

# Why You Should Be Meditating If You Are Pregnant

Most meditation practices include instructions on how to breathe properly. You concentrate on your breathing, and this lets you shut out all outside distractions. What is one of the important physical exercises taught to pregnant women? They are taught to breathe properly to aid in the delivery of the baby, as well as to help them cope with the physical stress and pain they are experiencing.

Meditation improves breathing for stress-release and focus, and can also benefit mothers-to-be in the following ways.

- **Reduced stress and anxiety** - Did you know anxiety keeps your immune system from functioning properly? The goal is to be as healthy as possible during pregnancy and delivery. A compromised immune system heads your health in the opposite direction and promotes physical and mental stress. Anxiety and stress during pregnancy have been linked to a lower than normal birth weight, labor complications, an increased risk of miscarriage and a greater chance of birth defects. Meditation has been well known for relieving stress for thousands of years.
- **Improved endorphin production** - Endorphins are some of the "feel good" chemicals your brain releases when it feels you could benefit from a sense of well-being. They are also effective natural pain-relievers. This pleasure-enhancing and pain-stopping one-two punch helps knock out much of the pain associated with delivery.
- **Higher DHEA levels** - Dehydroepiandrosterone is much easier to remember (and pronounce) as DHEA. It is a hormone produced by the adrenal glands which supports a healthy immune system, improves mood, balances brain chemistry, and benefits hearing, vision, muscle and bone growth. It is also linked to lower levels of stress and anxiety, helps regulate healthy blood pressure and defends against certain diseases. Meditation naturally elevates levels of DHEA, which tend to drop after the age of 30.
- **Increased melatonin production** - We refer once again to the positive effect of meditation on the immune system, because how well your immunity is working dictates how healthy you are. Melatonin is one of those "feel good" chemicals we referred to earlier, which has a

calming effect that improves mood and a sense of well-being. High melatonin levels during pregnancy also contribute to a strong immune system.

- Lowers the need for Epidural Anesthesia and Caesarian Section - One important study showed the incidence rate of cesarean section surgery dropped by a full 56% when women meditated regularly during pregnancy. More impressive was the fact that pregnant women who meditated were 85% less likely to turn to epidural anesthesia for pain relief.

Meditation is important for pregnant women for a number of reasons. It has been linked to healthy delivery rates, a lowered risk of postpartum depression and better sleep habits. Women express a healthier mental and emotional connection to their dramatically changing body, as well as less overall tension and more peace of mind. Develop a meditation practice today if you plan on becoming pregnant, and once pregnant, meditation provides you and your baby significant health rewards.