive infodump might not be for everyone. I can see that more neurotic and insecure person could feel overwhelmed and even anxious; for me, it was just OK. I like knowing things on the one hand, and on the other, the pregnancy was a wonderful broadening and deepening of our family life and not something akin to the revolution that necessitates reorganisation of a whole life.

The good thing about Goodreads is the one doesn't have to make any grand statements. One look at the "currently reading" shelf is enough.

Month 1: Apparently something's cooking. A baby bun. And I thought it inconceivable.

Month 2: First sonogram. Oh my, a pollywog on a balloon.

Month 3: The Mothers know. So. It's official.

Month 4: Seedling took a shortcut to Heaven skipping the Earth altogether.

Senda says

I seem to disagree with most of the reviews of this book.

This book got me through my pregnancy. Period.

I wasn't overwhelmed by the amount of information; instead I found it to be the only friendly, comforting book out there. While other books were telling me that if I'd had a glass of wine before I knew I was pregnant, my child would have extra limbs and no face, *What to Expect...* reminded me how minute the chances actually were. When the my overly clinical other books told me to panic if I hadn't noticed the baby moving for three hours, *What to expect* told me that that actually happens to most women sometime in the third trimester, why I should be concerned, and again, how extremely low the probability was that something was actually wrong, but that I should still check in with my doctor just in case. Essentially this book kept me well informed so that I didn't freak out about things (like loosing my mucus plug one morning at work) and knew what to look out for and when to call the doctor. The first book I got after my baby was born was *What To Expect the First Year*, and I couldn't live without that either! I don't have my mother around to give me advice anymore, and these books feel like a mom sitting you down with a nice cup of tea and telling you exactly what they say: what to expect.

Jennifer Spinola says

Preachy, harping, self-righteous. I hated this book. Every other page has some guilt-tripping admonishment not to eat white flour ("Push the bread basket away at a restaurant if the bread isn't whole wheat," it said once, and oh, count the calories in the butter you do spread on your whole wheat bread). And avoid white sugar like the plague - in favor of "juice-sweetened" cookies or desserts, which the authors seem to think is the ticket to health in every occasion. News flash: sugar is sugar, whether it comes from fruit or sugar cane, and the human body physiologically can't tell a difference. As a hypoglycemic, I'll get just as nauseated if I eat grapes or a candy bar on an empty stomach.

Give me a break. I'm as healthy as they come. I make my own whole wheat bread and yogurt and eat very little sugar, but to tell a hungry pregnant woman to "push the bread basket away" at a restaurant just because the bread isn't whole-wheat? Even licensed nutritionists will tell you that the overall fiber count in a meal is what is important - not necessarily the fiber count in a particular food. And I don't need to hear about it every other page, ad infinitum. I started to think that if I heard the term "juice-sweetened cookie" one more time, I'd throw the book out the window.

The rest of the book is spread thickly with admonishments not to gain too much weight, not to eat dessert except "fresh fruit," and on and on and on. One "question" (which was probably self-written and planted in order for the author to do more harping) said, "I've gained 13 pounds in my first trimester. What can I do

now?" The author's harsh and judgmental answer, in a nutshell: "It is TOO LATE. You've done what you've done, and it can't be fixed now." And then they goes on to guilt-trip the supposed "questioner" and rant about "healthy" weight gain (according to their own limited views of "healthy" eating).

What a ridiculous answer! Is the author a doctor who knows this particular patient and is licensed to dispense medical advice to her and all other readers? Of course not! A suitable and appropriate answer would have been something along these lines: "IT DEPENDS. Each woman is different, and your ob/gyn can tell you more about what's healthy for you and what's out of range." Guess what? I HAVE gained 13 pounds, and I'm not even done with my first trimester! AND my doc says I'm totally healthy! Before my pregnancy I was very underweight, barely 95 or 96 pounds, and my metabolism has always been through the roof. Getting myself up to 109 pounds - on, yes, a very healthy diet - was a wonderful victory, and I'm not sorry in the least.

Oh, and the "raid your husband's closet" clothing advice didn't help much, either. Maybe that's because the author thinks we're all whales who eat too much and can't fit into anything else?

If you want a book that talks about real issues and gets off a soapbox for five minutes, this is not the one.

By the way, here's a shocking revelation - I occasionally eat dessert and white bread, and I don't count the calories in my butter. Shh!!

HeavyReader says

Avoid this book at all costs!

It infantilizes pregnant women and tells them to just go along with whatever the doctor says they should do. I also remember it being very hetero-normative.

A much better book is *The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth* by Sheila Kitzinger.

The only thing *What to Expect When You're Expecting* is good for is starting a fire to keep the expectant mother warm.

Jen says

It felt to me like this book is out to scare moms-to-be. Instead of celebrating how normal many of our pregnancy changes are, this book makes you question any weight gain (hello, we're growing babies here! They weigh a lot!) and can often take a hectoring tone. I don't think ladies need that. Check out any of the other fine pregnancy and labor books out there by Sears, Gaskin, Kitzinger, Simkin, England and others.

Melissa says

Talk about your guilt trips! I know this is a popular gift to give someone who is expecting a baby and it does

contain some useful info. but it does seem like the Martha Stewart approach to child rearing. Inpractical for most of us mortals.

Tara says

How can you complain about too much information? This book was great, practical and reassuring. The index had most every topic I could think of. However, the version I read needed an update on epidurals since it didn't recognize that many women today have them during childbirth.

It does have diet guidelines that are healthy goals. I personally didn't follow them but they might be useful for someone who thinks that it is ok to gorge on whatever you want just because of being pregnant.

Lain says

When I was pregnant with my first child, I picked up nearly every book on the bookstore shelves having to do with pregnancy and childbirth. I wanted comfort, a friend in the form of a book, a companion to hold my hand and let me know everything was going to be okay.

This book was not that friend.

Instead, everytime I read this book, I found myself getting more and more agitated. It exposed me to almost TOO much information, verging on the point of overload. You know how medical students become convinced they have every wacky and rare disease they learn about in med school? That's how I felt when I read this book. After each chapter, I became convinced my child had Downs Syndrome, that I had placenta previa, that I was suffering from gestational diabetes, etc., etc.

Now that I have three children, I feel like I'm in the position to make a recommendation -- get this book if you must, but don't read it cover to cover. Use it as a resource if one of the other books you read (I suggest "The Mother of All Pregnancy Books" by Ann Douglas) leaves you wanting more information.

By the way, I didn't follow the "Best Odds Diet" and my kids still turned out fine. :)

Jessica says

This is probably not the worst pregnancy book in the universe, but it is the worst one I've ever read. Unfortunately it's also the most popular, no doubt due to its admittedly catchy title and unavoidable ubiquity. I'm sure that many, many women, like me, zipped off to the library and grabbed this first thing after their positive pregnancy test.

I had zero ambivalence about being pregnant, but I imagine that for other thinking women less sure they want a baby, this book could do a lot to make them decide that in fact they might not. A lot of people have complained about its alarmist tone and cataloguing of things that can go wrong, but I don't particularly remember that; what I hated was its insultingly cutesy-but-hideously-uncute, grating, idiotic style. The entire book is written in peppy, spunky awful-puns-that-aren't-even-really-puns and moronic-jokes-that-aren't-

actually-jokes. These aren't real examples, because I don't have the book, but seriously the whole thing is like, "Being pregnant is a gas! And you'll *have* gas the whole time your little bun is in the oven..." Speaking of buns, you may want to indulge your cravings for sticky buns, but be careful or *your* buns will get fat and no one wants that! Teeheehee!" I mean, obviously that is not a direct quotation, but in essence it really is not so far off. I hate this book because it makes pregnancy seem stupid, and seems to imply that being pregnant is going to make *you* stupid. If this is something you're already kind of worried about, *What to Expect* can be a highly distressing read. I found its tone so nauseating and awful that it made me slightly less excited about being pregnant for awhile. It really made the whole thing seem like a lame project for stupid, infantilized women, and something I didn't want to be a part of at all despite really wanting a baby.

To be fair, I have a hard time with a lot of accepted pregnancy book conventions, beyond just this book. Use of the word "baby" with no article rankles me, and referring to a six-week-old embryo as a baby (or, infinitely worse, just as "baby") completely skeezes me out. A lot of this is due to a lifetime of programming and conviction about reproductive rights, but it's also because I'm aware that there are high rates of miscarriage in the first trimester. Of course it's a personal choice when you decide to think of your fetus as having personhood, but it seems irresponsible to me the way all these books start personifying and burbling on about an adorable bundle of joy so early on in the process... But of course, that's just me.

I'm not made of stone and I was incredibly emotional and excited about being pregnant, but I found the discourse of these books really alienating, and this one was the worst. A lot of people seem to love it, but if you're like me you'd do better off with something else. Honestly, I didn't ever find a pregnancy book I loved (childbirth yes; pregnancy, no) and wound up getting most of my intel from the BabyCenter website, which isn't perfect but is decent and has an infinitely more tolerable tone.

Sally says

It may be appropriate to read these books as an introduction to pregnancy and birth, but you must not stop here!

The books in this series may be helpful if you know absolutely nothing about how pregnancy and birth are managed in mainstream America, or if you hate asking questions from your doctor. But in my opinion, there are many, many books out there that educate and prepare women to understand, deal with and manage their pregnancies and births **as partners with their health care providers**, not as quiet, non-questioning, passive patients.

Erin says

This book has a mixed reaction from moms--some feel that it can be too strict at times in terms of diet and exercise. However, I really enjoyed the book and took the pregnancy diet tips as tips, not ultimatums. As a first-time mom, this book had helpful question and answer sections for each month that encouraged me.

What to Expect answers questions such as what to watch out for when you are pregnant, tips for buying a layette set and how to help you and your husband bond with the newborn. In a way, it's like your mom, doctor and pastor are answering all of your questions without the phone call!

Great read. I highly recommend *What to Expect the First Year* after this. It starts right at month one of the newborn, which is the most nerve-wracking month of their life! I probably used this book every day for the first 2 months!
