

PART 2

DR. HEATHER HUNT, D.C. (*The Brain of the Office*)

I was born in the birthplace of Chiropractic: Davenport, Iowa, where my father, Dale Jacobson, was finishing his Doctorate of Chiropractic. When I was four months old, we moved to Belgium so he could study with Dr. Gillet, the chiropractor famous for taking chiropractic from the static “bone out of place” paradigm to the more dynamic system of functional evaluation via joint motion analysis. By the time I turned two years old, our family moved back to my dad’s hometown area of Nevada City/Grass Valley and my parents opened Jacobson Chiropractic in 1979. From my earliest days, I have watched my dad treat patients, teach seminars throughout the country, and heal people. The power, simplicity, and sensitivity of “to practice with hands” (the meaning of chiropractic) have drawn my deepest interest for as long as I can remember.

I grew up in Nevada County as the eldest of four beloved children. My parents helped found what is now the Yuba River Charter School and I was Waldorf educated from kindergarten through the 8th grade. I then went to Nevada Union High School. Every summer, since I was twelve years old, I have taught swim lessons and worked with kids. From this early age, I knew that I wanted to empower children, women and families. I pursued this goal at



Mills College, graduating in 2002 with a Bachelor’s degree in Women’s Studies and Ethnic Studies. I travelled to England and India for my thesis work, which examined a woman’s place in distinct power structures: in family, in community, and in global society. I saw first-hand how empowerment of women is often a potent seed that sows positive change in the family and greater community. In addition, since I was 18 years old, I have travelled internationally quite extensively—experiences that have broadened my understandings of health and family. I started at age fifteen by spending a summer as an exchange student in Switzerland, and then after high school I traversed Europe for 6 months. In later years I studied with Tibetan Buddhists, trained as a yoga teacher in India, did five silent, 10-day meditation retreats, studied Spanish in Mexico, trekked all over Nepal, sailed for two weeks in Greece/Turkey for my honeymoon, and sailed in the British Virgin Islands.

In the spring of 2003 I met Luke Hunt, who is now my incredible husband. A scientist and avid outdoorsman from the Big Trees/Hwy 4 area of California, he was working on his PhD in biology at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station and living on a sailboat in the Monterey Harbor. What can I say? When you know it is right, you know. We were married in the fall of 2004 and I moved aboard his cozy 31-foot sailboat and called it home for two-and-a-half years before moving to Portland for my chiropractic education.

I graduated from the University of Western States Chiropractic College in Portland, Oregon in December, 2008. While there, I also pursued advanced training in Craniosacral Therapy with the Upledger Institute and with Carol Gray. Portland is unique in that health practitioners from across the spectrum often cross-pollinate – midwives practice with medical doctors, and chiropractors and naturopaths write NIH (National Institute of Health) grants together. This cooperation affirmed my core belief that an interdisciplinary approach to healthcare is truly the gold standard. While in Portland, I also studied with three well-known chiropractors that specialized in pediatrics and women's health. Then, while pregnant with our first son Jacob, I experienced just how fear-based U.S. healthcare practices can be, regarding pregnancy, birth, post-partum and infant care. These experiences cemented my commitment to build a practice focused on an empowering and wholesome health care alternative for families. Fortunately, I have been invited back to my chiropractic college multiple times to lecture there on what I have learned through my own practice and further trainings and I have been able to teach students there about pelvic instabilities, pregnancy-care, a focus on women's health and other topics that I did not feel are adequately taught in school.

Two weeks after my graduation, Jacob was born alert, peaceful, and happy at home in Portland. (I was fortunate enough to also be born at home, as were my three younger siblings). As I watched Jake thrive in his first months, I realized that one of the greatest gifts you can give your child is the gift of health. In addition to raising healthy children, I strive to be healthy myself. So in our family we breastfeed, we eat organically, we rest, we play, we laugh, we are treated with regular Chiropractic and craniosacral therapy, and we go outside to play a LOT! Luke, Jake and I moved to Nevada County in the beginning of 2009 so that I could enter practice with my father at Jacobson Chiropractic (a lifelong dream!). A year later we bought my grandfather's property in Nevada City, the homestead where my dad was raised. In July 2011, we had another delightful son, Giles Ray and in March 2014 we welcomed Ian Glacier. As the mother of three young sons (!!!) life is always full and adventurous and I constantly work for balance in my own life and that of our family.

Within a few years of practice, I realized that I could help my patients tremendously with chiropractic and craniosacral therapy, but that what I offered was still incomplete. I was missing something. I needed to find a way to treat more internal and systemic problems. Functional Medicine, nutritional counseling and group purification/detox cleanses were the solutions I began to implement. Functional Medicine is focused on analyzing the whole body and its systems to decipher and treat the root cause of disease. Blood work, hormone, adrenal, gut tests, extensive intake paperwork and personal history are my tools to peer deeper into people's health. When these results are received, we narrow conventional blood reference ranges and look for patterns as people often feel unwell way before they go

out of lab range normals on a blood panel. I consider this true preventative medicine. After catching many previously undiagnosed issues with thyroid, anemias, adrenals, parasites, chronic infections, autoimmune diseases and more, I am absolutely convinced of the importance of objectively measuring our health through lab testing and treating it accordingly. It is so rewarding to catch people who are slipping through the cracks and to help them get better.

Let's face it. It is difficult to change our habits and create the lifestyle shifts that best facilitate our optimum health and well-being. We all know we could do better on a few fronts when it comes to diet, exercise, emotional and mental stability and spiritual practices. In order to truly support people in making lifestyle changes (instead of just telling them what to do!) I created a 21-Day Purification Cleanse in January 2013 with my nutritionist Jessica Flanigan (www.aiplifestyle.com). For this process we created a 35-page written manual, daily emails, weekly informational meetings, extensive recipes and a collection of whole food nutritional supplements to push elimination pathways and detoxify the body. Hundreds of people have gone through this month-long process and it has been life-transformative for many.

I am excited to offer such safe and effective methods of healing, doing work that aligns with and builds on my ever-growing experiences and training. I am humbled to work alongside so many skilled practitioners locally and nationally, especially my father who I enjoy seeing, collaborating and cross-referring to daily. I am thrilled to be a part of building communities around healthy images of women, birth, family, and care for our children. Of catching people who are slipping through the cracks in our health care system and truly teaching what a healthy diet and lifestyle would look like. What could be better? I look forward to working with you!

Yours in health,

Dr. Heather Hunt D.C.

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Chiropractic: I love Chiropractic to assess joints that are not moving properly and restore mobility through precise and gentle manual adjustments. My Chiropractic work includes: spinal and extremity adjustments, muscle therapy/massage, myofascial release, trigger point therapy, physical rehabilitation, and stretching exercises for patients. These are powerful techniques for sciatica, whiplash, TMJ, neck and back pain, accidents, slip-and-falls, shoulder/arm/wrist pains, knee/ankle pain, balance problems, dizziness, headaches, and the list goes on!

Pregnancy and Post-partum Care/Infant Care: I have pursued specialized study in Chiropractic and craniosacral for pregnancy, birth and post-partum. I am Webster Technique certified and with three children of my own, am very comfortable and familiar with pregnancy and birth! With pregnant moms, I mix gentle chiropractic, massage and craniosacral work with home exercises. With infants I use craniosacral work almost exclusively. The birthing process is traumatic for a baby's little body and I believe that all newborns can greatly benefit from treatment as early in life is the time we have the potential to eliminate restrictions that may possibly negatively influence the rest of their lives. I find treatment especially important for babies who cannot latch well

to nurse/take a bottle, have colic, gastro-intestinal problems, head flattening, or always lay their heads to one side.

Women's Health: I put special emphasis on analyzing the full picture of your health as a woman, realizing that neck or back pain is often the symptom of deeper and more chronic patterns. For example, pelvic imbalances, past traumas, gut health, emotional stress, anxiety, hormonal changes and daily routines can greatly influence wellness. Chiropractic, craniosacral, muscle therapy, stretching exercises, nutritional advice, and functional medicine are usually what I find most helpful in my care of women.

Pediatric: Being a kid can be rough on the body. Growing is hard work and joint injuries are frequent. Often, kids have health issues that we would not know about without taking them to a Chiropractor: issues that may negatively affect their later life. Falls and bonks, growth spurts, repetitive stress injuries (soccer, dance, etc.), chronic ear infections, learning difficulties, sleep difficulties, stress, ADHD, headaches, pain following orthodontic/dental work, digestive problems, and sensory integration disorders can all affect the long-term health of children—and all can be treated with Chiropractic and craniosacral therapy.

Craniosacral Therapy, Myofascial Release & Visceral Manipulation: These are very light-touch techniques based in the cranial sacral system (head, spine, sacrum, and tissues surrounding these structures). I began my craniosacral education with the Upledger Institute in 2008 after receiving profound healing as a child and then again during Chiropractic college. Since then, I have had many other teachers, including the wonderful Carol Gray in Portland. I love cranial work in that it is a patient-lead process and I simply use a gentle touch to follow the patient's tissues and help facilitate release. Because of this, it is a very safe technique, even for babies hours old and people very sick. Myofascial release uses the fascia (connective tissue) as a guide to release muscles, joints, organ tension, etc. Finally, Visceral Manipulation focuses on freeing the organs and digestive tract to function optimally through specific hands-on work on the abdomen.

Functional Medicine: I am pleased to offer my newest clinical addition: Functional Medicine. Over the last 3 years I have been quietly and diligently working with some of the best and brightest teachers and practitioners in Functional Medicine so that I can offer the community that so many of you have asked for: a system of medicine that takes into account the whole body and its function in order to uncover the root cause of what is ailing you. Through Functional Medicine we can get answers about thyroid, adrenal and hormonal health, digestive wellness, parasites, hidden autoimmune diseases and infections, blood sugar stability, heart health, B-vitamin methylation, anemias, and more. We can find answers to health questions such as, “why am I so tired?” “Why can't I concentrate well?” “Why do I wake up every night at 3am?” “Why can't I lose this weight?” “Why am I so bloated?” “Why do I have such a foggy brain?” and “Why don't I feel good?” Together we will piece together your specific health puzzle and create a wellness protocol to move you into vibrant health.

Functional medicine shifts the focus to that of function and integration of people's physiology in order to uncover the root cause of what is robbing their health. In functional medicine we use comprehensive intake paperwork, extensive personal history, blood-work, hormone (saliva), digestive (stool) and other tests to gather

objective evidence. Then we narrow conventional laboratory reference ranges and look for patterns, as many people will feel unwell before they test out of lab range normal, which means disease has already manifested. I then create a unique personal plan for every patient depending on our findings. This includes a wellness protocol of diet and lifestyle changes and quality nutritional supplements that I have hand-picked specifically for my patient. Because often there is loss of proper function (fatigue, depression, sleep problems, weight gain, etc) before there is disease, I consider this method of analysis true “preventative medicine.” I am excited to offer my patients more security in their present and long term health.

21-Day Purification Cleanse: In 2013, I began offering 14 and 21-day group detox purification cleanses to better support my patients and the community in achieving and maintaining optimum health. Everyone asks how to eat, what to eat, when to eat and instead of giving instructions and sending people out alone, I wanted to create a space where they were supported in month long journey with weekly meetings, daily emails, a personal intake and lots of recipes. It has proven to be a VERY popular program and it has been life-transformative for many people. You can do the cleanse on your own or with a group. We offer group cleanses beginning each January, May, and September. See our website for more information.

Chiropractic Care During Pregnancy

What is the Webster Technique?

By Dr. Heather Hunt, D.C.

Pregnancy can be challenging physically for many women, even very healthy women with no previous history of bodily aches and pains. I had my first baby in 2009, so I have recently been through it myself. The good news is that as a woman, your body was made for being pregnant and giving birth. In fact, pregnancy does not even have to hurt!

What seems to be a root cause of problems for women in both pregnancy and birth is pelvic imbalance. This can be caused by many things, even a twisted ankle, as demonstrated in Figure 1 at the right. It's all connected! Restrictions in joint mobility, muscle contractions/spasms, ligament tightening, joint injuries, leg length inequalities and more can throw your pelvis "out of wack." During pregnancy, it is more crucial to get treated as these dysfunctions can actually create excessive tension on the uterus, which could be uncomfortable for the mom and increase stress on the baby. An unbalanced pelvis can also narrow the pelvic bowl opening, which you want as open as possible for birth!

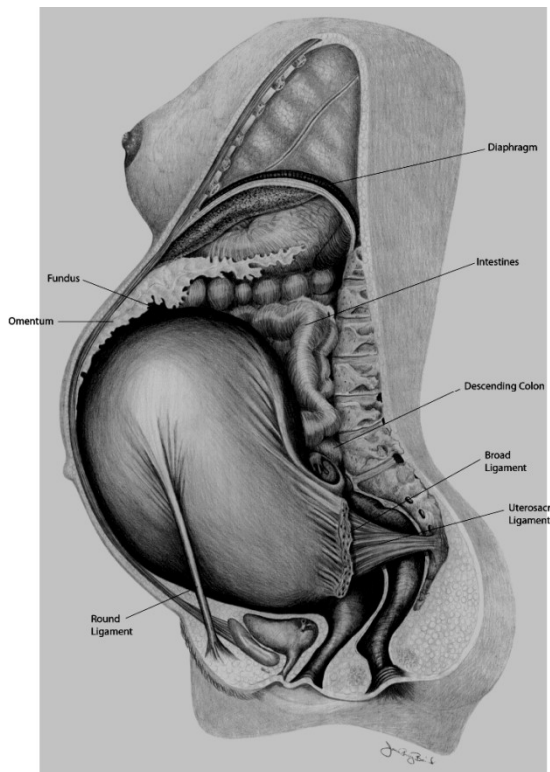


Figure 2

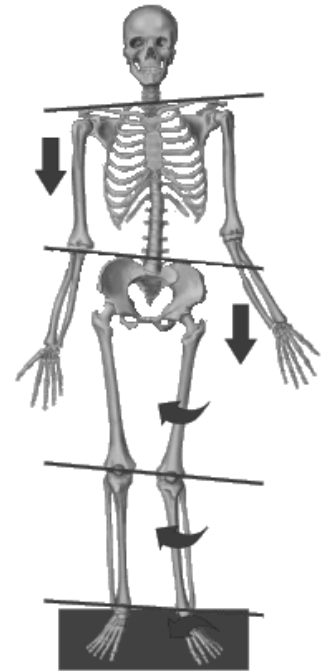


Figure 1

In this diagram of a 40-week pregnant woman, you can see the round ligament (which connects the uterus to the pubic bone) and the tremendous tension exerted on it. You can also see the stress on the lumbar spine (low back) and you can imagine the pressure on the pelvic joint structure.

Chiropractic care is an excellent choice when you are pregnant. Chiropractic supports your body's natural ability to be healthy. With its focus on the musculoskeletal system, it aims to restore mobility and balance through precise work with the joints (where bone meets bone), ligaments (which connect bone to bone), muscles (movers of bone), fascia (connective tissues) and the nervous system. This balance helps to optimize your body's many functions. Chiropractic care is safe and effective during pregnancy. (For more information and references, please see the ICPA website

www.icpa4kids.com).

"The Webster Technique is a specific chiropractic analysis and adjustment protocol that reduces interference to the nerve system & helps to balance maternal

pelvic muscles and ligaments. This in turn reduces torsion in the uterus, a cause of intra-uterine constraint of the baby and allows for optimal fetal positioning in preparation for birth.” (ICPA)

Dr. Larry Webster, DC, founder of the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association (ICPA) developed this protocol as a safe means of treating pregnant mothers. In women presenting breech, transverse, or posterior, there has been a high reported success rate (in clinical reports) of the baby turning to the normal vertex position. It has been successfully used with twins. However, this technique should not ever be interpreted as an obstetric, “breech turning” technique. It is a good option for anyone wanting a more balanced, pain-free pregnancy.

Dr. Heather Hunt DC is a chiropractor certified in the Webster Technique. She uses chiropractic, massage and craniosacral therapy to treat her patients. She recommends that if you are pregnant, you see a chiropractor at least as often as you see your doctor/midwife during the course of your pregnancy! She looks forward to supporting your journey and reminding you along the way that your body was made for this!

CHIROPRACTIC & CRANIOSACRAL CARE OF THE NEWBORN BABY

Birth is frequently a traumatic process for both mother and baby. This diagram demonstrates why birth can necessitate the care of a specialist. As a natural part of birth, a baby hyper-extends (bends backwards) its neck just as it exits the birth canal. This cervical (neck) hyperextension mimics what occurs in a whiplash injury. It has the potential to jam the upper cervical spine, which can put direct pressure on the brain,



exiting cranial nerves and spinal cord. This compression can lead to all sorts of symptoms including but not limited to: fussiness, colic, reflux, restlessness, constipation, gas, diarrhea, inability to turn neck in one direction, nursing side preference, indigestion, nursing latch problems, sleep problems, excessive spitting up, head asymmetries and more.

Because a baby's skull and bones are still soft (immature), chiropractic adjustments are not usually necessary for a newborn. Dr. Heather uses only very

gentle mobilizations, muscle work, and especially craniosacral work on babies.

Craniosacral Therapy is a light-touch therapy that comes out of the osteopathic medical tradition. It helps to alleviate restrictions in the cranium, spine, and fascial connective tissues. It also aims to relax the nervous system and bring about a feeling of calm. It is a patient-led therapy and therefore very safe for newborn babies. Dr. Heather recommends that all babies be examined (even with a completely natural/normal birth) due to this hyperextension of the neck. It is best to check babies within the first 3 months of life. More serious indications of needed care are cesarean birth, failure to thrive, Strep B positive mom/birth, premature birth, long labor, very short labor, babies that get stuck in the birth canal or use of forceps/vacuum extraction.

Dr. Heather offers a free craniosacral visit to all pregnant moms and all babies up to one year of age. For more information, visit: www.heatherhuntdc.com

Dr. Heather's Advice for Pregnancy & Postpartum

WHAT DO I WANT PREGNANT WOMEN & NEW MOMS TO KNOW?

EDUCATION

- **CHOICE** you have a choice. You can choose what feels best for you and your new family. Make choices out of a place of wholeness and empowerment, not out of place of fear. Practice using that motherly intuition, even if your baby is still on the inside!
- **READING** do not read the typical pregnancy/birth books. They are fear-based and filled with misinformation. Refer to my recommended pregnancy books list and lending library in my office.
- **READ** *The BabySense Secret* by Meg Faure. It is the best book I have found on parenting your baby from a sensory perspective. If you buy one book, buy this. I do not endorse her feeding advice though, but the rest is great.

SUPPORT

- **SOMETHING** along the way will surprise you in how hard it is. It may pregnancy, birth or postpartum. Talk to other women and ask for help from everyone around you.
- **REST** more than you think you need to throughout pregnancy: especially the few weeks before and at least 6 weeks afterwards. But expect to be very tired and recovering for up to one-year post-partum.
- **ENCOURAGE** dad/partner to take as much time off as possible to be with the new baby and support the new mommy. I really think this first year is a crucial time for development of the deeper patterns, feelings of wholeness and social development. It is said that the more dependent you let a baby be, the more independent and self-confident they will be later in life.
- **USE** your local resources! We have great alternative health care providers, lactation consultants, mom's groups, post-natal yoga classes, etc. Find like-minded women and families. Create a mom's group or join an existing group.

HEALTH

- **TREAT YOURSELF** to chiropractic, craniosacral, massage, acupuncture, and other bodywork during and after pregnancy! Chiropractic can keep the pelvis open and balanced throughout pregnancy. It can also be very useful postpartum as your pelvis is repositioning after birth and as the relaxin leaves your system. Postpartum is a good time to change chronic pain patterns due to structural patterns and misalignments.
- **PLAN AHEAD** make a post-partum plan where you freeze meals or get meals delivered for at least 2 weeks. Postpartum is harder than you think and it tends to be overlooked with the focus emphasizing the birth only.

- **NUTRITION** eat an insane amount of saturated fat during pregnancy and postpartum: Butter, eggs, animal fats (leave the skin on chicken and eat it, or else put some butter on top of it), raw whole milk/yogurt products, kefir and coconut oil. Your hormones are made of these fats and cholesterol, and you pregnant women know this is a hormonal time! You need to constantly replenish the building blocks so that you do not become depleted (which leads to tiredness, general dis-ease, adrenal exhaustion, mood swings, etc). Olive oil doesn't count. In fact, it should only be used as a dressing as it gets unstable when cooked at higher temperatures.
- Eat an insane amount of fermented food during pregnancy and afterwards. You need two cups a day (sauerkraut, yogurt, kefir, miso) or else take a probiotic supplement to make your own gut healthy to pass onto your baby. Your baby is born with a sterile intestinal tract and its first inoculation with bacteria is the journey through the birth canal. If you have a tendency towards yeast infections (candida, etc), use a probiotics as a vaginal suppository daily during pregnancy or at least for the last few weeks before delivery. Also, probiotics are extremely important in treating constipation. We carry medical grade probiotics and also Dr. Dale has a informative and entertaining articles on gut health in his book, Guide to Healthy Living available online and at our office.
- **WEIGHT** don't even think of regaining your figure until 9 months to a year postpartum! Your body will hold onto all its resources to replenish your own system and feed your baby. It is the wisdom of your body.
- **PRENATALS** keep taking your pre-natal vitamins after the birth, or better yet ask me for my recommendation on a woman's multi-vitamin. You need this extra nutrition more than you might realize and I have some great suggestions.
- **ADRENALS:** Ask me about adrenal support. Your adrenals are the endocrine glands that secrete your stress hormones. Pregnancy and postpartum are times of huge life changes and thus stressful events. Many women get adrenal fatigued and feel mentally foggy, forgetful, have increased anxiety or mood disorders, have sweet cravings and generally just lack the kind of energy they are used to. Likely you need adrenal support. I have 4 different adrenal protocols I follow with different nutritional supplements. They are safe for breast-feeding and cost-effective. They will nourish your adrenals so that you can get back on your feet again.
- **POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION and BABY BLUES** While many women experience some mild mood changes during or after the birth of a child ("Baby blues"), up to 1 in 8 women experience more significant symptoms of depression or anxiety. Please know that with informed care you can prevent a worsening of these symptoms and can fully recover. www.postpartum.net is a great support network and they have a free hotline.

BABY

***CRANIOSACRAL.** Even the most successful birth is traumatic for both mom and baby. Due to this, I offer a free baby craniosacral visit for all babies up to one year of

age. I like to treat them within the first 3 months of age. Colic is not normal. This can usually be helped through cranial work. More on my website www.heatherhuntDC.com.

*BREASTFEED your baby if at all possible. It will be one of the greatest gifts you can ever give them, the gift of health. Your baby is born without an immune system and will depend on your immune system that is transmitted through breast milk especially for the first year. Your milk also has the perfect composition for both neurological and gastrointestinal growth and development.

*VACCINATIONS: Do not vaccinate your baby at birth. I am not against vaccination, but I am VERY AGAINST vaccinating your baby the day it is born with the Hepatitis B vaccine. This disease is passed the way AIDS is (through blood and bodily secretions). Good chance your baby will not be sexually active with infected partners the first multiple years of life! If you choose to vaccinate, wait until you get to know your baby first so you can tell if there are any adverse effects of the vaccinations. Only get one shot at a time. This way your baby can actually mount an appropriate immune response against one vaccine and not be bombarded with many.

*USE CLOTH DIAPERS. They are so easy now with the new designs. They cost a quarter of the price of paper diapers. You can use them on multiple children. They are better for your baby and the earth. Enough said.

*IF FORMULA-FED: If your baby or other babies you know are formula-fed, I recommend giving this baby probiotics the whole time the baby is on formula. We carry International Nutrition's Baby Biotics and it is a great product. Always use organic formula, no soy, and if you are ambitious make your own! Recipe at www.westonaprice.org. Also, Green Pastures makes a Cod Liver Oil massage rub. It sounds gross, but it is a safe (and relatively non-smelly) way to get these good nutrients into the baby's skin while bypassing the immature digestive tract. Cod Liver oil is high in Vitamin D and A and has those good Omega 3 oils.

RECOMMENDED READING

(There are so many and more on my website, but these are my favs):

- Dr. Dale Jacobson's *Guide to Healthy Living*. Also on the web at www.jacobsonchiropractic.net
- *The BabySense Secret* by Megan Faure 2010. And anything else by Megan including *Sleep Sense and Toddler Sense*. Everyone should read *Baby Sense*; it is invaluable for caring for your baby.
- Ina May's *Guide to Childbirth* (2003) and Ina May's *Guide to Breastfeeding* (2009) by Ina May Gaskin—and anything else she writes!
- *The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two* (Revised and Updated Edition) by William Sears, Martha Sears, Robert Sears, and James Sears (2003) and any other book written by the Sears family, including *The Vaccine Book*.
- *You are Your Child's First Teacher: Encouraging Your Child's Natural Development from Birth to Age Six* by Rahima Baldwin
- *Heaven On Earth: A Handbook for Parents of Young Children* by Sharifa Oppenheimer

- *Taking Charge of Your Fertility: The Definitive Guide to Natural Birth Control, Pregnancy Achievement, and Reproductive Health* (Revised Edition) by Toni Weschler (2001)
- *Nourishing Traditions Cookbook*, Sally Fallon

WEBSITES:

www.jacobsonchiropractic.net and www.heatherhuntcd.com for current info and blog updates
www.askdrsears.com
www.drgreene.com
www.nourishingourchildren.org
www.healthfullivingsf.com
www.westonaprice.org
<http://www.westonaprice.org/images/pdfs/healthy4life2011.pdf>

COST ANALYSIS OF DIAPERS

For my cost analysis I used Kirkland signature disposable diapers from Costco. These are a moderate priced disposable. I allowed for 10 diapers per day for three months in the smallest size (up to 15lbs), 8 diapers per day in the medium size (16-28lbs) for 9 months, and 6 diapers per day in the large size for an additional year and a half (22-37lbs). This gets our fictitious baby to an ambitious potty-trained age of 2.5 years. The grand total for two and a half years with disposables is \$1,465.64.

Simple Cloth Diapering System using premium pre-fold diapers and quality wraps:

For this analysis I used Thirsties diaper covers and allowed for full price (no quantity discounts or package pricing). I also used premium (4x8x4) unbleached prefolds, 30 in the infant size (7 – 15lbs) and 24 in the standard size (15-30lbs). The grand total for this adventure was \$376.50.

All in One Deluxe Diapering System. My favorite diapering system is the Fuzzibunz One Size pocket diaper. These are \$18.95 each and are one size. I recommend at least 14 of these diapers if they are the only system you use. (I assume we will be changing our little sweetheart at least 8 times per day and I only want to do laundry every other day). Allowing for no quantity discounts, these big-ticket dipes have a grand total of \$265.00

CONCLUSION:

I have read many reports of cost differentials but I have never taken the time to do my own analysis. I am now certain that the prices are current (Kirkland diaper prices off of Costco.com on September 12, 2008) and I know that I have allowed for the same amount of diapering in the same age ranges. Even allowing for fluctuations (cloth diaper accessories, potty training at a later date, human error, etc), cloth diapers are significantly more cost effective. I can't speak much to the water bill situation but in my own experience, my water bill was not remarkably different than pre-baby. Even if my laundry bill had gone up \$300/year (which it didn't), I still would have been better off financially choosing cloth.

NOT TO MENTION:

The benefit to the environment and you baby's health when you use cloth. Imagine even a week's worth of dirty disposable diapers piled in your backyard. It has been estimated that your cute baby could generate two tons of "disposable" waste in a two and a half year period. It is not ordinary waste though, it is raw sewage. Viruses found in fecal matter could pose a threat to wildlife and the raw sewage could pose a threat to water and earth. This is one simple way you could make a profound difference in helping to create a better and healthier environment.

Speaking of health. Did you know that disposable diapers are full of potentially harmful chemicals? Harmful ingredients: dye, fragrance, plastic, toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene, dipentene. Disposable diapers consist of a plastic exterior, an inner super-absorbent layer treated with chemicals, and a liner. One commonly used absorbent chemical, sodium polyacrylate, can trigger allergic reactions. Disposable diapers may also contain dyes and dioxin, a carcinogenic by-product of the chlorine bleaching process is implicated in Toxic Shock Syndrome and already outlawed in tampons.

A study conducted by Anderson Laboratories in 1999 and published in the Archives of Environmental Health found that disposable diapers release volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), including toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene and dipentene. All of these VOCs have been shown to have toxic health effects, such as cancer and brain damage, with long-term or high level exposure.

The researchers also discovered that mice exposed to the chemicals released by disposable diapers were more likely to experience irritated airways than mice exposed to emissions from cloth diapers. These effects were increased during repeat exposures. The authors suggested that disposable diapers may cause "asthma-like" reactions and urged more study into a possible link between diaper emissions and asthma.