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**A guide to effective  
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# **A guide to effective care in pregnancy and childbirth**

**Third Edition**

Murray Enkin

Marc J. N. C. Keirse

James Neilson

Caroline Crowther

Lelia Duley

Ellen Hodnett and

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*To the individuals who  
conscientiously and selflessly  
prepare the systematic reviews  
for The Cochrane Library, on  
which the updates in this book  
are mainly based.*

# Preface

Work towards *A guide to effective care in pregnancy and childbirth* started over a quarter-century ago, when Iain Chalmers, later joined by Murray Enkin and Marc Keirse, began to assemble a register of controlled trials in perinatal medicine. Together they established explicit criteria to identify studies that were likely to provide the best evidence for evaluating care, and began a comprehensive and systematic search for those studies. They then, with the help of content experts in each field, brought the results of this research together into two major publications: *Effective care in pregnancy and childbirth*, a 1500 page, two-volume book; and a regularly updated electronic database. The electronic database, which consisted of a register of controlled studies and systematic reviews of their results, was first published as the *Oxford database of perinatal trials*, and continued as *The Cochrane pregnancy and childbirth database*. It was then incorporated in *The Cochrane Library* and is now maintained and kept up to date by the editors of the Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth Group, Jim Neilson, Caroline Crowther, Lelia Duley, Ellen Hodnett, and Justus Hofmeyr, and their editorial team. At the time of writing, there are over 9000 controlled trials on the register, from almost 400 medical journals in 18 different languages, from 85 different countries.

*A guide to effective care in pregnancy and childbirth* was prepared to make the conclusions of these larger publications more readily available, in a more portable format, to all who are involved in the care of childbearing women. The first edition appeared in 1989. It was widely acclaimed as a landmark publication, which made readable, evidence-based information on the effects of pregnancy and childbirth care accessible to all who need and want it. The second edition won first prize in the British Medical Association's 1995 Medical Book Competition in the Primary Health Care category, and was translated into several languages. The success of the first two editions has confirmed the importance of accurate, up to date information to guide

the decisions that must be made by those who plan, provide or receive care during pregnancy and childbirth.

Research has continued to add new information, which is regularly incorporated into the electronic *Cochrane Library*. But the printed word stands still, and must be brought up to date. This third edition of *A guide to effective care in pregnancy and childbirth* has been prepared by the editors of the Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth Group, along with two of the authors of the first edition. It has been extensively revised and rewritten to incorporate new research and new understandings.

Annotation of reference sources is a particular problem for a book of this type. To cite all primary sources would make the book far too long. Most new references are listed in *The Cochrane Library* (Update Software Ltd, Summertown Pavilion, Middle Way, Oxford OX2 7LG, England, or 936 La Rueda Drive, Vista, California 92084, USA. Internet: 'http://www.update-software.com'); older sources will be found in *Effective care in pregnancy and childbirth* (1989, Oxford University Press, Oxford). We have noted for each chapter the relevant reviews from the *Cochrane Library* and chapters from *Effective care in pregnancy and childbirth*, plus a few key additional sources.

We hope that the information in this book will help those who provide or receive care during pregnancy and childbirth to make the right decisions for themselves, in the context of their own circumstances and priorities.

June 2000

Murray Enkin, Marc Keirse, Jim Neilson, Caroline Crowther, Lelia Duley, Ellen Hodnett, Justus Hofmeyr.

### References

Please note, that the reference sources for the information at the end of each chapter, can be found in the following:

Chalmers, I., Enkin, M.W. and Keirse, M.J.N.C. (1989) *Effective care in pregnancy and childbirth*. OUP, Oxford.

*The Cochrane Library*, Issue 4 (1999) Update Software: Oxford.

Pre-Cochrane reviews refer to:

*Cochrane pregnancy and childbirth database* (1995) Update Software: Oxford.

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We owe particular thanks to the authors of each chapter of *Effective Care in pregnancy and childbirth*, and to those who prepared the systematic reviews for *The Cochrane Library*. Most of this book is derived from, and extensively quotes, their contributions. We are well aware and appreciative of the countless hours that they spent in reviewing and analyzing the data on which those contributions were based. The credit for the review and analysis is theirs; the blame for any errors that may have crept into our condensation of their work rests with us.

We are grateful to Iain Chalmers, who first conceived this project, and to Mary Renfrew, who contributed so much to the second edition of this book, and the chapter on breastfeeding for this edition. We would like to thank the many colleagues who read chapter manuscripts and gave valuable comments and suggestions, in particular: Zarko Alfirovic, Eva Rebecca Bild, Beverley Chalmers, Iain Chalmers, Peter Choi, Patricia Crowley, Anita Gagnon, Adrian Grant, Phil Hall, Mary Hannah, Michael Helewa, David Henderson-Smart, Eileen Hutton, Charlotte Howell, Karyn Kaufman, James King, Michael Kramer, Nancy Lowe, Judith Lumley, Laura Magee, Deana Midmer, Patrick Mohide, Renato Natale, Cheryl Nikodem, Sally Pairman, Jeffrey Robinson, Greg Ryan, Carol Sakala, Penny Simkin, Jack Sinclair, Fiona Smaill, Patricia Smith, John Smith, Gordon Stirrat, Joan Tranmer, Chris Wilkinson,

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Murray Enkin, Marc Keirse, Jim Neilson, Caroline Crowther, Lelia Duley, Ellen Hodnett, Justus Hofmeyr.

# Contents

## Basic care

- 1 What do we mean by ‘effective care’? 3
- 2 Evaluating care in pregnancy and childbirth 5
- 3 Support for pregnant women 16
- 4 Antenatal education 24
- 5 Lifestyle in pregnancy 29
- 6 Dietary modification in pregnancy 38

## Screening

- 7 Risk scoring 49
- 8 Imaging ultrasound in pregnancy 53
- 9 Screening for congenital anomalies 60
- 10 Screening for pre-eclampsia 67
- 11 Gestational diabetes 75
- 12 Assessment of fetal growth, size, and well-being 79

## Pregnancy problems

- 13 Unpleasant symptoms in pregnancy 95
- 14 Miscarriage 108
- 15 Hypertension in pregnancy 119
- 16 Fetal compromise 133
- 17 Multiple pregnancy 141
- 18 Rhesus isoimmunization 148
- 19 Infection in pregnancy 154
- 20 Diabetes in pregnancy 169

- 21 Bleeding in the latter half of pregnancy 178
- 22 Suspected fetopelvic disproportion and abnormal lie 185
- 23 Prelabor rupture of the membranes 196
- 24 Preterm labor 211
- 25 Promoting pulmonary maturity 226
- 26 Post-term pregnancy 234
- 27 Fetal death 240

### **Childbirth**

- 28 Social and professional support in childbirth 247
- 29 Hospital practices 255
- 30 Care of the fetus during labor 267
- 31 Monitoring the progress of labor 281
- 32 The second stage of labor 289
- 33 The third stage of labor 300

### **Problems during childbirth**

- 34 Control of pain in labor 313
- 35 Prolonged labor 332
- 36 Repair of perineal trauma 341
- 37 Preterm birth 347
- 38 Labor and birth after previous cesarean section 359

### **Techniques of induction and operative delivery**

- 39 Preparing for induction of labor 375
- 40 Methods of inducing labor 383
- 41 Instrumental vaginal delivery 397
- 42 Cesarean section 404
- 43 Prophylactic antibiotics with cesarean section 409

**Care after childbirth**

- 44 Immediate care of the newborn infant 417
- 45 Mother and baby 429
- 46 Breastfeeding 439
- 47 Perineal pain and discomfort 457
- 48 Breast symptoms in women who are not breastfeeding 467
- 49 Loss and grief in the perinatal period 471

**Synopsis**

- 50 Effective care in pregnancy and childbirth: a synopsis 485
  - Table 1 Beneficial forms of care 487
  - Table 2 Forms of care likely to be beneficial 489
  - Table 3 Forms of care with a trade-off between beneficial and adverse effects 494
  - Table 4 Forms of care of unknown effectiveness 496
  - Table 5 Forms of care unlikely to be beneficial 500
  - Table 6 Forms of care likely to be ineffective or harmful 506

Index 509