

WELCOME TO YOUR *Pregnancy* **JOURNEY!**

This book won't replace the incredible work of midwives, childbirth educators, or healthcare professionals – they're truly one of a kind. But it **will** boost your knowledge and confidence as you navigate pregnancy, birth, and beyond.

Whether you're a mom in the city juggling work and pregnancy, or living in a quiet rural area with limited access to classes, this magazine is for **you**. We know not everyone can attend childbirth classes, and not every partner can be present for every moment. Life is busy, unpredictable, and sometime exhausting, but that doesn't mean you should miss out on important birth and postpartum education, as well as the excitement and joy you will experience at this very special time in your life.

Special thanks go to Helene Bourquin, Prof MarkCotton (HIV update), Dr Anthony Allwood (anaesthesiologist), my publishers, who keep this dream alive, as well as the many parents and grandparents, medical colleagues and friends, who shared their wisdom. You've helped shape this book into something special.

So buckle up – we're going on a roller-coaster ride! I'll guide you gently, offering evidence-based info, real stories, and a little humour to help you feel informed and supported through the choices that matter most to you, your culture, and your family – with the mother always at the centre of this circle of care.

Irene Bourquin



What's safe? What's not?

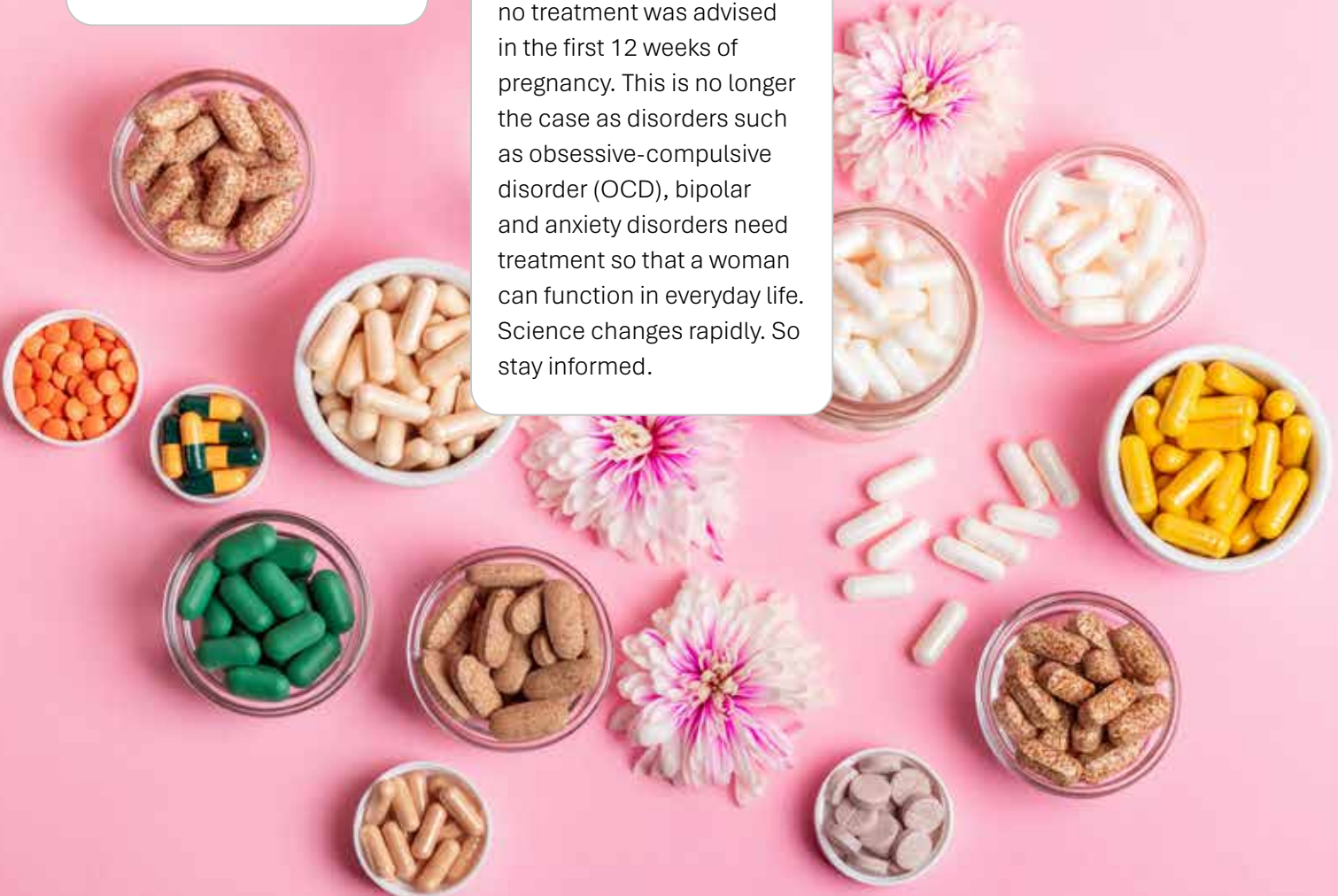
Taken in moderation, paracetamol is safe to take during pregnancy. Some antibiotics used in the first trimester have, however, been linked to an increased risk of miscarriage. Ask your caregiver for current information about their safety.

What if I can't stop my meds?

Sometimes the effects of stopping a medication can be more dangerous than simply adjusting the dosage. A specialist in postpartum depression should monitor medications such as mood stabilisers, anti-depressants and antipsychotic medications. In the past, no treatment was advised in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. This is no longer the case as disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar and anxiety disorders need treatment so that a woman can function in everyday life. Science changes rapidly. So stay informed.

Know your rights

Family-centred care is what families need. It's your right to be treated with dignity and respect. It's also your responsibility to learn what you need to know at this critical time. As Nelson Mandela said, "Education can change the world".



For nine months of your life, one of the biggest sacrifices you can make for your child is to stop drinking.

CHAPTER 12

THE RUN-UP TO THE **Big Day**



If you have chosen to have your baby in hospital, make sure that you take a tour with your labour partner to familiarise yourself with your surroundings. It's also a good idea to take siblings with you. They will then know where you are going, and that you will come home with a new brother or sister. Grandparents should go too, if only to see how maternity units have improved over the years!

CHAPTER 23

SENSIBLE SUGGESTIONS FOR *siblings*

When you bring home a new baby, most children will regress in some form – some a little, others a lot. Here’s how you can make the transition easier for everyone.

Birth is a family-centred event, and you may have chosen to have the older siblings present while you are in labour. Some children are interested while others are not at all – roll with it, and be prepared. A caregiver, grandparent or family member (other than the labour-support person) needs to be present at all times to take siblings out of the room if they (or you)

are not coping. Bring along snacks, drinks, a change of clothes and something to occupy them if they are in a hospital maternity ward. At home, children will often wander in and out.

Read books about birthing to your children and give age-appropriate instructions to your older children before the birth. Always “debrief” children after the birth to find out how they felt about it, and address any issues about what they saw or what they thought they saw.

CHAPTER 30

COMMON *baby problems*



This chapter offers guidance on common issues affecting infants and young children, along with suggested solutions. Always consult your pediatrician or clinic sister first if you are unsure.