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 1220 Hillside Drive, Carlisle, PA 17013
 1-800-MOMWELL (666-9355)

[Http://www.motherwellfitness.com](http://www.motherwellfitness.com)
 E-mail: bonnie@bonnieberk.com
 Fax: (717) 258-1241

Poor Sleep in Late Pregnancy Associated with Tougher Labor

A new study suggests that first-time moms who get little sleep late in pregnancy may have a longer labor and higher risk of having a cesarean section than women who are well-rested.

Researchers found that women who averaged less than six hours of sleep per night during their ninth month of pregnancy were more than four times as likely to have a c-section as women who got more sleep.

Among 131 women, women who slept for less than six hours a night, on average, spent 29 hours in labor, compared with just under 18 hours for those who slept seven or more hours per night.

Further, this study measured quality of sleep and found that women who showed severe sleep disruption, defined as being awake for more than one hour during the night after

initially falling asleep, had a c-section rate of 39 percent, compared to 10 percent for women with little or no sleep disruption.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, relaxation through Yoga practice helps cure insomnia. Advocates claim that by practicing Yoga, you are able to calm the nervous system as well as bring more blood supply to the brain through certain postures or asanas.

Motherwell Yoga offers pregnant women benefits including a reduction in the common discomforts of pregnancy, a decrease in anxiety and better quality of sleep. Perhaps this is why women taking Motherwell Yoga report shorter and easier labors.

References:

1. Lee, KA. & Gay, CL. Poor Sleep in Later Pregnancy Tied to Tougher Labor. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Reported 12/21/2004 on Medline Plus:

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/print/news/fullstory_21981.htm

2. Sherman, D. (2003). Yoga and Sleep. *Sleep and Health Newsletter*.

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Trial labor After Cesarean Associated with Greater Perinatal Risk

Women who have cesarean deliveries sometimes feel less than satisfied with their childbirth experience and hope that they can deliver vaginally next time around.

Unfortunately, studies show that going through a trial labor after cesarean delivery is associated with a

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greater perinatal risk.

A prospective four-year observational study of all women with prior cesarean deliveries at 19 academic centers compared women who underwent a trial of labor to women who had an elective repeated cesarean delivery without labor.

Vaginal delivery was attempted by 17,898 women and 15,801 women underwent elective repeated cesarean delivery without labor. Uterine rupture occurred in 124 women (0.7 percent) who went through a trial labor and of the women who went through a trial labor and had a subsequent cesarean, 12 delivered infants with hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy. There were also two infant deaths associated with uterine rupture.

The rate of endometritis was higher in women undergoing a trial of labor than in women undergoing repeated elective cesarean (2.9 percent vs. 1.8 percent) as was the rate of blood transfusion (1.7 percent vs. 1.0 percent).

Researchers conclude that a trial of labor after prior cesarean delivery is associated with a greater perinatal risk than is elective repeated cesarean delivery without labor, although the absolute risks are low.

Women are encouraged to talk to their health care providers regarding what kind of delivery is best for them and their babies.

Reference

Landon, MB. Et al. (2004). Maternal and Perinatal Outcomes Associated with a Trial of Labor after Prior Cesarean Delivery. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 351;25;2581-2589.

Air Pollution May be Associated with Lower Birth Weight

According to US Government researchers, pregnant women who live in areas with high levels of air pollution may give birth to slightly smaller babies.

In California, a study of more than 18,000 full-term infants suggests that a mother's exposure to fine-particle air pollution seemed to make a difference in babies' birth weight and the risk of an infant being below average size.

Although the absolute difference in birth rate between babies born in high pollution areas vs. low pollution areas is modest, this study is consistent with results from other research.

Reference

Norton, A. Air Pollution Tied to Lower Birth Rate. Reported 1/4/05 on Medline Plus:

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/print/news/fullstory_22179.html.

Cleaning Products May Affect Babies' Breathing

New research reports that pregnant women who use a lot of household chemical products are more likely to have babies with persistent wheezing.

The products included bleach, disinfectant, air fresheners, aerosols, carpet cleaners and pesticides. And according to the study's author, Dr. Andrea Sherriff at the University of Bristol in the UK, children with wheezing are more at risk at eventually developing asthma.

Dr. Sherriff recommends pregnant women "be sensible" with chemicals and follow the product's instructions, especially in regards to ventilation. She also suggests that infants who are in an overly clean environment may not be exposed to the bacteria and germs that help babies build healthy immune systems.

Reference

McCook, A. (2005). Reported 1/11/05 on Medline Plus: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/print/news/fullstory_22324.html.