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3rd Australian & New Zealand Edition

Pregnancy FOR **DUMMIES®**

**by Midwife Jane Palmer,
Dr Joanne Stone,
Dr Keith Eddleman
and Mary Duenwald**



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Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd

Pregnancy For Dummies®, 3rd Australian and New Zealand Edition

Published by
Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd
42 McDougall Street
Milton, Qld 4064
www.dummies.com

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National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Author: | Palmer, Jane |
| Title: | Pregnancy For Dummies / Jane Palmer |
| Edition | 3rd Australian and New Zealand ed |
| ISBN: | 9780730377399 (pbk.) |
| Notes: | Includes index |
| Subjects: | Pregnancy — Popular works Childbirth — Popular works Postnatal care — Popular works |

Dewey Number: 618.24

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Cover image: © Amanda Rohde/iStockphoto.com

Typeset by diacriTech, Chennai, India

Printed in China by
Printplus Limited

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Authors' Acknowledgements

Writing this book was truly a labour of love. We would like to thank everyone who played a part in the 'birth' of this book, specifically the following.

From Jane: So many people contributed to this third edition and I'm forever grateful. My colleagues Robyn Dempsey and Melanie Jackson provided many suggestions from a midwifery perspective. Yvette Barton and Anna Russell took the time to review the book extensively from a non-medical perspective. Rebecca Crisp, Charlotte Duff and Hannah Bennett (and the rest of the Wiley Publishing Australia team) were wonderfully supportive (and understanding when certain deadlines weren't met). Some amazing technical reviewers volunteered their time to look at sections in their area of expertise. Technical reviewers include Catherine Harding, Marion Gevers and Karen Willetts (from the Australian Multiple Birth Association), Jacinda Jaensch (acupuncturist and traditional Chinese medicine practitioner), Sandra Venables (aromatherapist and homeopath), Sue Watson (from Trauma and Birth Stress — TABS), Christine Carroll (from SANDS Australia National Council), Sharon Franklin (osteopath), Dr Sarah MacNeil (chiropractor) and Peter Jackson (CalmBirth practitioner). All of whom provided such valuable input to make this great book even better.

From Joanne, Keith and Mary: Tami Booth, Jennifer Ehrlich, Christy Beck, Elizabeth Kuball, Paula Lowell and the other folks at Wiley Publishing, Inc. who conceived this idea. Sophia Seidner and Carolyn Krupp and the folks at International Management Group and Dr Jill Fishbane-Mayer for establishing the initial connection. Drs Lynn Friedman, Mary D'Alton, Richard Berkowitz and Ramona Slupik for excellent comments and suggestions and Dr Ian Holzman for nurturing us through the newborn chapter. Kathryn Born and Judith Morgan for taking our scrap art and turning it into terrific illustrations. And to all our patients over the years whose inquisitive minds and need for accurate information inspired us to write this book.

Dedication

From Jane: To my husband, Frank, the biggest thank you. Without your ongoing support I would never have finished this book. To the wonderful midwives at Midwives @ Sydney and Beyond, thank you for your expertise and just being there when I needed you most. And to my friend Anna Russell for your support and practical help.

From Joanne, Keith and Mary: To George, Chloe, Sabrina, Regina, Phillip, Frank, Melba, Jack, Nick and Claire for all their love and support

Publisher's Acknowledgements

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial and Media Development

Project Editor: Charlotte Duff

Acquisitions Editors: Rebecca Crisp

Editorial Manager: Hannah Bennett

Production

Graphics: diacriTech

Cartoons: Glenn Lumsden

Proofreader: Catherine Spedding

Indexer: Don Jordan, Antipodes Indexing

Special art: Kathryn Born, Judith Morgan and Glenn Lumsden

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Introduction

Welcome to the third Australian & New Zealand edition of *Pregnancy For Dummies*. This book presents a comprehensive, research-based guide to what's one of the most memorable experiences in anyone's life — pregnancy. The *For Dummies* books are known for being accurate and informative, yet easy to read. This format is the perfect medium to present a no-nonsense, light-hearted, user-friendly and, at times, humorous guide to pregnancy.

When you're pregnant, you find that everyone has advice — health professionals, friends, family and even strangers. Some of the information can be conflicting, based on personal opinion, out of date or just plain incorrect, and can cause unnecessary anxiety. Having access to the facts, based on the latest research, enables you to put things into perspective. This focus is one of the guiding principles of *Pregnancy For Dummies* and information provided is aimed at helping you enjoy pregnancy and not worry needlessly. If you have any concerns, keep in mind that you can consult a midwife or doctor. So, enjoy the miraculous process of having a baby.

About This Book

Many women are curious about what lies ahead each step of the way during their pregnancy. The information in this book is written in such a way that you can take things one trimester at a time, if you like, using *Pregnancy For Dummies* gradually, as you enter into each stage of pregnancy. You can also consult the book as needed if you run into some particular question or problem.

Some expectant parents want to read everything they possibly can about all aspects of pregnancy, find out all there is to know about the latest advances in care, and read up on every possible option open to them. Others want to read only the information relevant to them and avoid reading about any potential problems. For this reason, we give you information on complications and unusual situations at the end of the chapters and in Part V.

Keep in mind that research advances fairly quickly. A great effort is made to ensure that all the information in this book is accurate and up to the minute at the time of publication. But, as you can well imagine, in a very short period of time further advances are made and information on pregnancy expands.

We trust that you use this book as a companion to regular care received from a health-care professional. Some of the information may lead you to ask questions that you may not have thought to ask. Because no one answer or even a right answer to every question can be given, you may find that your midwife or your doctor holds a different viewpoint to some of the information presented in *Pregnancy For Dummies*. A difference of opinion isn't uncommon between health-care professionals. So, while this book provides a lot of factual information, as with most information sources, the information shouldn't be regarded as 'gospel'. Remember also that many topics presented on pregnancy are for general readership; your situation is unique and certain aspects might warrant extra consideration and attention.

Conventions Used in This Book

We use a couple of conventions in this book:

- ✓ The terms *partners* and *expectant parents* are used. While traditional male-female couples account for the majority of expectant parents, babies are born into many different circumstances. These circumstances may involve single parents, same-sex couples, adoptive parents, or pregnancies that involve surrogacy. In this book, the terms *partners* and *expectant parents* cover all situations.
- ✓ Three main types of health-care professionals provide care to pregnant women: Midwives, general practitioners and obstetricians. (We explore the roles and philosophies of each of these caregivers in detail in Chapter 2.) As a convention for this book, we choose to use the term *midwife or doctor* to refer to the pregnancy professional. In some situations, we do specify 'doctor' — for example, in circumstances that clearly call for the services of a doctor.

Foolish Assumptions

As health professionals, we know from experience that many prospective parents, whether expecting their first child or their fifth, are very keen to find out everything they can about pregnancy, birth and caring for a newborn.

We assume you want answers to all these questions and more:

- ✓ How will I know when I'm in labour?
- ✓ Is it safe to have sex during pregnancy?
- ✓ What prenatal testing is available and why?
- ✓ What are my options of pregnancy and birth care?
- ✓ When is the baby's heart formed?

With the multitude of available sources of information on the subject — books, magazines, newspapers, television and the internet — sorting through and finding what you're looking for can be difficult. *Pregnancy For Dummies* does this for you.

How This Book Is Organised

The organisation of the parts and chapters of this book represents a logical flow of information about the pregnancy process. The following sections provide a more detailed overview of each of the six parts.

Part I: In the Beginning

For many women, pregnancy is unplanned; for others, it's a conscious choice. Planning ahead is a good idea — including seeing a caregiver before you conceive. Even if planning that far ahead is already too late, this part of the book fills you in on what's happening to your body during the first days and weeks of pregnancy. In this part, you can also find out what happens at a prenatal visit. And you can find out the general scope of what your life is going to be like for the next nine months.

Part II: The Pregnancy Trilogy: A Masterpiece in Progress

Like all good narratives, pregnancy has a beginning, middle and an end. The stages are called trimesters. The way you feel and the kind of care you need vary with each stage. In this part, you get an idea of how each trimester unfolds.

Part III: The Big Event: Labour, Birth and Beyond

After you put in your nine months, it's time for labour — that important event that results in the birth of your baby. At this point, a lot is going on in a short time. Your experience depends heavily on the support you receive both during pregnancy and labour, and what kind of birth you have. This part covers the basic scenario of labour, birth and the early days after birth — plus a number of different variations on the theme.

Part IV: Pregnancy and the Modern Woman

This part covers contemporary issues facing expectant parents. Today, most women choose to work through pregnancy and want to know their rights as well as how pregnancy can affect them at work. The use of complementary and alternative therapies is increasing and we look at the different treatments available. The average age of a woman having her first baby is increasing and family structures are changing. We explore these and other issues in detail.

Part V: Special Situations

This part is where to look for information about all kinds of special situations that may arise during pregnancy. If you're having any kind of difficulty, from the mundane to the serious, this part is the one to consult.

In a way, it would be nice if we didn't have to have a section about some of the challenges that come up during pregnancy. In an ideal world, every woman's experience would be perfectly trouble-free. On the other hand, many of the difficulties that can arise needn't develop into full-blown problems if they're taken care of properly. The information we provide may help you explore your options should any special needs arise.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens is standard in all *For Dummies* books. This part is a great place to put aspects of pregnancy in a nutshell. Here, we dispel some common myths. We also explain how you can find out more about getting the best from your midwife or doctor.

Icons Used in This Book

Like other *For Dummies* books, this one has little icons in the margins to guide you through the information and zero in on that special information. The following paragraphs describe the icons and what they mean.



Pregnancy brings about all kinds of changes in your body — for example, certain hormones flow more freely. We use this icon to point out the physical changes you can anticipate.



Many things you may feel or notice while you're pregnant can beg the question, 'Is this important enough for my midwife or doctor to know about?' When the answer is yes, you see this icon.



This book avoids being alarmist, but some situations and actions may come up that a pregnant woman clearly needs to avoid. When this is the case, you see the Caution icon.



The internet is a wonderful place to access information on pregnancy and birth. This icon highlights some great sites for you to check out.



Worrying to some degree is normal during pregnancy. This icon highlights issues that cause some women to worry, but which are considered normal or not harmful.



Partners experience a lot through pregnancy (though, let's face it, not nearly to the degree that pregnant women do). And partners can do, or should know about, certain things along the way. This icon points out the things that are particularly for them.



Lots of myths and misconceptions surround pregnancy and birth. This icon highlights some of the major myths.



We flag certain pieces of information with this icon to let you know when something is particularly worth keeping in mind.



This icon signals that we're going to delve a little deeper than usual into a technical explanation. We don't mean to suggest the information is too difficult to understand — just a little extra detailed.



This icon marks bits of advice we can give you about handling some situations that may arise during pregnancy, birth or beyond.

Where to Go from Here

Ideally, you're reading this book before you get pregnant. If so, you can take advantage of the information on how to prepare for pregnancy in Chapter 1; for example, by making sure you're healthy and in reasonably good shape, by taking folic acid ahead of time and by scheduling a preconception appointment with your caregiver. We expect, though, that the majority of expectant parents start reading about pregnancy after they've conceived. Chapters 2 to 20 cover what happens after conception occurs.

Pregnancy For Dummies is written in a logical sequence so you can follow your pregnancy as it progresses. If you're at the start of your pregnancy and want to find out more about diet and exercise, you can check out Chapter 4. If you're in your third trimester, no problem — just drop in to Chapter 7 and you're on your way.

You can read the book from cover to cover if you wish or use it as a reference (the book has a great index). Bookmark the pages that are especially interesting or relevant to you. Write little notes in the margins. And we want to hear from you on how you find *Pregnancy For Dummies*. Most of all, have fun and enjoy your pregnancy!

Part I

In the Beginning

Glenn Lumsden



In this part . . .

I'm not sure I'm ready for parenthood' is a normal reaction to finding out that you're pregnant, no matter how long you've been thinking about having a baby and no matter how long you've been trying to conceive. Suddenly, you're faced with the reality that your body is about to undergo some profound changes; a baby is going to take shape inside you and you're going to be a parent. Ambivalent feelings about pregnancy are very normal.

You can take positive steps to help prepare yourself for pregnancy ahead of time. One step is to visit a health-care practitioner who has an interest in preconception care four months before you plan to conceive. Even if you're not that far ahead of the game, this part can help you explore some of the many ways you can prepare yourself physically and emotionally for the very important, very interesting next nine months.