



Prepared parents. Healthy families.

March Parent Newsletter

When you're pregnant, there are countless decisions to make to ensure your baby has a healthy start in life. You choose a doctor or midwife, decide which car seat to buy, what prenatal vitamin to take, and more. These are mostly easy choices.

What if there was one choice that wasn't so easy but could affect your baby, your labor and delivery, and even your parenting? Can you guess what this might be?

The answer is taking prenatal childbirth classes! Research has found that women who take a childbirth class are [less likely to be induced](#) and feel [less fear](#) and [anxiety](#) during labor and delivery.

*"At first I thought you were going to show me the corner of the labor room in which I had to sit and panic but I know now how to support my wife in her labor and birth."
- Dad in local class*

Prenatal classes are the best way to prepare for childbirth but participation has been dropping over the last 20 years. Some expectant parents think they don't need prenatal classes. And seriously, who wants to spend hours talking about female anatomy with strangers?

What if the teacher is pushing natural birth and you want an epidural? What if you have to [pretend to give birth to a doll](#)? Ok, deep breath... and again... one more... just kidding, prenatal classes aren't all about breathing techniques!

Meet Our Newest Parent Voice

Hailey Cain, 23, is a recent LBCC graduate and is 36 weeks pregnant with her first baby. Find her in Pollywog's [Parent Voice](#).

"Pregnancy is both exciting and overwhelming. It is my hope to share stories of my experiences as I near the end of my pregnancy and transition into life as a new mother. Look for my thoughts and experiences with prenatal classes in my upcoming blog posts."

*"I am glad you taught us about cesarean births. I was not afraid during my cesarean birth and there were no surprises."
- Mom in local class*

Top Reasons to Take Prenatal Classes:

Learn up-to-date facts from birth professionals. Your mom, best friend, [Call The Midwife](#), [The Baby Story](#), and YouTube are good for anecdotes but only professionals can tell you everything that happens during labor and how it's handled.

Help your partner learn. Your partner may [have no idea what's going on](#) with childbirth! Maybe you feel ready because you talked to friends talk about labor, but your birth partner will need a class to learn how to support you.

Meet other expectant parents and build important friendships. It's been proven that the friendships you make in childbirth classes are [unlike any other friendships you'll have](#) in life.

Find out how to protect and [care for your newborn](#). It doesn't matter how many other babies you've cared for, it is very different when it's your baby.

The most important reason is your baby. Being prepared for labor is a choice for your baby's health and will [help you be a better parent in the future](#).



Baby-Friendly in Our Community

Big changes have been happening in the [Birthing Center](#) at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center (GSRMC) in Corvallis with the goal of increasing mother and baby health through breastfeeding. GSRMC is in the final stages of earning the designation of [Baby-Friendly Hospital](#), and hope to have the long process completed this year.

GSRMC will be the only hospital in the Linn/Benton/Lincoln area with this designation. The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was started by UNICEF in 1991 to globally decrease infant mortality through changes that support breastfeeding. These include extra training for hospital staff, room-in for all babies, and lactation consultants available after discharge. Since the start of BFHI, infant mortality has decreased worldwide by over half.

Perhaps the biggest change happens immediately after birth, when a mom holds her baby skin-to-skin on her chest for at least an hour. There are [many benefits](#) to this for both the mom and the baby, including a first breastfeeding initiated by the baby. In this practice of immediate skin-to-skin contact, bonding between the mother and baby are prioritized over other post-birth processes, unless there is a medical concern.

Although the main focus of BFI designation is support for breastfeeding, moms who choose to use formula will receive the same level of support.



What Is A Doula?

Do you know [what a doula does](#) and have you considered hiring one? Doulas have been supporting moms in labor around the world for centuries and becoming popular again in the US.

Doulas are hired to support a mother before, during, and after birth. The doula provides calm support to the laboring mother and helps her navigate the medical system. This can be hard to do for a partner or other family member who might be worried, scared, or just as exhausted as the mother. Likewise, the doula doesn't replace a nurse or doctor because the doula doesn't have medical training. But, unlike medical staff, the doula has only one patient – you.

There are many [advantages](#) to having a doula as a part of your support team, and [research](#) has found that having additional labor support like a doula can reduce the possibility of a cesarean section and other complications. Ready to find a doula? Check out:

- [The Community Doula Program](#) - free doula services to families who are covered by IHN.
- [Grow Doula Services](#)
- [MidValley Doula Network](#)
- [Willamette Valley Doula Collective](#)

Pollywog
connects you
to prenatal classes! Call
Pollywog at 541-917-4884 or sign
up [online](#) and Pollywog will walk
you through the steps of registering
for class. We register families for all
kinds of classes, from childbirth
to breastfeeding and infant
care classes.



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