

the WONDER WITHIN you

celebrating your baby's journey
from conception to birth

CAREY WICKERSHAM





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The Wonder Within You

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Preface

My dear Mama-friend,

Two tiny lines inside a window on a six-inch piece of plastic. It's the universal sign of "my life will never be the same."

Congratulations! Whether you planned it or not, you're pregnant, and you are now a card-carrying member of a history-spanning club of women that is more than a millennium in the making.

Black, white, brown, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Republican, Democrat, sixteen, or sixty-seven—we're all in this together. And be glad, because we need one another. For laughs, for advice, for information, for encouragement, and for hand-me-down maternity clothes!

Within the pages of this book, hundreds of women shared their stories . . . for you. Some stories you'll relate to; others I hope you don't. But motherhood pushes all our differences aside and brings us together. The earth's baby growers have a common bond. The circle is meant to be forever widened. You are warmly invited to clasp new hands in this rich season of life. So let me be among the many to extend my arms in welcome. I'm smiling with you.

Our mothers and their mothers never had a pregnancy book like this. In the past two decades, the widespread advances of the ultrasound have changed everything. We



can see what our female predecessors could only imagine, and a picture is worth a thousand decades of maternal musings.

During a healthy pregnancy, most of us get only a few peeks at our unborn babes. The Wonder Within You lets you peer through a womb window every week. You can watch as baby grows and changes. You can see the differences in baby's moods and appearances. These are distinctions DNA set in motion from day one.

GE's new HDlive ultrasound technology is amazing. Because of it, we're able to study baby's facial expressions, personality, and preferences. Studies show these images help us bond to our babies and empower us to make better prenatal decisions. The images are so clear, they often look like photographs, but they're captured with sound waves. Because of the way the waves bounce inside the uterus, it may appear that parts of baby that aren't "in focus," so to speak, are missing. Rest assured, baby is intact.

Throughout the book, you'll notice the Play button next to the ultrasound photos. If you scan the QR code (quick-response barcode) above it with your smartphone, you'll be able to watch a very short ultrasound video clip. If you don't have a smartphone, borrow one (or access the site via the URL) so you can take advantage of this unique feature of the book. Watching these little ones move is amazing!

I hope you relish the videos, the ultrasound images of baby, and the stories from moms as much as I did when



I included them. Use this book to journal your pregnancy moments and record your milestones. Someday you may want to give it to your child as a keepsake. Because who knows what pregnancy will be like for our babies' babies?

*Your friend,
Carey*

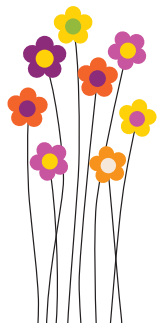
PS: Join me at www.thewonderwithinyou.com for more stories, images, and information! I would love to hear from you as well. To me, there is nothing richer than a good baby story.





week ONE

Your future houseguest is
calling in a womb reservation





week ONE

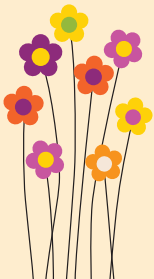
GETTING READY

Your ovaries release an egg or two (or sometimes more) each month, usually around the fourteenth day of your menstrual cycle. The egg emerges from an ovary and travels down the fallopian tube, where it can meet sperm to start a process called fertilization. Health-care providers begin the countdown to your baby's grand entrance on the first day of your last missed period. That's two weeks before the tiniest form of baby even exists. For now, it's as if your future houseguest is calling in a womb reservation two weeks out.

When your egg actually joins with a sperm at the end of week two, it's baby time! The average pregnancy lasts approximately forty weeks from that day. For women who don't conceive in a given cycle, the lining of the uterus (called the endometrium) is shed during the menstrual period. The endometrium then thickens again in preparation for receiving a fertilized egg in the next menstrual cycle.

Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body.

—ELIZABETH STONE,
AUTHOR



RX FOR HEALTH

Women who are considering pregnancy should see a health-care provider prior to conception for a complete physical exam. Your provider can offer suggestions for optimizing the timing of conception and may recommend possible preconception testing options. At the appointment, individual concerns and risks can be addressed. Your provider will also likely recommend or prescribe a prenatal vitamin for you to take even before you conceive.

You and your partner should stop smoking, drinking alcohol, and taking any medications that aren't allowed during pregnancy. Illicit drugs are especially harmful to a developing baby.



NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Proper nutrition is important before and after you conceive. Your body will function optimally (as will your reproductive system) when you eat a healthy, balanced diet. Eat your fruits and veggies, avoid trans fats, and select complex carbohydrates in favor of simple carbohydrates and refined sugars. If you're trying to conceive, try to get to your optimal weight now. Being extremely over- or underweight often affects your menstrual cycle and can prevent regular ovulation.



MOMMY MOMENTS

“I Always Knew”

Some women dream of being a mother from a very early age. Some decide much later. For others, it's not a conscious decision; it's a total surprise.

I knew I wanted to have a baby even when I was a little girl and loved dolls.

—CAROL SUE WICKERSHAM

I started noticing all the strollers at the mall. They had always been there; I was just taking notice of them. —CELESTE KIRMER

I knew I wanted to have another one when I started to dream about babies in my sleep. —SARA LISSAUER

We had been married for several years and I was giving my dog, Willy, birthday parties with hot dogs and cake! It was time. —TRACY MCMINN

It was like something turned on inside of me, and once it was turned on, I couldn't turn it off. Everywhere I looked I'd see babies galore, and even my husband was noticing every couple with a baby. We were ready.

—BECCA CLARK

I always wanted to be a mom, but there were unexpected delays in getting there. I came to a point where I thought I might never have the privilege. But God's plan for me was best. My daughter, Charley, and son, Nash, are gifts that were sent at just the perfect time. —STACIA WINKLER



PRENATAL POSTCARD

The Trials of Waiting by Tess Koppelman

This is it. This is going to be the month. I can feel it. My boobs hurt, I'm feeling strange, maybe a little overly emotional, and I'm really, really tired. Then there's the crinkle of the plastic wrap, a pee test, a two-minute wait, and then . . . a big . . . fat . . . negative.

That's the routine every month. Every month is filled with excitement, thinking about what could be. Then there's the disappointment. It wasn't meant to be. Pick yourself up, try not to be upset, and try and try again.

I didn't think it would be this way. Even though I'm thirty-six, I'm pretty healthy, and the doctor says everything looks fine. So what's the problem? Am I doing something wrong? Do I want it too much? Do I not want it enough? Am I overthinking it and stressing myself out, thereby sabotaging everything? Or is it really this hard to have a baby? Then why does it seem like some couples get pregnant just by sipping out of the same glass?

Maybe I waited too long. I spent the majority of my adult life focused on my career. I didn't even think I wanted a child. The idea of having someone dependent on me practically gave me hives. But then you grow up a little. You see your friends having kids and think, Hey, this little being isn't so scary. I could do that.

Just three months after my husband and I started "trying," I did have that one positive. But it turned out to be an ectopic pregnancy. An overly eager sperm found its way to the egg but attached to my ovary instead of landing in my uterus. Trust me, that's not a good thing. It involved lots of medical stuff and staff who are now familiar with every inch of my reproductive organs. So we'll keep trying. And maybe next month will be that big fat positive. I hope.

ONLY A DREAM

Remember when you were a little girl, and you first thought of me? Did you hold your dolls and pretend they breathed and laughed and cried? I'm going to make your baby dreams come true. Only better. I will love you back. I'll trust you completely. My cheeks will warm to your kisses.

Someday I'll smile at you and run to the door with my arms in the air when you come in. I might cry sometimes too. Right now I'm still a dream, but I'm about to make a lifetime of your dreams come true.

BABY NOTES

Describe your earliest thoughts about becoming a mother.

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