



I hope this newsletter sees you and your family healthy and warm during these very cold winter weeks.

Bronwyn van Hooijdonk
Company Director

Doulas

A Birth Doula is a calm, comforting, encouraging presence in the birthing room. A Doula is someone who has been through at least one birth herself and can support and help the new mother using her own experience as a guide. A Doula will stay with you for the whole of your birth however long it takes. A Doula will also visit you before and after the birth. Beforehand she will go through your birthing plan with you and become familiar with your birthing wishes. After the birth she can help you record your birth experience.

It must be emphasised that Birth Doulas are not substitute Lead Maternity Carers. They support birthing mothers, love them, comfort them and are dedicated to the one mother who has hired them, but they are not trained or qualified to do many of the important things that only an LMC can do.

A Doula's desire is that all women have the opportunity to experience the type of birth they hope for.

Doulas are here to help women identify their opinion...not tell them which option to choose.

Doulas are here to help women discover their own strengths for labour and birthing.



Gilmours Pharmacy,
proud sponsors of
HB Doulas



 **Gilmours** 13 MIDDLE ROAD,
PHARMACY HAVELOCK NORTH
PH 877 8222

antenatal classes in havelock north



topics covered include -
stretching
breastfeeding
prenatal care
pelvic awareness
relaxation techniques
pregnancy information
infant car seat installation
labour & birth preparation
pain relief methods & options
plus - 2 hr postnatal doula session
plus - 1 hr infant massage
plus - 1 hr infant CPR
plus - hospital tour
car seat hire

for further details & to enrol telephone
hb doulas on **06 8778282** or **027 6775241**

held at 13 Porter Drive Havelock North
from 7-9pm Tuesday night

Come Out and Play

My heart seems to beat a little faster these days
Maybe it's the thought of my life changing in so many ways.
I've heard so many tales of sleepless nights
And tests of patience taken to new heights.
Yet my excitement grows as we count down each week
For I know soon we will finally meet.
I have a little fear I must admit
Will I be good at it?
I daydream of baseball games and fishing trips
And passing along life's little tips.
Will you be tall? What color is your hair?
Do you like peas? What will you wear?
Can I slay the monster under your bed?
Will we be able to build a sled?
How will I explain the birds and the bees?
Oh, I must have a million of these.
Answers to questions, questions to ponder
Things to see, places to wonder.
Together, we'll be the ultimate team
Limited only by what we can dream.
So as the weeks are counted down, I anxiously await
That Oh - so - wonderful date.
When all of the waiting is over and done
And I can hold you in my arms, My Son.

By Dad Brad Lawson in 1998

Tummy time

I have been invited to bring some clarity to the confusion that exists around tummy time – whether it is beneficial or harmful for our babies if we place them in this position on the ground.

What I have learned in over 30 years as a physiotherapist for babies and children is that the most important part of their development is in the getting to know their own body. For this they need to learn to feel it, hold it and move it in a well controlled way. It takes development of good muscle balance, in which flexors and extensors of the body are in tune, to achieve that.

As described in my book *Babymoves* (2002) this development occurs in stages and needs to happen in the right sequence. Fortunately our babies know this very well. After birth they are flexed, like little flower buds that gradually open up into their more extended bodies.

The development of this good body control takes place simply by the baby wanting to be comfortable, both on his back or the tummy.

When lying on the back, it takes a baby about four months to learn to be comfortable, stable, grounded and ready to start to explore the world. It takes up to seven months before a baby has learned all the important steps in this position.

Also when lying on the tummy the baby wants to be comfortable and to get ready for exploring his or her surroundings. It takes up to six months for the baby to achieve the well balanced stability this requires. The baby can then take action to feel and explore.

In both positions babies are often taken away from what is a beautiful, innate development, because adults believe they need external stimulation.

Let me give you an example: it takes a well developing baby usually four months to master good balance when lying on their back. If during this time we offer toys or other forms of stimulation for them to reach for, we disturb the natural unfolding process with the risk of creating an imbalance for the child.

Another example is that if we offer external stimulation like toys to look at while the baby is still learning to be comfortable on the tummy we again put the baby at risk of developing the imbalance that is now so common.

When the baby is ready to discover the world, he or she will go and find it, and it seems that even the fluff on the carpet brings joy, if it presents itself at the right time.

Based on my experiences as a physiotherapist I can say that lying on the back is, in general, a much safer position for development in babies although there is room for tummy time for some. But no matter which position we choose to place little babies, we should refrain from stimulating them as it takes them away from their own development. We should trust our babies to know best. If they get upset by a position then they simply tell us that it's not right for them. We should believe them.

Many of the parents who come to my clinic need to be re-educated about letting their babies do their own development. Most have been advised to place their baby on their tummies and stimulated with toys.

In almost all cases I have to advise parents to start again by placing the child on their back, to regain body control, even if they are already sitting or standing up. The results are outstanding. Parents are of course very frustrated and always ask the same question when they see the positive change in their children, 'why has nobody told me this before'.

There seems to be confusion amongst the experts as to what muscles babies use in various positions. Some in fact think that the supine position (lying on the back) stimulates the extensor muscles when in fact the opposite is true. It is also sometime thought that extensor muscles are needed for head control and again, the opposite is true. We need good balance between flexors and extensors for head control. Both flexion and extension develop in supine and in prone positions in a well balanced way, if we allow this to happen. It is easier for a baby to develop extension than it is to develop flexion. This means that the extension sometimes tends to take over when the baby is placed on the tummy, more so if the baby is stimulated. The example here is the baby who learns to bring up his or her head without the elevation of the chest by support of elbows. If the baby develops extension first it is even harder for flexion to still come through.

I hope this information helps to create a better understanding of our babies' needs.

Reference Hermsen-van Wanrooy, M. (2002). *Babymoves*. Nelson: Baby Moves Publications. www.babymoves.co.nz

The First Years: Nga Tau Tuatahi. New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education. Volume 8, Issue 2, 2006

Delight Your Child

Play, yell, scream with delight. Live fearlessly. Have an insatiable thirst for fun—let joy be your natural state of being. Have boundless energy. Eat dessert first—take the largest helping. Live totally in the present moment. Ask for what you want. Be naturally curious—let everything be new, exciting & wonder-filled. Find yourself in the magical world of fantasy. Do what makes you feel good. Kiss and make-up. Take regular naps. Blossom from the heart. Go barefoot. Dare to fail and make mistakes. Do crazy and outrageous things. Be expressive in all parts of your being—cry, laugh, sing. Question everything. Know no bounds. Have big dreams. Be in touch with your essence—know you are a child of god.

Sumi 1997