



The Complete Organic Pregnancy

Deirdre Dolan, Alexandra Zissu

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While being pregnant is thrilling, the responsibility of a growing baby can provoke anxiety about what is and isn't safe. In *The Complete Organic Pregnancy*, Deirdre Dolan and Alexandra Zissu address how you can minimize your exposure to the invisible toxins that surround us—in everything from food, cleaning products, and cosmetics to furniture, rugs, air, and water. Step by step, they tell you where dangerous chemicals are lurking, why it's so important to avoid them when pregnant, and what you can do before, during, and after your pregnancy to protect your child.

In this exhaustively researched book, the authors (calmly) talk parents-to-be through everything from the safest laundry detergent to which crib mattresses contain toxic flame retardants. You'll find out how to choose the right face cream, plastic water bottles, household cleaners, types of fish, and much more—all with an eye toward keeping you and your baby safe and healthy.

The Complete Organic Pregnancy also features a collection of personal diaries from well-known writers and organophiles, including Barbara Kingsolver and Marion Nestle, as well as recipes from organic chefs. Required reading for anyone heading into this exciting stage of life, *The Complete Organic Pregnancy* is your chance to make a difference for your children, even before they're born.

The Complete Organic Pregnancy Details

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Mugsymkelly says

This had some good information but was mostly repetitive for me. Some of the authors' advice was also a little mainstream for my taste. I also felt a little annoyed by all of the little stories in the book by "real" moms being written by urban people from NYC or California cities. My favorite quote from the book however was: "When I was about a month away from giving birth to my son, a woman in my prenatal yoga class snapped. We were 'checking in' like we did, sitting in a circle in some approximation of the lotus position, or what the lotus position might look like as performed by a ring of Humpty Dumpty parade floats. This was Santa Cruz, California, so there was much patchouli in the air, much oneness with nature, much consternation over epidurals and episiotomies. We'd all read Spiritual Midwifery and secretly wished that we, too, were giving birth inside a school bus on The Farm in the 1970s, stoned and maybe even stopping to give our husbands a blow job while the 'rushes' washed over us. Well, maybe we didn't all wish this. . ." (by Catherine Newman, p. 233)

Lisa says

I agree with some of the other reviewers that this is a very basic guide. That being said, I did pick up and remember some pointers while I was perusing the book and found some of the website links helpful. For example, we are having new carpet installed next week and I made sure that they would not be using glue/toxic products during installation (and the type of carpet we picked was eco-friendly). However, I know there are flame retardants on the carpet and plan on being gone while my husband "bakes" the VOCs from the retardants out of our house to reduce my exposure. So really this book reminded me to be diligent and think about being organic/natural in my daily choices for both me and my little one to come, can't complain about that!

Sarah Joy says

Fabulous! This has details on just about everything you could wonder about during pregnancy.

It is also well measured... helping the reader to be realistic about not being able to avoid every single toxin in our modern environment unless we live on a commune and eat all whole foods (still hard!) I especially appreciated the info about plastic water bottles and other plastics. The discussion about sustainable eating versus eating all organic is very intelligent and helpful, plus there is an invaluable guide to what non-organic fruits and veggies are least affected by pesticides.

Sophia says

This book covers everything about making your home and personal self more natural and organic. Good advice for creating a healthy environment in your home, whether you're pregnant or not. It is organized into

three sections—transforming (pre-conception), growing (pregnancy), and living (babyhood). In each section, the authors cover food, home environment, work environment, fitness, play, etc. The text is easy to read and accurate, and broken up by essays written by various journalists. I find these essays to be a pleasure to read, not something to skip over. The perspectives are varied and many of them are quite amusing. There is also an abundance of website recommendations throughout the book—a nice perk in any recently published book.

The best sections are the ones that cover food (which are most important to eat organically and why), your house (why not to remodel when pregnant, lead, mold, water filters, plants that can actually filter your air), beauty products (phthalates, what to toss out now), household cleaning products (what's really in them and why it's dangerous), labor (natural or epidural—a great non-judgmental summary of your options), and plastics (why they're dangerous for you and for baby). Some of the advice may be a bit over the top for the average person (can you really afford an organic mattress for you and for baby?), but their advice is sound and not alarmist at all.

Stephanie says

I loved this book and wished I had read it BEFORE getting pregnant. It is a valuable resource for trying and expecting mothers.

A semi-related TED Talk: The toxic baby
https://www.ted.com/talks/tyrone_haye...

Jessica says

This book was vastly informative and led me to a lot of great new resources. My only reservation, which is probably just bias, is that a lot of the things they recommend to do in this book are things only the upper class could ever afford to do. However, that doesn't mean they shouldn't have suggested it and they acknowledge that fact. Some of their precautions are based off speculation, too, but that annoyed me less in the case of this book because I think it's a good idea to avoid the unknown when it comes to chemical exposure and a baby, particularly in a country that requires little knowledge of a chemical for it to be considered safe to use in food or in a household.

Dave Hill says

I want a baby inside me. An organic baby.

Kelly says

This book is exactly what I was looking for. It's a thorough overview of everything you need to know if you want to give your baby an organic start to life. The book covers food, home and work environment, beauty products, and on and on. But what I really loved was that it provides all this information without stressing you out about it and making you feel like a loser for not doing everything right away. The authors are great about reminding you to do what you can because anything you can do will benefit your

baby.[return][return]The only thing I really wish it had was a checklist or summary to pull it all together so I can see everything in one list. So I think I'll make my own checklist.[return][return]I'm glad I own this one because I'll be referring to it often!

Josh says

I took everything in this book with a grain of organic, locally produced, safely-packaged-in-glass salt.

This book wasn't quite as alarmist as I assumed it would be when I picked it up, but that doesn't mean that you don't frequently get the notion that the authors think that everything will kill your child. It is more often a daunting description of the harmful world we live in than a useful reference for a healthy family.

In a way, that is probably good. I firmly believe that the point of eating organically is about making conscious decisions about what you eat, so I appreciate that they don't just say "Buy this. Eat this. Do this." On the other hand, at some point, my child is going to go outside, and then what?

Another problem with the book is that the lifestyle that is being suggested seems far from accessible. Some things are easy. I can spend a little more for Non VOC paint or floor finish, but what about shower curtains? Non vinyl curtains are virtually impossible to find, as are non-flame retardant crib mattresses (which you need a note from your doctor to purchase).

Eating organic, locally grown food is also at the forefront of the book's suggestions. Which I am all for, and must be nice when you live in California. Of course, my family would spend most of the year eating onions and cabbage. Frankly, I'd like my child to try a grapefruit.

To their credit, the authors mention more than once that the important thing is that you make these changes to your lifestyle when you can. One of the most helpful parts of the book is a list of the 12 foods that should be organically grown. Choosing organic over conventional foods for these 12 items can cut 90% of the pesticides you consume out of your diet. It is paired with a list of 12 foods which can be safely consumed conventionally. This and other resources were very useful.

What I found the least useful were long lists of chemicals found in everyday items, and descriptions of how they will harm you, especially considering that these chemicals are generally unlisted and the products are more or less unavoidable.

I'm happy that I have a few extra tools with which to do the shopping for our baby, but I feel like I could have used web based tools to do a lot of the legwork here and found it more useful and less frightening.

Heather Kleinman says

I was intrigued by the idea of this book since I am vegan and do try to live as organically as one can, but I thought *The Complete Organic Pregnancy* was a bit lacking. I was looking for thoughtful guidance, or at least more information than I had already gathered from friends and the Internet, to take my organic practice a bit further, but this book is really a beginner's **very** basic guide to organic and natural options for pregnancy and

childbirth. If you are starting from square one knowing very little about food and environmental issues, maybe this would be a good starting point.

Kara says

After watching and admiring one of my closest friends raise her now one and a half year old I can't help but be fascinated with all she has taught me. Although pregnancy is something I'm planning for a few years down the road I'm finding joy in starting my research now. This book is a great start to that research. While I've long been aware of the importance of organic food and using good, chemical free products, toxins in and around the home have never been brought to my attention in the way they have now. As well as covering the organics and good products this book also covers the many potentially harmful toxins; how to eliminate them and what you can do to avoid them if need be. The book is filled with web addresses of where to get more information, which is useful. I especially liked the many personal stories which were very endearing and remarkably human as the individuals share their flaws and triumphs.

Tricia says

If you're looking for an eye-opening read that will make you suspicious of everything from the box of cereal in the cupboard and the veggies in your fridge to the paint on your walls and the pillow you sleep with....this book is for you!!!

If you have absolutely no interest in living the healthiest life you can, or making informed purchasing decisions, I highly recommend avoiding this publication at all costs. Guilt abounds post-reading, but I will never look at plastic the same way again. I will do my research before purchasing my next mattress, and I will try really hard not to love the new car smell wafting from my wonderfully fuel efficient Mazda 3.

Well-researched, entertaining, and a little bit addictive. I loved this book and will hold onto it as a valuable reference for the time when little ones come along.

Peachy says

This book drove me to the brink of insanity as I realized that it is not financially possible, without a windfall, to do everything organically when it comes to our eventual pregnancy, let alone the two others that we will hopefully endure to follow. From food to beauty products to furniture to toys to household cleaners...AHHH! I've come to the conclusion that I have to prioritize. I'll do the best I can, and that will have to be good enough.

So basically, the book was a little too informative, lol. I really got a kick out of the reference to people thinking that following an organic lifestyle can be likened to the hippie generation of late, as my sister and brother-in-law often tease me about this very thing. What a load of malarkey! The Hippies were these zen-like, incense burning, stressfree people. Clearly racing thoughts of phthalates, parabens, pesticides and growth hormones is anything but stressfree and zen-like, and following suit, I am most definitely the polar

opposite of any hippie I've ever had the chance of encountering.

Margot says

This book gives advice on how to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals before, during, and after pregnancy. It includes long lists of chemicals included in many common household cleaners and beauty products, and their potential effect on you and the health of your baby. There are also a lot of reprinted personal essays from contributing writers about the challenges and health decisions they made during the course of their pregnancies.

I find exhaustive lists of chemicals not very fun reading. On the other hand, the sections on cleaners and beauty products are probably the most useful in the book and the parts that I will go back to as I finish purging my own house of these sources of carcinogens, estrogen imitators, and neuro toxins. Besides these sections, I was surprised at how little new, useful information this book offered for pre-pregnancy and pregnancy. There was actually a lot more about post-partum, such as making your own baby food, whether to use cloth or disposable diapers, etc.

The personal essays were a bit hit-and-miss for me. In a way, it felt like a bit of a cop-out from the authors, allowing them to produce less content themselves for the book. Some of the essays were very helpful while at least one could be perceived by some as mildly offensive.

Katie says

This book was great. I bought it for myself and no one recommended it. I just saw it and picked it up very soon after I found out I was pregnant. The first section of the book is about what you should do before you get pregnant, the second during your pregnancy and the last section is after the baby is born. A lot of the suggestions in this book, I was already doing, however it did make me a little (a LOT) neurotic about chemicals and made me have insomnia for a few weeks worrying about all the things I had already done wrong and how terribly I've poisoned my baby. This is because I got the book after I found out I was pregnant and like all new pregnant women, I didn't know for a few weeks that I was pregnant so I wasn't being as careful as I would've been had I known. So as good as this book was, it did make me freak out and worry a lot. But, I did become very careful and mindful of everything I was coming into contact with and made some changes for the better. Overall, I would recommend this book, but you have to realize that you can't be perfect so setting a goal of changing some of the things the book recommends is fine.
