

# Better Baby Guide

By Lana Asprey, M.D.

Thank you for signing up for the [Better Baby Book](#) mailing list and for your interest in the Better Baby Book! The book itself is scheduled to be released sometime this year, according to our publisher, J. Wiley of New York.

Before the official release we cannot share the actual contents of the book, but what we *can* do is outline the cornerstones of our program, and that's what this guide is all about.

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## Let's Get Started

There are three important things to focus on before getting pregnant and three things while you're pregnant.

### Before getting pregnant:

1. **Detoxing** so your body and home environment have as few toxins as possible
2. **Resolve any allergies** you may have (to food, chemicals, etc), so that your immune system is in a calm and "happy" mode when you conceive and throughout your pregnancy.
3. **Take the right supplements/vitamins** so you have an easy time getting pregnant

### While pregnant:

1. Continue to keep your body and your environment as toxin-free as possible.
2. Eat the right things (healthy foods are the building blocks for your growing baby).
3. Take the right supplements (ones that support your health and your baby's growth)

## Detoxing Your Body

What is detoxing? Simply put, detoxing is doing your best to "clean out" as much of the toxins that we all accumulate during our lives. It's not a straight forward "one size fits all" process either, so the best and safest thing is to find a holistic MD or naturopath, who can work with you. A doctor who knows what they are doing will:

1. Monitor how your body is handling the detox—your healthcare practitioner should make sure you are responding well to the detox and that the pace is appropriate for you.
2. Take blood tests to 1) check for levels of heavy metals and 2) determine how well your liver and kidneys are functioning.

Working with a holistic physician is important because detoxing can be done too quickly. You may have heard stories about people getting much worse or seriously sick BECAUSE of detoxing. This happens when the detox was done too fast without adequate testing.

Your kidneys and liver can become overwhelmed if there is a fast release of large amounts of toxins that were stored in the body for a long time. For example, the body often stores toxins in fat tissues to keep the toxins away from vital areas. Detoxing will draw the toxins out of the fat tissues but it must be done at the right rate, and using the right detox programs. Finding a reputable holistic physician is the way to get the personalized advice you need to detox the right way for *you*.

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Depending on your exposure and the program your doctor chooses, detoxing can be pricey and take some time. Some alternatives that are not as costly, and are gentle enough to do at home, are high doses of vitamin C and moderate doses of chlorella.

## Chlorella and Spirulina

Chlorella especially binds many heavy metals and flushes them out of the body. Spirulina too is good for metal detox, especially mercury that's found in sea-food and in dental fillings. The doses recommended orally (take by mouth), are gentle enough that there is virtually no risk of overdoing it and going too fast. With both Chlorella and Spirulina, depending on what brand you take (powder, capsules), the dose will vary. When choosing a brand, make sure it is one without fillers or additives. You want the cleanest and most easily digestible brand you can find.

Both chlorella and spirulina are rich in iron. While it is true that the natural iron that is found in these algae is more easily absorbable than mineral iron, it is still iron, and it can be toxic in high doses. This is why you should not be taking these supplements all the time. My advice is to ask a holistic practitioner for an oral protocol with dosage, prescribed length of treatment and tapering dose. He/she will also be able to recommend a good brand. And monitor your iron levels to make sure they stay in a healthy range!

## Vitamin C

Over the last 100 years, there has been plenty of research that shows it is NOT possible to overdose Vitamin C. The only thing that will happen if you take too much, is you might get a stomach ache and diarrhea. These will resolve as soon as you lower your dose.

If you are not taking Vitamin C now, and *you are not yet pregnant*, you can start with 1 gram per day and then increase with another gram every three days until you reach a level where your stools are starting to be quite loose. Once you have reached that level, back down by 1 gram, and then stay on that dose. So if you get to 8 grams/day and start having loose stools, decrease to 7 grams/day (the most you can take while not having loose stools).

If you are already pregnant, in your first trimester, and you have NOT been taking vitamin C regularly before, please do NOT follow the above protocol. There is some evidence that suggests that sudden changes in vitamin C intake, especially going from zero to a high dose in a short period of time, during the first trimester could increase risk of miscarriage. So for those of you in your first strimester, who have NOT been taking Vitamin C before, we recommend taking Vitamin C in low doses and consulting with your doctor prior to doing so.

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## Liposomal Glutathione

Finally, a wonderful detoxing preparation, though somewhat expensive, is liposomal glutathione. It helps the liver cleanse your whole system, and it also helps your liver to be more efficient while cleansing. Again, this is not something you can overdose. I took 1 table spoon per day for 1 month, as a preparatory cleanse to help my liver get rid of toxins before I got pregnant.

I was so pleased with the results, I continued to take 1 teaspoon every day throughout the pregnancy. In fact, I still take 1 teaspoon every day, even now, 4 years later! The brand I use is [Lipoceutical Glutathione](#).

## Detoxing Your Environment

Here the important thing is getting rid of as many chemicals in your home as you can.

### Cosmetics And Cleaning Products

The easiest is to tightly seal and stop using strong cleaning solutions, standard laundry detergents with fragrance, and body lotions, soaps, and cosmetics that contain SLS and parabens.

It's important to stay away from these because they're made from toxic chemicals. Even the sweet smelling artificial scents added to high end soaps are bad news. Since they're toxic, they stress your liver and kidneys, which have to deal with them and flush them out. Better to save that energy for getting into optimal health and then growing your baby!

A note here: just because something is organic doesn't mean it's good or "easy" on you and your home. Some organic brands contain artificial chemicals that are pretty harsh.

The best brands we have found are:

Personal care products: *Aubrey Organics* (they are moderately expensive, but they LAST a long time). Can be bought at *Whole Foods* or similar stores.

Home cleaning products: *BioKleen* (for cleaning products and laundry detergent) and also *Seventh Generation*. These are also found at *Whole Foods* and at larger *Safeway* stores.

You'll want to get the unscented versions to avoid the chemical fragrances.

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## Other Common Household Chemicals

The other chemicals to avoid include air fresheners, dry cleaning, and flame retardants.

Air fresheners, whether they're in your car, your bathroom or your bedroom, are all scented with chemicals that can act as hormone disruptors.

Dry cleaning should be called chemical cleaning. The clothes are cleaned by being dipped in strong chemical solutions that draw out the stains and dirt. Traces of those solutions remain on the clothes and guess what—they get absorbed into your skin! If you really need something dry cleaned, the best method is by CO2 cleaning. It's pricier, but absolutely harmless. No chemicals whatsoever. Just plain old carbon dioxide.

Sheets and mattress covers often contain flame retardants. A flame retardant on a mattress or bed will only help if you are a smoker who happens to fall asleep while smoking. Then it may save your life. But if there is an actual fire, where your house starts burning down, well, the pound of flame retardant found in a queen size mattress isn't likely to make a difference.

What the flame retardants do however, every day you sleep on them, is disrupt your hormones, because they are very potent chemicals. Especially for women this is not a good thing, we need our hormones as natural and optimal as possible!

If you don't want to or can't spend the money on a natural latex mattress with a wool top (wool is a natural fire retardant), then buy one of those allergy free covers and zip your mattress into it. The cover will encase the mattress, and prevent a large amount of the chemicals from reaching you. If your mattress is 10-15 years old, then don't worry—the flame retardants will have dissipated by then anyway.

After your baby is born, it's key to make sure his/her crib is also free of flame retardants. It's absolutely worthwhile to get a "green" mattress for your baby. We like the natural latex ones with a layer of wool top and organic quilted cotton casing. Wool is a natural, nontoxic fire retardant and the organic cotton will be free of chemicals.

These mattresses are a great thing to put on your baby shower wish list. They are about \$300, and they last until the child is 2-3 years old and has outgrown his/her crib. A good investment, because it comes to about \$10-15 per month! And if you have a second baby, well, then you can reuse it, and that makes it even cheaper.

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## Dealing with Allergies

If you have allergies, *before* pregnancy is the time to find out what causes them, and then to avoid those things. If you have allergies, or suspect you have them, but are not sure of the causes, consult a holistic physician.

Some people suffer from frequent colds regardless of the time of year, have a stuffy nose, dry eyes, rashes that come and go, constipation that comes and goes ... all of these symptoms are signs of allergies, either environmental (mold, dust mites, animal dander, plants, chemicals in the home), or food allergies (gluten, soy, dairy, nuts, etc.). It's important to resolve as many of those issues as possible, because having a chronic allergy, even if it's a "mild" one, means that your immune system is in a constant state of agitation, and that is not optimal, especially while pregnant. We now know that the mother's immune system affects how the baby's immune system will develop, so, you want to have a "calm, quiet" immune system when you conceive and when you're pregnant and breast feeding. This way, your baby will have as few allergies as possible.

## Preconception Supplements

In the *Better Baby Book* we will recommend the following supplements and many others. To get you started, here's a decent "middle of the road" program:

Folic acid—SO important. 800mg/day at least. If you take only one thing, this should be it!

Vitamin E: 400 - 800 IU (international units). This is NOT the same as milligrams! Big difference. Make sure you look at the unit of measure so you take the right amount. A really good brand is Unique E, [www.acgrace.com](http://www.acgrace.com). Vitamin E capsules should be natural sourced and should say "mixed tocopherols", so that you are sure you are getting the right MIX of the different types of vitamin E.

Vitamin C as discussed above, Solaray buffered time released 1 gram capsules are good. You can buy with or without bioflavonoids.

Multivitamins. The Living Multi from Garden of Life is our favorite. 6-9 tablets/capsules per day depending on your weight.

Probiotics. Primal Defense is a great blend and is also made by Garden of Life. 2-3 capsules/day depending on your weight.

Advanced Essential Minerals from *Vitamin Research Products* ([www.vrp.com](http://www.vrp.com)). 3-6 capsules/day. If you are taking Living Multi, 3-4 capsules is probably enough.

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Vitamin D-3 (cholecalciferol). You need to go have your levels tested *before* you start on vitamin D, so you know where you are. Normally, most women are LOW on vitamin D, even if they live in a sunny climate like California and spend 1-2 hours outdoors every day! This seems unlikely, but it is true. Most of us don't get the sun exposure we need to maintain healthy vitamin D levels. Especially in winter. And many of us need to supplement with anywhere between 2000-8000 IU/day. Yes, between 2000 to 8000 IU/day. This is MUCH higher than the normal 800 IU per day that is still recommended by many doctors. Shame, because vitamin D-3 is a key vitamin for a healthy immune system, for good hormone production and for getting pregnant easily.

It's VERY IMPORTANT to make sure that your vitamin D is D-3, and NOT D-2. D-3 is not toxic in the doses I mentioned above, but D2 can certainly be liver toxic. So, have your levels tested, and then start taking D-3 if necessary. And after 6-8 weeks on D-3, have your levels tested again to see how you are doing and to determine if you need to increase or decrease the dose. This is why it's good to work with a health care practitioner. For an optimal pregnancy, you want your vitamin D levels in the blood be anywhere between 50 to 80 ng/ml. A good brand is Carlson's vitamin D-3 drops, which are 1000 IU/drop.

Fish oils – again, Carlson has excellent fish oil, which is rich in omega-3s and other good fats.

Iodine – important for thyroid function. Need to have your levels tested first, before you start supplementing. Too much iodine is highly toxic. For supplementing I use Lugol's 2% iodine, and to give you a frame of reference, I took about 2 drops (yes, DROPS, tiny little drops, barely enough to stain the water yellow), in a large glass of water once per week until my levels were good.

L-Glutamine, 1 teaspoon per day in the morning just to feel energized.

D-ribose (1 scoop in morning shake) for energy.

Collagen (every day 3 scoops in my morning shake) for key better baby building blocks. After trying several brands, [Dr. Bernd Friedlander's collagen](#) is the one we settled on. I ate it every day 6 months before I got pregnant, while I was pregnant, while breast feeding, and when I stopped breast feeding. We also gave it to both our kids in their morning shakes and we still do. Not only is collagen a fabulous as a source of amino acids, it's great for your skin, nails and hair. You will notice after about 3 months on it that your skin is more resilient and thicker, as are your nails. As a woman, I think that's a good thing!

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## Thyroid Function Is Central To Fertility

Check your thyroid. Have your holistic or anti-aging doctor do a COMPLETE thyroid work up. Not just TSH, but also T3 (bound and free), T4 (bound and free), as well as the T3/T4 ratio and reverse T3. There is very good research showing that many women don't get pregnant because their thyroid isn't working properly, but often all they notice is that they are "a bit tired." This is such an unspecific symptom/complaint, and so common for so many of us, that it can go unnoticed and unheard for months and years. And greatly mar your pregnancy plans.

Having optimal thyroid function is another key to a successful pregnancy. Yet many OB/GYNs only test TSH. If TSH is normal, they assume all is fine. Not so. You can have normal TSH and very low T3. And that is truly a problem, because TSH doesn't do anything in the body other than tell the thyroid how much T3 to produce. It's T3 that's the REAL thyroid hormone that does all the work. So that's what needs to be tested, and that's what you need to have enough of. I personally had normal TSH levels but almost non-measurable levels of T3 when I was planning to get pregnant with our second child. I should have had all sorts of symptoms, including brittle nails, weight gain, hair falling out ... yet I had none of these. I was just "a bit tired", and I attributed it to working and being a mother of an 18 month old!

## The Better Baby Diet

The best present you can give to yourself before and during your pregnancy (and after too) is the right diet. In a word, the right diet is cutting back on carbs, getting enough protein and eating the right fats. We discuss diet at length in the Better Baby Book. The right diet will help with everything from improving your mood to preventing morning sickness. And it will reduce risks of gestational diabetes to almost nothing.

Carbs that are particularly unhealthy are soft drinks, breads/pastries, pasta, potatoes, white/processed rice and most fruit. Yes, most fruit and berries are so full of sugar that they are not good for us when we eat them on a regular basis, year round. Peaches, bananas, nectarines, raspberries....they are LOADED with sugar. So those should be viewed as an occasional treat. The vitamins and minerals you want from fresh food should come primarily from VEGETABLES.

Healthy fat, is that really possible? We are all so used to thinking of FAT as BAD. It's certainly not bad if it's the right kind. The right fats will help you get pregnant and have a good pregnancy with very little or no morning sickness. A lot of women are deficient in good fats, and because of the shortage of healthy fats, these women don't produce the right amounts of necessary hormones.

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Fats are what hormones are made of, and hormones are critical when planning to get pregnant and during pregnancy. If you eat the right fats and cut out or reduce starchy carbs, you will NOT gain any extra weight. And what weight you gained during the pregnancy, will come off quickly, usually within 6 months after your baby is born, without any need for special weight loss diets. If you are breast feeding, the “baby weight” will usually come off 6 months after you finish breast feeding your baby. We’ve seen it ourselves, and in friends who have followed our diet and supplement advice.

The very best fats are:

Organic, grass fed butter. Has to be grass fed, because the cows need to eat the right thing (grass!) in order to produce healthy fats for milk/butter. The regular Kerrygold that comes in the half pound wrappers is the best brand in most grocery stores, and it’s cheap too. You can buy it at *Safeway*. Kerrygold does have some reduced fat butters now that are sold in tubs—this is the wrong product. Here’s a picture of the one you want:



They have an unsalted variety that comes in a silver wrapper. If you can’t find good grass fed butter, eat organic butter. Do not eat conventional butter, because it will be full of hormones and antibiotic residues that were fed to the conventionally-raised cows.

MCT oil – easy to digest, and full of the right fats. I eat one tablespoon per day in my morning shake, and MCT oil is also great for cooking or for salad dressing. It has no taste at all, so it goes with everything.

Coconut oil – cold pressed, extra virgin, organic only. 1 tablespoon per day and it’s good for cooking.

Olive oil – as a salad dressing only. Don’t cook/fry with it. It oxidizes and then it’s not as healthy

Also please check out our [Foods To Eat And Foods To Avoid](#), which gives our rating of a wide variety of foods. In the *Better Baby Book* there’s going to be tons of information about why we put these foods where we do, but this little section should help you get started with healthy fats and avoiding unhealthy foods.

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## If You Only Do 3 Things ...

Please don't feel overwhelmed, as a soon to be mother, stress is the last thing you need. So if all of this feels like too much, just pick 3 things to do to get started and add others if it feels right and as you're able. At the very top of my list would be:

1. Supplement with folic acid
2. Get your vitamin D levels checked and supplement with vitamin D-3 until you achieve 50-80 ng/ml
3. Eat plenty of Kerrygold butter or an organic butter
4. Work with a holistic physician to check your thyroid and correct any imbalances

## Thank You

Thanks for your interest in the *Better Baby Book*! We'll notify you via email when the book is available. Since you're on our mailing list, you'll get the book at 20% off.

Please feel free to contact my husband Dave and myself here any time, and we'll do our very best to answer your questions.

Kind regards,

Dr. Lana Asprey



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