

# Key Notes



Anna Vakil PhD CCH  
Yuma Homeopathy  
*Board-certified in homeopathy*  
*certified metabolic balance® coach*  
Serving southwest Arizona  
[www.yumahomeopathy.com](http://www.yumahomeopathy.com)  
Follow me on Facebook!  
Phone/fax: (928) 247-6385  
anna@yumahomeopathy.com

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A “keynote” in homeopathy is a unique symptom that can point to a certain homeopathic remedy. For example, someone who has a condition with symptoms that are worse with first movement and better with very hot applications might need *Rhus-toxicodendron*, a remedy made from the poison-ivy plant.

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### ***Family health tip***

#### **Parental health and *pre*-conception**

Emerging evidence shows that preconception health of the mother- and father-to-be — especially their diet and weight — affects fertilization, embryo development, and even their child's risk of future cardiometabolic disease.

A series of three articles, published online April 16 in the *Lancet*, shine a light on this critical period.

"Most people are aware of prenatal and antenatal care, and their importance," lead author of one of the articles, Judith Stephenson, MBBS, from University College London, UK, told *Medscape Medical News*, "but we're saying you need to shift the focus further back in time."

"There's now a lot of compelling evidence, both from animal and human studies, that the nutritional status and health of the mother and father before conception has an important influence on the way the embryo develops, and that will then affect the infant and child health," she noted.

Changes in embryo development can affect the child's lifetime risk of cardiometabolic disease (hypertension, obesity, and type 2 diabetes), allergies, cancer, and neurologic impairment.

"Alongside continued efforts to reduce smoking, alcohol consumption, and obesity in the population, we call for heightened awareness of preconception health, particularly regarding diet and nutrition," Stephenson and her fellow researchers urge.

Health care practitioners may see women of childbearing age when they are "getting a pregnancy test or fertility test kit, if they've had a miscarriage (and are maybe thinking about trying to conceive again), or [they are] going to a family planning clinic and wanting their contraceptive device taken out because they want to conceive," Stephenson explained.

#### **Obesity, Poor Nutrition Are "Rife" in Women of Reproductive Age**

In the [first article](#), Stephenson and colleagues report that poor nutrition and obesity "are rife" among women of reproductive age, "and differences between high-income and low-income countries have become less distinct, with typical diets falling far short of nutritional recommendations in both settings and especially among adolescents," they note.

For example, their analysis of 509 nonpregnant women of reproductive age who took part in the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey showed that 77% of women aged 18 to 25 had a dietary intake of iodine below the recommended level. And 96% of woman aged 18 to 42 had iron and folate levels below recommended levels for pregnancy.

Moreover, 49% of the women were overweight or obese.

Preconception is typically defined as 3 months before conception, because fertile couples who plan to have a child will generally conceive within that time.

However, the researchers suggest that the preconception period should be extended. Although "optimizing nutrition, including folic acid supplementation, should coincide with the decision to become pregnant," which can be within 3 months of a pregnancy, other changes can take much longer to accomplish.

For example, reaching a healthy weight should ideally be achieved "during the sensitive period of adolescence when most women will not be planning a pregnancy," they advise.

This is especially important because 40% of pregnancies globally are unplanned, so efforts to improve nutrition and health behavior as a whole at a population level are needed.

#### Embryonic Development a Critical Time

In the [second article](#), Tom P Fleming, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Developmental Biology at the University of Southampton, UK, and colleagues propose that "there is sufficient evidence from human and animal research showing that the periconceptual period is a key window during which poor maternal and paternal physiology, body composition, metabolism, and diet can induce increased risk of chronic disease in offspring."

Stephenson explained: "Maternal obesity can cause lipids to accumulate in the developing egg and within the early embryo causing stress and damage to their metabolism, altering growth rates, and changing the pattern of gene expression."

And "there's good evidence...for example, [that] male obesity can reduce sperm fertility and motility and increase sperm abnormalities leading to poor quality embryos," she added.

#### Strategies to Improve Preconception Health

In the [third article](#), Mary Barker, PhD, Associate Professor in Psychology, also at the University of Southampton, and colleagues stress that new individual and population-level strategies are required to improve preconception health.

On an individual level, increased awareness about preconception health is needed among women and couples planning to become pregnant.

"Trying for a baby is often quite a private matter," Stephenson noted, "and you don't necessarily go around telling families, friends, or doctors that this is what you're doing." Couples may prefer to wait until 12 weeks of pregnancy to tell others, when miscarriage is less likely.

However, "during that time it would really help your baby and the pregnancy to take folic acid, eat a healthy diet (more fruits and vegetables, and less junk food), quit or reduce smoking (if you can't quit altogether), and the same for alcohol and recreational drugs; all these things are important to do before conception."

If you don't know that, then for some issues, "you've missed the boat; [because] when you're 12 weeks pregnant, you're not going to get the [full] benefit of folic acid supplementation," for example.

"Probably only a third of women [in the UK] who are actually planning to get pregnant will take folic acid before they become pregnant, because they don't really know about it," she continued.

The message to women is that "even if you're young, fit, and healthy, not overweight, have a good diet, and exercise, you still should take folic acid tablets before [becoming pregnant]."

On a population level, some countries require fortification of foods.

In the United States, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, and South Africa, after folic acid fortification of certain foods became mandatory, there was a reduction in the prevalence of neural tube defects.

However, folic acid fortification of certain foods is not mandatory in Europe or the UK.

And the World Health Organization recommends fortifying salt with iodine.

Barker and colleagues observe that trials of interventions to improve nutritional status before conception and birth outcomes are scarce, "but new trials are underway," they conclude.

[Adapted from: Busko, M, Apr 16, 2018: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/895243> ]



### ***Homeopathy case***

#### **Homeopathy for labor and delivery**

##### *Rhoda: failure to dilate*

Rhoda, 27, began to feel contractions and went to the hospital. As she was being examined and prepared for the birth, her contractions stopped abruptly. She called her homeopath.

"I feel an inner dryness," she said. "My eyes and throat are dry. The labor cramps continued for two to three hours without dilation and suddenly stopped. I feel like crying and running away from here. I don't feel safe here. It scares me. This place and its instruments scare me, as well as the cold attitude of the physicians."

The homeopath recommended a homeopathic remedy that Rhoda happened to have with her. She took a dose and returned home. Within a short time she experienced regular contractions. There was a gradual dilation, and she returned to the hospital. The birth was easy—an 8.8 lb. boy, without an episiotomy.

##### *Tracy: fear of labor*

Twenty-nine-year-old Tracy, pregnant with her fourth child, wanted a different kind of birth than she had experienced before. In the past, she had been given epidural anesthesia, and her labors were induced with drugs. She had been disappointed with her birthing experiences.

Throughout her prenatal visits, Tracy expressed her desire to take some control over this birth and to avoid any intervention unless necessary.

Tracy's pregnancy was uneventful, but as the time drew near she felt more and more trepidation about the birth. By 40 weeks, she and the baby were healthy, but Tracy showed signs of general exhaustion and nervousness. She was very tired and slow moving. She'd had sporadic contractions on numerous occasions over the last week, but her cervix was still barely open. When I asked how she felt about the approaching task, she admitted that she wasn't sure she could do the job. She said she felt too tired and weak to accomplish what she had set out to do.

Tracy's body was showing signs of readiness to give birth, but her fear was getting in the way. Because of her feeling of not being up to the task, I gave her one dose of a homeopathic remedy that is known as a prime remedy for anxiety in anticipation of an upcoming event, especially when the person is weak and shaky. Tracy had a good dinner and then a nap, and she awakened

feeling more rested and relaxed than she had in weeks. She read her children a bedtime story, and at 10:30 p.m. her water broke and she started having contractions. By 11:30 the contractions were regular and powerful. Tracy arrived at the hospital at midnight and gave birth to a healthy baby ten minutes later.

At the 3-day post-partum checkup, Tracy couldn't say enough about her exhilarating and wonderful birth experience.

*[Adapted from Dr Diderik Finne, 2011:*

<http://www.diderikfinne.com/homeopathy%20for%20childbirth.pdf/> ]



***Did you know?***

### **Homeopathy and the “plausibility” argument**

A quick Google search of “homeopathy” will lead you to at least one webpage that will attempt to convince you homeopathy is not worthwhile because it is “implausible”. This argument is problematic for at least two reasons. First, there is an obvious error of logic in the assumption that because we cannot explain something, it therefore cannot exist. Such an error has been made many times in our collective past: the earth revolving around the sun, the force of gravity, a growing universe and many other phenomena now commonly accepted as facts were all at one time deemed “implausible”.

A second problem with the plausibility argument is it is assumed that because there is no bulk substance contained in homeopathic remedies, they therefore cannot possibly have biological action. However, there is growing evidence that homeopathic remedies do not in fact contain “nothing”.

Click here to watch Dr. Alex Tournier of the Homeopathy Research Institute briefly discuss some of these issues:



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homeopathy  
Help your body heal itself!