



BOOK EXCERPT

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A Weekly Guide  
for Reflecting  
on Your Pregnancy  
and Preparing Your  
Heart, Body, and Mind  
for Motherhood

the  
**Healthy  
Pregnancy**  
Journal




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## INTRODUCTION

# Your Journey into Motherhood

 Our pregnancies were some of the most special times in our lives, and though the days seemed long, the months flew by. By the time your baby arrives, we imagine you'll agree with us.

So many emotional and physical changes happen—seemingly all at once. We remember feeling both empowered and vulnerable, beautiful and dumpy, and like superheroes and scaredy-cats. But looking back now, it is sometimes difficult to recall specific memories from our own pregnancy journeys (Martha: 7 and Hayden: 3).

We developed *The Healthy Pregnancy Journal* as a guide to help you reflect on this most special time, to work through the beautiful chaos of pregnancy by journaling, to keep you on track to having a healthy pregnancy, and to create a keepsake that you can return to in years to come. Throughout the journal, we call on our experience as health, childbirth, breastfeeding, and parenting educators to help you bond with your baby before birth and offer important advice to keep you and your baby thriving during pregnancy. It is the perfect companion to *The Healthy Pregnancy Book: Everything You Need to Know from America's Baby Experts*, part of the Sears Parenting Library.

Our hope is that this journal will help you connect with yourself and your baby on a deeper level—one of our favorite parts of the journal is where you write a monthly love letter to your growing child. You may want to share this with your child one day! But in our minds, a journal equally embraces the happy, cute moments, like bump pics, baby showers, and first kicks, and the parts of pregnancy that aren't as shareable—the fears, the worries, and the meltdowns. That is why we also provide insightful and often intimate prompts to encourage you to write down your innermost thoughts, whether those thoughts are fit for public consumption or not. We want to create a space for all your feelings and experiences as you prepare to be a mom, whether it's for the first or the fourth time.

The sweet spot of pregnancy gives way, oh so quickly, to the whole new world of motherhood. *The Healthy Pregnancy Journal* opens up the space for you to reflect on your mental, emotional, and physical evolution over the course of pregnancy and to embrace each phase for what it adds to your life. We look forward to guiding you on this momentous and spectacular journey.

**With love,  
Martha and Hayden**

## MONTH 1

# Take a Deep Breath

## Weeks 1 Through 4

**C**ongratulations on your pregnancy! If you weren't before, now you are a mother. Be prepared to be amazed at what your body will accomplish over the next 40 weeks.

Staying in the moment, especially with all the excitement and, let's face it, anxiety that comes with a new pregnancy can be difficult. But whether this is your first baby or your fourth, it is important to bear witness to all the changes going on in your body and around you as you nurture this new life.

The conventional way to start counting your pregnancy is from the first day of your last menstrual period—about two weeks before sperm meets egg. Most women aren't aware that they are pregnant until at least week 4 and often later. If that's your case, come back to this month and record in retrospect what you were thinking and feeling at the start of this amazing life journey you may not have even known you were on!

### What Baby Wants You to Know



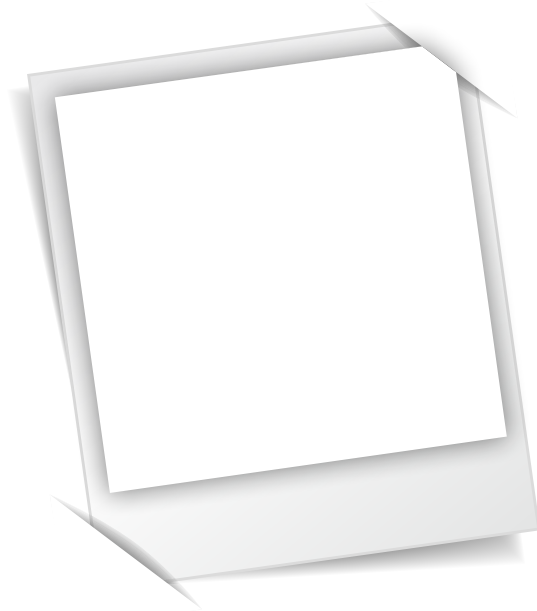
**Happy, healthy moms are the most likely to have happy, healthy babies!**

**Now is the time to begin creating habits around the goals you set for yourself in the last section.**

**Staying calm and managing your stress helps to create a soothing and healthy environment for me to grow.**

**Listen to your body. For example, if you begin to have intense food cravings, find the healthiest version of that food and eat up!**

## Pre-Pregnancy Pic!



Date \_\_\_\_\_

Who took this picture? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I love about it? \_\_\_\_\_

Where was I? \_\_\_\_\_

How old was I then? \_\_\_\_\_

What was on my mind? \_\_\_\_\_

How was I feeling? \_\_\_\_\_

What do I want to remember about this day and this time in my life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Health Check-In

Am I getting enough sleep (at least seven hours)?

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Am I staying hydrated (drinking eight or more glasses of water daily)?

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Am I managing my stress?

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How?

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Am I exercising regularly and safely?

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How am I doing on my healthy pregnancy goals?

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## Martha's Pregnancy Salad

This superfood salad is the perfect pregnancy meal. Customize it with your own favorites.



### Salad

- 1 4-ounce grilled or canned salmon filet
- 4 ounces kidney beans
- 3 cups spinach
- ¼ cup chopped tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon raw sunflower or sesame seeds
- 1 egg, hard-boiled and sliced

### Dressing

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- juice of half a lemon or lime
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- black pepper and salt, to taste

### Directions

Mix the dressing ingredients together then combine salad ingredients, lightly toss with the dressing, and top with salmon.

### Notes

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# WEEK 1 Who Am I?

*No baby on board, yet. If your tummy is feeling a bit larger than usual, chalk it up to menstrual bloat.*

How would I describe myself as a woman?  
What are my talents and skills?

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Week 1 begins on the first day of your last period, before you actually get pregnant. Fertilization and implantation don't happen until weeks 2 and 3.

What do I like most about my pre-baby body?

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What does a typical day in my life look like?

What are my favorite activities?

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What was my pre-baby life plan?

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What do I like most about my pre-baby life?

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**Pro-Pregnancy Tip**

Set yourself up for a restful night by starting your bedtime routine a half hour (or more) earlier and incorporating some relaxing rituals, like a warm shower and soft music.



So much love  
is coming  
your way!

## WEEK 2 My Community

*Common ovulation signs include thin, clear, stringy cervical mucus, pelvic ache, breast tenderness, and increased sex drive. Which did you experience (if any)?*

### Before I Was Pregnant . . .

What was going on in my family and relationships?

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Toward the end of week 2, your body is likely getting ready to ovulate.

What was going on in the world?

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Which of my closest friends and family already have kids?

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How do I feel about other people's kids?

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Who are the babies in my life that I feel most connected to?

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What do I like most about babies?

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**Pro-Pregnancy Tip**

Pregnancy can be isolating. Joining a pregnancy group with women due around the same time as you is a great way to find community and expand your village. You can often find out about pregnancy groups to join through your hospital or birthing center, your health-care provider, or local baby stores. Examples include prenatal yoga, water aerobics, and meet-up groups.



**Martha Sears, RN, and Hayden Sears, MA,** are part of the Sears parenting legacy, responsible for over 25 bestselling parenting books. For more, visit [askdrsears.com](http://askdrsears.com).

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