

This years World Breastfeeding week slogan is "Mother Support—going for gold". A perfect slogan with the Olympics upon us. Dads needs our support too so don't forget them on Father's Day in September.

Bronwyn van Hooijdonk  
Company Director



"A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child."

Knights of Pythagoras



### antenatal classes

pregnancy, childbirth & early parenting information  
13 Porter Drive Havelock North  
from 7-9pm Tuesday night

### birth support

continuous physical & emotional support during your labour & birth

### postnatal care

emotional & practical support in your own home after the birth of your baby

for further details or to enrol telephone  
hb doulas on **06 8778282** or **027 677524106**  
**bronwyn@hbdoulas.co.nz**

## WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 1-7 AUGUST Mother Support : Going for the Gold

Breastfeeding results from a reproductive health continuum for the mother to the child with no beginning or end, from generation to generation. When a practice is disrupted, it must be restored. However, restoration of the breastfeeding culture demands more resources and mobilization.

In conjunction with the Olympics in August, World Breastfeeding Week 2008 calls for greater support for mothers in achieving the gold standard of infant feeding: breastfeeding exclusively for six months, and providing appropriate complementary foods with continued breastfeeding for up to two years or beyond.

As every country sends its best athletes to compete at these global games, it is important to remind ourselves that, in a similar fashion, a healthy young athlete can only emerge from a healthy start on life. There is no question that optimal infant and young child feeding is essential for optimal growth and development.

Supporting Mother = Supporting Her to Provide the Golden Start For Every Child!

[www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org](http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org)

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"I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection."

Sigmund Freud

## Father's day

Father's Day is a day of commemoration and celebration of Dad. It is a day to not only honor your father, but all men who have acted as a father figure in your life - whether as Stepfathers, Uncles, Grandfathers, or "Big Brothers."

Whether you're a daddy-to-be or a seasoned granddad, Father's Day is a wonderful opportunity to bask in the glow of your family's affection and appreciation. This year, you can also make Father's Day an opportunity for self-reflection and personal growth. Ask yourself: Are you the father you always wanted to be? Are you the father your children deserve?

While children need the freedom to explore and make mistakes in the process, a good father provides clear boundaries and gentle guidance throughout their journey.

Take the opportunity to learn both through your successes and through your setbacks. Getting it wrong today just means we have another opportunity to get it right tomorrow.

[www.holidays.net](http://www.holidays.net)

### Animal vs. Human Birth

The protocols in the world of animal husbandry to protect an offspring at the time of birth—no strangers, dimmed lights, freedom of movement, familiar environment, unlimited nourishment, respectful quiet, no disruptions—are done without hesitation because to do otherwise invites "unexplained distress" or sudden demise of the offspring. These thoughtful conditions are the norm, along with careful observation to determine when to use the technological expertise in true emergencies. When we have veterinarians in our childbirth education classes, they always start to smile and nod when I tell this story. These are givens—instinctive givens, even, for animals of all descriptions!

Yet what are the "givens" for the human who births not in a barn, but in a "modern and advanced" hospital? In many cases world wide, 100% the opposite! Usually a minimum of a dozen strangers pass through the world of the laboring mother in her first 12 hours in the hospital—security officer, patient transporter, triage secretary, admission clerk, resident and/or doctor on call, first shift nurse, break nurse, additional nurse at delivery, doctor or midwife plus possibly students, anesthesiologist, pediatrician, etc. Bright lights in labor rooms are challenging to dim. Mothers are attached to monitors or IV poles. They are exposed to voices of others in the hall or chatting by the attendants during contractions and endless disruptions throughout! But then, do we ever find that we have an offspring experience "unexplained distress?" Of course, and at frightening rates! Yet, oddly, many of these disruptions are promoted as minor inconveniences or necessary to "protect" the baby.

Curiously, while veterinarians commonly have to defend interventions in light of the additional cost and the risks associated with interfering with nature, providers caring for human mothers within the medical system more commonly are forced to defend why they did NOT intervene!

Consider the high rates of inductions, epidurals, artificial rupture of membranes, immediate cord cutting, cesareans and the vigorous defense necessary to fight for anything different, especially if time is involved (time to go into labor, to progress, to push, to allow the cord to stop pulsation or to get "done", bonding). I've recently seen outstanding LMCs and obstetricians sacrifice their own political reputations and suffer departmental reprimands for births with great outcomes where they protected the mothers' yearning for privacy, allowed extended pushing time with great vital signs or, during a healthy normal birth, followed their intuition and honored the mother's begging to check heart tones frequently by hand during pushing instead of what the mother considered the massive intrusion of wearing the monitor belt. Interventions are considered to be the ultimate protection from litigation in human care, yet they contribute mightily to the high rates of distress in mothers and babies!

In animal husbandry, the first line of defense for protecting the unborn is to protect and nurture the nutritional needs and comfort of the birthing female. In the case of institutionalised birth for humans, however, in spite of evidence to the contrary, the norm is to act as if the nutritional needs and the comfort of the birthing mothers are of concern to, at most, the marketing and public relations department! It's an affront to common sense that as a society we are currently more accepting of the needs of foaling mares, whelping poodles and high-producing cows than of our birthing humans. From the high rates of fetal distress, meconium staining and breastfeeding problems, the consequences are clearly devastating to our infants, just as any decent horseman would predict.

**Beth Barbeau Excerpted from "Safer Birth in a Barn?," Midwifery Today, Issue 83**

### Baby's smile 'like taking cocaine' for mums

A new study has found a mother looking at her own smiling baby gets a similar high to that of taking cocaine. Research from the Baylor College of Medicine in the US shows that the same part of the brain lights up from the two activities.

It could help prove the existence of a special mother-infant bond and also help to understand what happens when things go wrong.

Lead author, paediatrician Lane Strathearn from the Texas Children's Hospital, says when a mother sees her own baby smiling as opposed to another baby smiling, "it activates similar sort of brain circuits as a cocaine addict getting a shot of cocaine. So it's a powerful stimulus and I think any mother can tell you that – that when she sees her baby smile it really does have a powerful effect," he said.

Dr Strathearn says the process revolves around circuits in the brain that process reward stimuli. "They help us to predict reward and help to motivate behaviour in response to particular cues, and for baby faces we believe that those cues that a mother receives from her baby actually help to motivate behaviour in response to those baby faces," he said. "So care-giving behaviour, cuddling, picking up, responding to a baby's emotions."

He said there was a response to seeing other people's babies smiling, but "nowhere near as powerful" as when their own babies smiled. And Dr Strathearn says although the study didn't look at this, he would imagine there would be some response to a baby's smile even for those who aren't parents.

"It's just a matter of degree," he said. "That's why we specifically contrasted the response to when mothers saw their own baby compared to someone else's baby - a baby that they'd never seen before. And that's where there was specific activation of these particular reward pathways in the brain."

He says while only 28 mothers were involved in the research, it is considered a good sample in the magnetic resonance imaging world. "It's an involved and expensive process and that's a number that really gave us sufficient information for our purposes," he said.

One thing that we are also looking at now, is how different sub-groups of these mothers respond differently. "For example, is it the case that some mothers don't receive this reward stimulus or reward response in the brain when they interact with their baby? Could this help us to better understand what happens in child neglect?"

"Perhaps in some mothers, this process isn't working properly and so there's not that same reward and motivation to adequately respond to a baby's needs and provide the nurturing care that a baby requires."

Based on an interview by Bronwyn Herbert for The World Today