

Science AMA Series: I'm Amy Tuteur, an obstetrician-gynecologist, blogger (The Skeptical OB) and author. I write about the intersection of parenting and pseudoscience. AMA!

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Hi! I came across you and your work a long time ago (4 years, hah) when looking up birthing options. A lot of the ideas of "natural parenting" appealed to me, but I was uncomfortable with the cult-like, closed-door mentality that often insisted on ignoring the incredible risks.

In looking at "natural childbirth", I (and I saw this repeated by many other women) was looking for solutions (or alternatives) to the condescending and dismissive treatment received by my OB. There is a real feeling of losing your body to the control of others when pregnant. I repeatedly felt like my concerns weren't being heard at all - the OB who delivered my child I would've rated a 2/10 for her "bedside manner". And to clarify, I didn't request special treatment or make any "unusual" demands, nor did I pop in with a 10 page--or any--"birth plan". Literally just went with the flow, but any request to clarify her suggestions/information throughout the process was met with impatience and annoyance.

So, my question: Do you think there's any space for improvement in the medical profession's current approaches to treatment for pregnant women? I see the arguments that this is a ridiculous first-world problem, but at the same time I've seen the push for this in other areas of medical practice. What do you think?

Thanks for the AMA!

[SaraBellumsTits](#)

I think there's TREMENDOUS room for improvement in contemporary medical care. My perspective comes in part from the fact that my own father died in the wake of malpractice at the hospital where I was working (and they tried to hide it from me).

However, I think the greatest room for improvement is in the care of the poor, people who don't speak English, and people who are too old and too sick to advocate for themselves. That's the most pressing problem, in my view, although there's room for improvement everywhere.

I don't have a question, so much as an observation.

I have had two babies, both born in via c-section. One was born in Germany, the other in the USA. In Germany, it is illegal to facilitate a home birth. I was disappointed that I couldn't do that. My birth was attended by a midwife until I started having complications, which led to the c-section. My German, French, Dutch, and Spanish friends were all very glad the I was fine, and that the baby was very healthy and beautiful.

Many of my American friends treated the event more like a funeral than a celebration. I was told by one of them that she was very saddened that I had to have interventions and ended up with a c-section. She encouraged me to try for a natural birth next time around, which I did in an effort to redeem the first one, only to end up with another emergency c-section. I felt sad, embarrassed, and ashamed.

I shared these feelings with my European friends, and they couldn't understand why I could feel this way. They were very supportive and very helpful. They gave me very good parenting advice. They assured me that I would be a good mother even if I didn't follow the more "American" parenting methods. They also couldn't understand how I could possibly go back to work if I had all the demands of "American/attachment" parenting on me. They encouraged me to put my needs first, so that I have be my best, healthiest, rested self to my children. That isn't possible at all with attachment parenting.

The American friends were full of doom if I didn't go along with attachment parenting, and make myself a slave to my child. Also, my husband had a crazy work schedule, and would have to take business trips for weeks at a time, so I would be exhausted if I had tried to do attachment parenting. That didn't matter. If I didn't subscribe to that method, my daughter would probably be a crack whore when she grew up.

Anyway, I am astounded by the gaping differences in the two cultures. Most notably the stone throwing that happens with Americans.

[Sshortcake69](#)

Your observation touches on an important point. Natural parenting has nothing to do with parenting in nature; it's a contemporary American view of parenting dressed up as "natural." In addition, it has much more to do with mothers and how they want to see themselves as superior to other mothers than with what is good for children.

What, in your opinion, is the most common fallacy being pushed by natural parenting proponents today? What one is the most damaging?

[Juviltoidfu](#)

The biggest problem, in my view, is that natural parenting treats children as products, not people. The idea is that with the correct inputs (unmedicated vaginal birth, breastfeeding, etc.) you can reliably create a child whose achievements you can brag about.

The truth, uncomfortable as it is, is that children are people not products and there is no recipe to create the perfect child. All you can do is try to understand the individual child and try to meet that child's needs.

Hi Amy! This is a topic that interests me so I glad for the ama and will definitely check out the book!

Two questions: The pseudoscience parenting is generally associated with middle-upper class suburban women. You mention that this movement as undertones of keeping women at home and guiltling them to care for their kids, but is it possible that it just happened to stem from a demographic that was doing so already? The competitive nature of modern parenting isn't exclusive to the

pseudoscience crowd, it's been a part of the American psyche since the 50's. What are your thoughts on the movement as a classist divide, since families that can't afford a single income source are made to feel the most guilt?

Secondly, why do you think parents have such a mistrust of the medical industry in America? From a Canadian perspective we tend to hear mostly negative things, so I'm curious to what extent could have caused this much mistrust to grow. (We absolutely have pseudoscience/antivax parenting ideologies up here as well, but movement started in the states)

Thanks!

[Batsignal on mars](#)

Betty Friedan wrote memorably about the feminine mystique. It seems to me that natural parenting has created the "vaginal mystique" always leading to more work for mothers and always requiring books, products and services to achieve excellence.

It seems to me that unmedicated vaginal birth is to women in the 2010's what a clean, shiny floor was to women in the 1950's.

As to your second question, Americans have a long tradition of anti-elitism and a love of conspiracy theories. This has combined to produce the incredibly profitable business model of medical quackery.

My baby is 5 weeks old & I'm demand feeding simply because it stops the crying (and I'm completely infatuated and can't stop staring at her beautiful face). Am I doing the wrong thing? We do not co-sleep and she's already sleeping 6 - 8 hours at night, I feed and then she sleeps for another 2 - 3. During the day she cluster feeds and if I ask around my peers cluster feeding is expected but my mother can't believe I'm parenting like this. I just don't want to be doing the wrong thing. Luckily for me I live in Australia so have 6 months of paid maternity leave to have the time to find a routine before I have to work again but I just really want to know that I'm not creating a rod for my own back

[inarticulative](#)

Feeding on demand is important whether you are breastfeeding or bottle feeding so you aren't doing anything wrong. As far as I'm concerned, if your baby is cluster feeding during the day and sleeping 6-8 hours a night you have achieved infant perfection!!

Afaik breastfeeding has a lot of positive benefits (for child's Immunsystem and psychologically)...Do you disagree with that?

[kaesko](#)

Breastfeeding is good! I breastfed 4 children. However, the benefits of breastfeeding have been exaggerated. The truth is that in countries with clean water supplies, the only benefits confirmed by solid scientific evidence are 8% fewer colds and 8% fewer episodes of diarrheal illness across the entire population of infants in their first year.

What about all the other benefits you've heard about? They're based on evidence that is weak, conflicting, and, most importantly, riddled by confounders. We know that breastfeeding is more prevalent among women of higher income and greater education. Therefore, most of the purported benefits are really due to being of higher socio-economic status.

I'm a parent and a surgeon. My wife is a PhD scientist. We have tried repeatedly to find parenting books that are strongly evidence-based, with little success (only one that I would call a keeper). I suspect that many parents would like child-rearing advice which is based on more than celebrity advice or the latest fads, but this sort of thing is lacking at the bookstore. Are there any books or authors that you would recommend to the Reddit community that present best-practice advice on common parenting issues in a thoroughly evidence-based manner?

EDIT: Since many are asking, [Parenting with Reason](#) is the one I would describe as a keeper. It's not super in-depth with regard to the science (ie, no scientifically-minded person will mistake it for a research textbook), but it's the only book we've found that demonstrates the authors read the current literature and discusses the evidence as part of its recommendations.

[Porencephaly](#)

You can tell I'm really old by the fact that I still love Dr. Spock. I love that he says, "Trust yourself; you know more than you think you know." I still have the copy that I bought nearly 30 years ago. If you dropped it on the floor it would open automatically to the page, "Why is my baby crying."

What would you say is your favourite bit of terrible advise?

[Vussar](#)

Worst advice ever: Make your partner promise to keep you from getting an epidural in labor.

I've seen husbands attempting to bar the doorway to the anesthesiologist and the wife shouting, "Kill him, kill him, get him out of the way and give me the epidural!"

It's a bad idea to make decisions about pain relief before you actually feel the pain.

Just to clarify that I'm understanding correctly: you're not saying there is a problem with things like babywearing, cosleeping, breastfeeding, etc... right? Just that there is no proof that it has benefits, correct? Or is there proof of some of these things being harmful?

[st_claire](#)

There's no proof of benefits. The harm only comes when women are pressured into doing these things because they are falsely portrayed as better.

Thanks for doing this AMA! My partner is a labor and delivery nurse for a hospital in a relatively affluent area, and she tells me stories about parents who are obsessed with some of these concepts (i.e., natural childbirth at all costs, insistence on skin-to-skin contact immediately after birth even when there are more pressing health concerns, etc). My partner believes that these beliefs are often perpetuated by Midwives and Doulas. In your experience, have you or other OBs had to counter some of the advice that Midwives/Doulas provide? Is there common ground?

[StudentII](#)

I always worked with certified nurse midwives (CNMs) and found them to be excellent, but lately midwifery has been radicalized along with doula care and childbirth education. If you listen carefully, you hear the same thing over and over again: Anything doctors can do is bad or unnecessary and anything that midwives and doulas can do is awesome and safe. Hence you have midwives and doulas demonizing epidurals, the safest, most effective form of relief for labor pain, and promoting waterbirth

for pain relief which is entirely UNnatural (no primates give birth in water) and poses deadly risks to babies.

Childbirth is inherently dangerous. It is a leading cause of death of young women in every time, place and culture and THE leading cause of death in the 18 years of childhood. Childbirth now seems safe BECAUSE OF routine use of childbirth interventions; the natural childbirth industry has used that illusion of safety to pretend that childbirth is inherently safe and what matters is not the outcome but the process. Birth has become a piece of performance art.

Unfortunately, some midwives have become the equivalent of wedding planners, selling women on a specific experience in which they are the stars. That would be fine except that childbirth is just as deadly as it ever was and concentrating on the experience can lead to a deadly outcome.

As a parent of a young child and someone with a knowledge of psychology, I was really struck by how attachment parenting seems to lead to the exact opposite of secure attachment. From my anecdotal experience, it seems like the all three popular myths you listed, and attachment parenting in particular, are propelled by the incredibly damaging sense that women should have everything they need to make their baby happy all the time. It seems that the most anxious mothers are those who don't allow their children to deal with distress in small, controlled doses and thus constantly confirm their need to be overbearing with their children because of their inability to deal with distress.

Firstly, do you agree that these myths are attractive to women for that reason? If so, how do we fight against the guilt associated with not being able to fix all of your child's problems instantly? Finally, for the anxious parent how do you short circuit that cycle of deskilling their child leading to greater anxiety?

[ImNotJesus](#)

The irony of attachment parenting is that is completely opposite to everything we know about infant attachment. As Bowlby and others showed, attachment requires only the "good enough" mother. Attachment theorists never studied infant feeding, baby wearing or the family bed because they found that it wasn't specific parenting behaviors that led to attachment, but rather the child's sense that his or her needs were being met.

One of the greatest changes of the 20th Century was the emancipation of women (some women in some cultures). Nothing so dramatic happens without backlash and I suspect that natural parenting is part of that backlash; it's an effort to force women back into the home by labeling them bad mothers if their children are not literally attached to them.

Wow, what a breath of fresh air. The attachment parenting superiority complex is pretty thick on the ground these days and it's a source of serious guilt and stress for a lot of mothers. I think it's been a big contributor to my wife's post-partum depression (now regular depression 3 years out). Have you investigated possible links between attachment parenting and mental health effects?

[FUZZY_BUNNY](#)

The research is still preliminary, but it seems to indicate that attachment parenting (also known revealingly as "intensive mothering") is a risk factor for postpartum misery and possibly depression itself.

From the paper *Insight into the Parenthood Paradox: Mental Health Outcomes of Intensive Mothering* by Rizzo et al:

"... [T]he negative maternal mental health outcomes associated with parenting may be accounted for by women's endorsement of intensive parenting attitudes. So, if intensive mothering is related to so many negative mental health outcomes, why do women do it? They may think that it makes them better mothers, so they are willing to sacrifice their own mental health to enhance their children's cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. However, research is needed on child outcomes because, currently, there is not any data to support this assumption. In fact, young children of over-involved or over-protective parents often experience internalizing disorders. In addition, research clearly indicates that the children of women with poor mental health (e.g., depression) are at higher risk for negative outcomes. Given that this study found that aspects of intensive parenting are associated with negative maternal mental health, then intensive parenting may have the opposite effect on children from what parents intend."

Hi Amy, thanks for your work and for doing the AMA. I have 2 questions:

- 1) How do you think about balancing risk during pregnancy? I'm thinking about behaviors that are considered taboo like having an alcoholic drink, eating cheese/shellfish etc. It seems like we ask expecting mothers to abstain from a host of things in an impossible quest to drive risk to zero.
- 2) When dealing with pseudoscience, how do you deal with the legitimate bits of the arguments while addressing the fallacious reasoning? For example, you mention breast feeding - I know there are some components of human best milk that can't currently be replicated in formula. These things may have benefits to the developing infant, but those potential benefits get blown out of all proportion to the evidence.

I guess these are both addressing a similar parts of human psychology: moralizing around pregnancy and inability to accurately perceive risk. I'm just curious how you talk about them without alienating people that might be receptive.

[KeScoBo](#)

The issue of risk in pregnancy is fascinating. We live in what others have described as a "risk society." Until relatively recently, "risk" meant "something that might happen," like the risk of an earthquake. Today risk often means "something that must be reduced to zero." But as we know from the practice of medicine, sometimes you can do more harm by trying to reduce a very small risk to an even smaller risk.

As to your second question, I think it is critically important to deal with all aspects of a topic honestly. If I want people to trust me on details that they are not familiar with, I better be sure they trust me on the details they know about.

The dominant parenting ideology in the US today is natural parenting, which encompasses natural childbirth, breastfeeding and attachment parenting. Curiously although all three are often touted as being based on science, there is very little scientific evidence to support their claims."

Don't get me wrong, I am all for critical thinking and independent research. I also agree with your sentiment that certain ideologies are driven by industry more so than science.

However, this all said:

1. What parenting ideologies do you believe in?
2. Have they been scientifically proven?
3. And, can they be universally applied to all cultures, races and circumstances?

Thanks for your time and thoughts.

Edit: Spelling and formatting. On a mobile.

[Jake The Muss Heke](#)

This is my parenting ideology:

Love your child and make sure your child knows he or she is loved!

I've observed it in all cultures, races and circumstances.

I was surprised to read your opinion on natural childbirth. I read a few articles on your website, others where you were mentioned and quoted in major articles...do you seriously advocate for more C-sections?

Anecdotes aren't research, but the women I've known who had Cs are far more likely to tell other women to avoid them than "oh no, it was great," mostly due to post-surgical complications (and one still has incontinence issues 11 years later).

[IDDQD-IDKFA](#)

As Atul Gawande has written, nothing has saved lives on the scale of C-sections!

When I practiced, I had a C-section rate of 16%, so the current C-section rate seems high to me, too. However, there are three factors to keep in mind:

1. There is NO optimal C-section rate. The latest and best studies show that a minimum C-section rate of 19% is needed for low perinatal and maternal mortality.
2. Obstetrics is preventive medicine. When a Pap smear shows no evidence of cancer we don't think it was an unnecessary Pap smear, right? So when a C-section delivers a healthy baby, it may have been just as necessary as that normal Pap smear?
3. Natural childbirth is a business. The people who demonize C-sections either can't profit from them (midwives, doulas, childbirth educators) or want to save money by reducing them (hospital administrators, insurance companies). Neither group is responsible for safe outcomes' obstetricians are.

You seem to advocate *against* natural childbirth, breastfeeding and attachment parenting. But what do you advocate *for*? Are there birth or parenting practices you think are especially beneficial? (I'm 33 weeks pregnant with my first, so this question is near to my heart!)

[ljuvlig](#)

How could I be against something that I did?

I have four children, adults now. I had 4 vaginal births, 2 with epidurals and 2 without; I breastfed all 4 children; and although the terminology didn't exist when my children were small, I was basically an attachment parent, carrying them around all the time, letting them sleep in our bed, etc.

The best way to summarize my view is that while those things were good for my family and for me, it doesn't make me a better mother than anyone else.

As a parent of adults I want to tell new mothers, "Save your strength!" These issues are trivial parts of

mothering; the hard part is still ahead.

Amy, I suppose what my wife and I have chosen to do so far with our currently 8 month old son would be labeled "attachment parenting." (He sleeps in bed with us for part of the night, my wife is home from work all the time with him, we have not done "cry it out" types of training, breastfeeding, natural childbirth.) However, I don't think we decided to do this because of any societal pressure. To us these just feel like the right things to do. Look at any other mammals for instance and you wouldn't see the mother sleeping in a different room from her young.

I guess my question is about your thoughts on this type of parenting as simply the way that humans have evolved to be. Doesn't it seem like everything from formula, to induced labor, to sleeping separately are products of the 1950's lifestyle that seemed at the time to be the wave of the future (meet the Jetsons!) and now seems more like a human bastardization of our evolved animal nature?

[Trickykids](#)

We often have a "Paleo-fantasy" of idyllic life in nature and we often forget that evolution did not stop 10,000 years ago and continues to this very day. As Hobbes said in a different context, life in nature is solitary, poor, nasty, brutal and short. We evolved to reproduce ourselves, nothing more and nothing less. We evolved through survival of the fittest, not survival of everyone. That means that NATURALLY lots of babies and mothers died when living naturally.

Think about vision. About 30% of people are naturally nearsighted, which must have been a serious handicap. Now we have glasses and contacts. Is that unnatural? Sure, but it's also better!

So you should raise your child the way that seems best to you. Nature is far from perfect.

First of all *thank you so damn much*. I am pregnant with my first and the climate of everything you described in your OP makes me really frustrated and overwhelmed sometimes. Your book is on my "to read" list.

1. **Prenatal vitamins: yea or nay?** I've seen so much debunking of non-prenatal supplements in the last few years, but prenats seem to be a golden cow that no one wants to touch.
2. Based on what you know about other countries' healthcare systems, **what could the US stand to learn about perinatal care?**

[Pelirrojita](#)

Prenatal vitamins don't hurt but with the exception of folate, they probably don't provide much benefit, either.

Actually, I don't think that other countries do a better job of perinatal care than the US. I judge perinatal care based on outcome, not process. According to the WHO, the best measure of obstetric care is perinatal mortality in the US has one of the lowest perinatal mortality rates in the world.

You may have heard natural childbirth advocates carping about the US infant mortality rates, but that is a measure of pediatric care (and other factors) not OB care.

Why do some countries do even better than the US. The reason is that women of African descent (of all economic groups) have greater prematurity and perinatal mortality than other ethnic groups. Among developed countries. The countries that do better than us on perinatal mortality (and infant mortality) are whiter than us. The US has the greatest proportion of women of African descent of any industrialized country.

The one thing that I wish we would copy from other countries is the provision of postpartum support. We provide nothing and countries like the Netherlands and the U.K. offer visits and household help.

Hi Amy, thank you for doing this! I follow the SciBabe on Facebook and she occasionally shares some of your great posts!

I work in a boarding school with high schoolers. Occasionally, I see and hear the students repeating some semi-pseudoscientific thoughts that they pick up from their parents. One girl convinced some of the others to ask for gluten free pasta in the dining hall since it "reduced puffiness under their eyes." Another girl wanted to "detox" and drank those high sugar fruit juices. Worse, a girl who was vaccinated got a bad cold and we weren't allowed to give her medicine. Her mother only let her get the "natural" medicines at Whole Foods. A few days later when the cold got worse, the girl literally begged us to take her to a pediatrician, so we emailed the mom, and she insisted the girl was just overreacting and instead told her to "heal" but eating cinnamon, cloves, and other spices.

My question is what do you think the long term affects of this natural trend will be? Is this going to be a problem in the next generation? How are these naturally raised kids going to act as adults? Do you think this is just a trend or do you think this will continue on?

Edit: Now that I'm thinking about it, I believe a lot of these kids are also getting information from what they read online. Just because an article is meant for a 20-40 year old mother doesn't mean a teenager can't find it. As an additional question, do you think there is a danger in kids and teenagers finding these pseudoscientific articles online and following what is being said?

[livermornyAlumna](#)

Most of these kids will eventually change their minds, but it is very, very difficult to challenge what children learn from their parents.

Hi Amy, thanks for doing the AMA. When it comes to health related misinformation, I see that we are bombarded by different media sources all the time. Even for the highly educated people, this may not always be easy to navigate. How do you think we can improve communication between the scientists and the lay people? Especially in situations related to the well-being of children.

[cirruspray](#)

There are lots of ways we could improve communication; unfortunately, I suspect that this is not about communication but rather about how individuals want to see themselves.

There are lots of problems with medicine; my father died in the wake of an incident of malpractice at the very hospital where I was on staff so I'm well aware of the deficiencies of contemporary medical practice. However, the love of quackery is really the love of finding the easy way out ("you don't need chemo, just herbs"), the need for easy answers ("we don't know why your child has autism" vs. "blame vaccines!") and the love of feeling superior to other people ("unlike all the sheeple I know that doctors could cure cancer if they simply recommended healthy eating"). Those things are much harder to address than science communication.

In that sense, vaccines are a paradigmatic example. You'd have to be living under a rock not to know that vaccines work; that's why doctors, immunologists and Pharma execs give them to their kids. Everyone knows it, but not everyone wants to believe it.

I'm curious about attachment parenting and children who have been diagnosed with ASD (formally the

child I'm thinking of would have been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome, I'll be frank I'm not fond of the reclassification). The child I'm thinking of is in a single parent family and I'm not asking about the mother I'm wondering if the practice is more beneficial for children who have diagnosed anxiety and social difficulties. The reason I ask is because I'm not particularly fond of the parenting style but I can see how it can be useful for children with difficulties. What are your thoughts?

[ComingUpMilhouse](#)

There is no scientific evidence of any kind for attachment parenting. In fact, it's the opposite of what we know about infant attachment. Infant attachment is spontaneous, and inevitably occurs to anyone who meets the infants needs. Attachment parenting portrays attachment as difficult, contingent and dependent on specific maternal behaviors. Nothing could be farther from what the actual evidence shows.

This is fascinating! Thank you so much for doing this AMA.

Do you think that the pressure to breastfeed and attachment parent contributes to postpartum depression? I am a mom who was unable to breastfeed, has to work full time because I'm single, and doesn't agree with all aspects of attachment parenting. I've felt a great deal of societal pressure and guilt because of these things - I have even been criticized by strangers in the store when purchasing formula. I'm curious to know if this trend is hurting mom's.

[VladTheSoviet](#)

There isn't strong scientific evidence yet, but it seems reasonable to assume that constant hectoring, humiliation and sleep deprivation contribute to postpartum depression. There's no question that the pressure to breastfeed contributes to postpartum misery!

There's another aspect that ought to get more attention, in my view. Most of natural parenting seeks to make "normative" the behavior of Western, white, relatively well off women. Everyone else --- poor women, women of color, women with different ethnic traditions --- is automatically a "bad" mother when don't copy white, middle class women. There's something very wrong with a philosophy that equates privilege with "good mother."

If I am reading your website correctly, you are very anti-homebirth/pro-hospital birth. I know that home births are slightly less safe than hospital births, but are there any circumstances where you would be supportive of a mother opting for home birth?

[adarunti](#)

American homebirth is deadly. It's not comparable to homebirth in the Netherlands, the U.K., Canada, Australia or any other first world country for a very simple reason. The US has a second, inferior class of midwife that does not exist anywhere else. The vast majority of American homebirths are attended by homebirth midwives not nurse midwives (CNMs). Homebirth midwives are also known as certified professional midwives (CPMs), direct entry midwives (DEMs) or lay midwives. They are basically lay people who have made up and awarded themselves credentials that serve to fool the public.

To understand just how poorly educated and trained American homebirth midwives are, consider this: the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA), the organization that represents homebirth midwives strengthened its requirements in 2012 to mandate ... a high school diploma!

No formal education is necessary and training is by apprenticeship. Homebirth midwives like to say that more education and training is not necessary because they are "experts in normal birth." That's

like being a meteorologist who's an expert in sunny weather. You don't need an expert in normal; if the birth is normal you don't need an attendant at all. You only need help if there is a complication, precisely what homebirth midwives AREN'T trained to manage.

Parents are drawn to these ideas because these non-scientists are able to say "Do XYZ because it is best." What's the best way to draw new parents back to the basic idea of simply caring for your baby in a way that is the least stressful for the whole family? How can scientists/doctors make firm, clear statements supporting that idea that are similarly appealing?

[mimafo](#)

I often point out that doctors love their children just as much as other parents. If they are vaccinating (for example) it's because they believe that vaccines are safe and effective. How could some random stranger on the internet know more about vaccines than doctors and immunologists?

This question might be really basic for someone with your level of expertise. I've always wondered if there was a correlation vs. causation problem with the formula/breastfeeding studies. The articles I've read focus on metrics that would seem to be influenced by factors other than food, although they correlate with the food choices. Do you feel studies showing the benefits of breastfeeding (and there seem to be many) account for those externalities?

In other words, certain groups of children who are already more at-risk of health problems are also more likely to be formula-fed for reasons correlated with those health problems. So, the formula is responsive to (rather than causative of) the issue. Do you feel studies on formula/breastfeeding adequately control for those effects?

Just an examples. My daughter was 4.5 weeks premature. She needed enriched formula instead of breastmilk because she was underweight and needed more calories. She is probably more at-risk of later health problems, but it's not due to the fact that she's formula-fed, it's due to her being 4.5 weeks premature.

Or a mother who smokes might be more likely to formula-feed due to concerns about the quality of her breastmilk. That kid is probably more at-risk than normal to develop health problems later (asthma, allergies, etc.), but that is due to second-hand smoke—not the formula.

Or even something as simple as the desire to breastfeed could be statistically reflective of a child-centered parenting approach that results in health benefits independent of the food itself.

This is a really long-winded way of saying this: How certain are we that the benefits we believe come from breastfeeding are actually directly attributable to breastfeeding?

[SithKyoRen](#)

You are absolutely right! Breastfeeding is highly correlated with socio-economic status and educational attainment. Most of the purported benefits of breastfeeding are actually benefits of being wealthy with good health insurance.

Hi Amy,

I'm sincerely grateful for your research and candid way of speaking. As a new mother of four months, it has been a daily battle to feel adequate and confident that I'm raising my child the best way I can. But I am inundated by all sorts of ridiculous anti-vax, all natural, breast milk is pure gold, homeopathic

remedies, etc...I made myself completely miserable trying to follow all the "rules" to take care of my son. (For example, baby had trouble latching so I put myself on a rigid pump schedule. How to avoid nipple confusion. Keep baby on his back always. Don't co sleep or he'll die of sids. Etc etc.) What advice would you give to a new mom to avoid getting caught up in this new generation of information-- thanks to the Internet--that is likely causing more anxiety than good? It's almost as if I'm ignoring my own "instincts" because Google or other granola moms say I need to do one thing or another. Thanks for your time!

[onceiwasasnowman](#)

My advice is to find a pediatrician that you like and listen to her. Other mothers can be extremely helpful with specific advice for specific situations, but all too often they are more worried about feeling superior to you and having you validate their own choices by mirroring theirs back to them. You should definitely trust yourself. No one knows your child like you do; no one loves your child like you do. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise!

Dare I ask... autism. What do you think really causes it, and how do you deal with anti-vaxxers?

[sonofabutch](#)

Autism highlights one of the key differences between medicine and quackery.

Medicine will say "I don't know" when faced with something it doesn't know. Quackery always has an answer, generally the wrong answer.

Autism is almost certainly genetic in origin.

My view of anti-vax is that it has nothing to do with children or with health. It's all about parents and how they want to see themselves as smarter and superior to other parents. That's why you can't stop anti-vaccine sentiment with education; it has nothing to do with facts. It's all about ego.

Hi Dr. Tuteur,

I'm a mod over at [/r/obgyn](#), my wife is an ob and I am a stay at home dad, so we definitely live in a non traditional household. It's my understanding that 1 in 10 pregnancies need some sort of medical intervention to save the life of the baby or mother. In your practice, how do you convince women who want an at home birth experience with a doula that there is a significant chance that one or both of them may die? Thanks for your input.

[Mr_mom_13](#)

There's all sorts of facts that I can tell people, and I do share them, but what I find is often more effective is to point out that what obstetricians offer to patients is exactly what they choose for themselves. Natural childbirth advocates try to convince women that obstetrics is some sort of patriarchal conspiracy to ruin women's birth experiences and get to the golf course. I point out that today most obstetricians are women, most are salaried and don't get paid more for C-sections, and most would never choose natural childbirth for themselves (and they don't play golf). That often gets people thinking.

It seems from your website that your definition of "natural childbirth" is a home water-birth. This seems like a narrow definition, seeing as childbirth has a varying range of circumstances surrounding it. Can you please comment on childbirth in hospitals?

My main concerns are women giving birth with their feet in stirrups as opposed to squatting, which removes the assistance of gravity and makes childbirth arduous and longer than necessary, as well as the worryingly high rate of c-sections present in our society today. As far as I know, passing through the vaginal canal is extremely beneficial to the infant, seeing as the burst of adrenaline they get through the navigational process clears the pre-natal mucus from their lungs, as opposed to a c-section in which this does not occur and can be linked to breathing problems. Also, c-sections ravage the mother's body and leave her incapable of even lifting her own baby for months, not to mention giving her an enormous wound straight through her abdominal muscles. I know that occasionally these are necessary to save the mother and infant, but it seems to me that that is the *only* case in which it should be used.

Sure, childbirth is naturally a dangerous process, but that doesn't mean childbirth should be designed in a way that's easiest for the doctor instead of for the patient in question. In what way is what you're advocating best for the patient?

Also, can you please elaborate on your idea of feminism? I'm concerned that saying anything that makes women "too busy to participate in the wilder world" is not feminist guilty any women who have consciously chosen to raise children and stay at home. I understand that changing the role of women in society means becoming parts of the "wilder world" and that's what I intend to do as well (fellow woman, here), but feminism to me seems more about equal rights for all humans regardless of their sex, gender, or how they live their lives. This means we can't detract from someone's status as a feminist or a human simply because they would rather practice "intensive mothering." Can you please comment on this?

Thank you.

[lock_the_universe](#)

As I've said above, there is no scientific basis to the natural childbirth movement. There is nothing inherently better, safer, healthier or superior to unmedicated vaginal birth.

That doesn't mean that hospital care can't be improved. It most certainly can, although I think that the first place to start would be with the care of people who are poor and don't speak English, not with the privileged.

C-sections save literally tens of thousands of lives in the US each year. Can you have too much of a good thing? Certainly, but the issue with C-sections is complicated.

Obstetrics is preventive medicine. Nearly everything obstetricians do is designed to prevent complications or diagnose them early to treat them early. Unfortunately, we have very little access to one of our patients, the baby. The only thing we can measure is the baby's heart rate, which as you might imagine, is a very indirect measure of health. We need better technology to allow us to measure oxygen concentration in a baby's bloodstream during labor, but we don't have that now. So we are forced to use our imperfect technology to recognize babies at risk. That leads to C-sections that are unnecessary in retrospect.

The big difference between obstetricians and natural childbirth advocates is that obstetricians are willing to use imperfect technology to prevent as many deaths and injuries as possible recognizing that there will be unnecessary C-sections as a result. Natural childbirth advocates want to prevent unnecessary C-sections so they reject imperfect technology for no technology and pretend that complications won't occur if you "trust birth."

As a skeptical homeschool mom I run into a lot of homeschool parents who are anti-vaccination. Should I let my homeschool group that I will not attend events with un-vaccinated children, go but not

allow my kids to play with those children, or just not worry about it? My children are fully vaccinated and healthy.

[DarnHeather](#)

If your children are vaccinated, they should be okay. The big problem comes when there's a new baby in the family who isn't yet fully vaccinated. That's why so many vaccine preventable deaths involve babies. They are more vulnerable to the diseases and they don't have full protection, or in some cases, any protection.

When I read your posts I see a lot of the same language that comes from the other side of your position, and it irks me. Weasel words, emotional language, bully talk, and power language. Why is it that you feel you have to speak like this when being supporting a scientific position? Do you feel that it's the only way to effectively counter your opposition?

In my personal opinion, I get suspicious and distrustful by use of such language.

[vitsippa](#)

I'm a blogger and I get detailed analytics about who's reading and what they're reading. My favorite posts, which tend to be the least confrontational posts, often get very few readers. I've adjusted my persona to reflect what people want.

One of the reasons why I wrote the book is that I was free to write in my own voice. Possibly fewer people will buy it because it is less confrontational but it reflects who I really am.

Hi Amy! I'm an MD/PhD student and regular reader of your blog. Thanks for the AMA and for all of your work! And thanks from saving me from a lot of post-partum guilt as I am trying to balance life as a mother, doctor, mastitis-sufferer, wife and researcher.

I've been wondering about the ideology behind the "natural parenting" and "natural birth" ideology. Who has things to gain from this? Who benefits from promoting home-births over hospital-births and acupuncture instead of epidurals? Someone somewhere must be making money from it. I live in a country of universal health-care and free hospital based lactation consultants (etc) so it can't be them... I get so confused. Any thoughts about this?

[lk09nni](#)

Almost all the original thought leaders in natural parenting are old white men who wanted to convince women to stay home. Grantly Dick-Read was very upset that women were agitating for political and economic rights and William and Martha Sears are religious fundamentalists who believe that the philosophy of attachment parenting is God's wish for family design with the husband as the head and the wife subservient and entirely occupied with children's needs.

The contemporary beneficiaries of the natural parenting movement are those that provided the goods and services that you are supposed to buy. Ironically, though women in nature gave birth without paying anyone anything, today's natural childbirth advocates need the services of midwives, doulas, childbirth educators, and must books, music selections for labor, birth pools, etc. etc. etc.

There's nothing wrong with that; I'm a big fan of capitalism. I just wish that women would apply the same skepticism to natural parenting as they do to Big Pharma.

Hi Amy!

You mention proprietary journals and flawed statistics driving this area. Any particular journals to watch out for which perpetuate this type of research? Also, could you point out (what you consider to be) the keystone articles in this flawed/deceptive research of attachment?

Thanks!

[JakeLL](#)

The journal Birth: Issue in Perinatal Care is actually published by Lamaze International, something they try very hard to hide.

My partner insisted on an unmedicated natural child birth with no monitoring except occasional stethoscope and just one nurse occasionally present. The child was born blue, not breathing, umbilical wrapped twice around his neck. He subsequently started breathing after being given oxygen but he's now a late developer compared to his peers. The circumstances of his birth have always troubled me. Should I connect the two? The hospital brushed off my concerns. note he's 8 now, with no physical problems but rather slow mentally

[teepeeey](#)

It's hard to say without more information. I will note, however, that the entire point of obstetrics is to prevent death and disability and this is the type of disability that we try to prevent.

Can you share information about cry it out or controlled crying? With both my kids I said I would never do it but around 4 months with both I would cave just to get them to sleep. They ended up being able to sleep without me holding them after just 2 nights of attempting "controlled cry method" where you go in at extended intervals.

[ThePermMustWait](#)

I'm not a pediatrician, but I think it depends on the child and the circumstances. There is no scientific evidence that it is harmful.

Is there any evidence of the prevalence of harassment around breastfeeding and natural childbirth? If so, is there a demographic breakdown? It seems easy to claim that such a phenomenon is widespread based on a few anecdotes from middle class mothers.

[batnastard](#)

Based on my email inbox, it's pretty widespread.

That's not surprising when you consider what's going on. Think about the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. It could have been called breastfeeding friendly since its purpose is to promote breastfeeding, but they chose to call it baby friendly which humiliates women who can't or don't breastfeed. You know there's a problem when the very name is a slap in the face to a group of mothers.

The program itself is not based on scientific evidence, has never been shown to increase breastfeeding rates, and restricts what nurses are allowed to advise mothers. Nearly half of the 10 steps of the initiative have nothing to do with women who want to exclusive breastfeed but are directed at women who want to use formula.

What I want to know is: what's baby friendly about humiliating mothers who can't or don't want to breastfeed?

Hi Dr. Amy! I love your blog and can't wait to read your book. When I had my first in 2011, I was a total natural parenting devotee and my unyielding commitment to breastfeeding lead to my son being admitted to the NICU for dehydration. It was a really scary experience and I felt so much shame for letting my beliefs harm my son. Your blog is like a guiding light for those of us that feel personally hurt by the natural parenting industry ... but I digress, here's my question:

Are you noticing a natural parenting backlash brewing or is it just me? I swear that after that 2014 sibling study [here](#) The breast feeding bullies really backed off. When I had my second baby in 2014, there was considerably less pressure to breastfeed. Also, there seems to be a lot less c-section and formula hate in the reddit parenting forums now a days. Have the times changed?

[4everInYogaPants](#)

We seem to be at the beginning of a change. When Adele feels comfortable publicly complaining about the "fu**ing ridiculous" pressure to breastfeed, you know that a lot of women are fed up.

My question is about female fertility.

From your blog and your responses here, you seem to be very interested in how discussions surrounding female fertility directly affect women's autonomy. So my question is about the rhetoric of fear surrounding women's fertility. This is especially true for women who've put time into their careers and have delayed childbearing until their 30s. Once you hit that magic number, the narrative changes. Suddenly your ovaries are drying up, you're too old for an infant, you'll never get pregnant, you selfishly pursued a career, etc.

How much of the discussion about female fertility is rooted in science, and how much of it falls into the anti-feminist rhetoric you mention? My gut says the truth is somewhere in the middle.

[thro3333333](#)

This discussion is rooted in science.

For most of human existence women began childbearing in their late teens and had babies on average every 2 years or so. By their 30s their reproductive years would be winding down so they could devote their energies to raising living children. Unfortunately, nature is not particularly compatible with modern lifestyles.

You mention the "proprietary journals, trade unions, and lobbying groups" associated with breastfeeding, etc. but couldn't that criticism be leveled against any segment of the medical field, if not more so? Medicine, including academic medicine, is rife with corruption (the autism-vaccine myth started in a respected medical journal with a physician, after all).

How would you respond to the criticism that you are not targeting pseudoscience, but healthy skepticism of an elitist scientific community?

[hytloe](#)

If you've ever been to a medical conference you will know that there is no party line in any area of medical research. Individual scientists and physicians will fight nearly to the death on arcane theories.

They will duel in journals and in every possible professional forum.

In contrast, journals like Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care will not publish anything that doesn't support natural childbirth and homebirth. There is no disagreement at professional conferences; there's ideological enforcement. Natural childbirth professionals don't dare speak in forums where they could be questioned by doctors and scientists since they might not be able to answer.

No, real science is hardly about everyone getting together and agreeing while natural parenting is always about sticking to predetermined conclusions.

If I'm being honest with myself, I have a lot of anger and frustration towards pseudoscience that seems to be non-productive. How do you manage these feelings when tackling these issues?

[moonshoeslol](#)

I feel like I've made a difference, not for the true believers; they didn't reason themselves into their positions so I can't reason them out of them. I've made a difference for those being bullied by the true believers and that helps me manage my frustration.

As the parent of a son, I have become aware of the movement known as 'intactivism' and I'm a little terrified. People get *really* angry about the actions of people on the opposite side of the circumcision debate. It seems like you're either a genital mutilator, or you're a granola whack-job that doesn't think the cons outweigh the pros (and so it goes, back and forth).

As an issue directly related to early age parenting, do you see the intactivism movement as helpful? Or as a hurtful movement that seems to be piggybacking off other 'natural' parenting options coming to light in the electronic age?

[LifeWin](#)

The intactivist movement is the ultimate expression of parenting as form of identity. It has nothing to do with what is good for babies

There are benefits to circumcision but they are small. The decision should be left up to parents.

Ironically, many homebirth advocates are intactivists. Apparently it's okay to risk a child's DEATH for the sake of being in comfortable surroundings, but removing a child's foreskin, which has minimal risks, is anathema.

Hello Amy! I would like to hear your thoughts on childbirth, "natural" vs c-section, and about the science behind your stance on the matter. Thank you for doing this AMA

[Daerux](#)

There is no science behind the philosophy of natural childbirth.

The father of natural childbirth was Grantly Dick-Read, a eugenicist who was concerned that the white race was committing "race suicide" because white women of the "better" classes were seeking political and economic rights while "primitive" women understood that their role was producing more children and staying home to raise them. He fabricated his theory; he claimed that primitive women had no pain in labor and that childbirth pain was punishment for women who became "over-civilized."

The philosophy changed in the US to focus on giving women control of childbirth: choosing to be

awake, choosing to be accompanied by a partner, treated with greater respect. By the 1980's the movement had met nearly all its goals and could have declared victory. But organizations rarely work themselves out of business so they moved the goal posts.

The new goal became recapitulating childbirth as it supposedly occurred in nature, shunning anything that doctors could do and embracing anything that midwives could do. There is no science behind the philosophy of natural childbirth. There's nothing better, safer or healthier about unmedicated vaginal birth without interventions.

Thank you for doing this AMA Dr. Tuteur.

Regarding the "can you pick out the breastfed babies in a kindergarten class" question: as an OB-GYN, this is a very relevant, and I'd imagine effective, way to advise your individual patients. It supports the notion that effect sizes found in literature have little bearing on the individual. And I agree with this notion, and often advocate it in my personal life with friends and family (especially with breastfeeding). However, when you open up the debate to a wider audience as you do by participating in AMAs and publishing works meant for wider audiences you begin to effect population sizes beyond the individual, where these effect sizes *are* relevant. For example, there is great social and economical benefit to society as a whole to have an average IQ 1 point higher or average BMI one score lower. So my question:

Do you struggle with the dichotomy of advocating between individuals and large groups?

To be clear, I support your work, and ultimately believe that a small but meaningful voice is needed to reduce postpartum guilt (and maternal stress which is likely equally as bad as not breastfeeding for the newborn) in society.

[jerodras](#)

I would struggle with that if population data corroborated the effects claimed in cohort studies, but they don't. For example, a paper in the Lancet claimed that if all women around the world breastfed, we could save 80,000 lives. On it's face, it sounded like a reasonable statement to me, but I looked at the supplementary material and found something different.

When I graphed the authors' own data on breastfeeding rates and mortality rates in moderate and low income countries I found that the countries with the highest mortality rates had the HIGHEST breastfeeding rates (nearly 100%). So if the countries where the deaths are occurring already have high breastfeeding rates, you obviously aren't going to be able to save any lives by advocating breastfeeding.

You find this over and over again in the breastfeeding literature. Over the course of the 20th Century breastfeeding rates dipped steadily to a nadir of 24% in 1973 and began to rise again to the current initiation rate of around 76%. If you graph breastfeeding rates against infant mortality, life expectancy, or IQ you find that breastfeeding rates had NO impact of any of them. That makes me question whether the effect sizes predicted by cohort studies are valid.

Hi, I love your publications with respect to natural birth dangers and vaccines because they are overwhelmingly supported by science. However why do you think that breastfeeding in particular is detrimental to women's independence? In my experience few people who already have access to four or more months of maternity leave even breastfeed that long. And access to this maternity leave appears to me like social progress. Equality should mean similar access to parental leave for men, not pushing women back into the workforce earlier. In my view it's feminism to tell men and women exactly what we all have to gain from breastfeeding and empowering every parent to take off a few months

around birth because it is important.

[canteloupy](#)

Breastfeeding has no greater benefits than it ever had. There was a time when all children were breastfed ... and children died in droves. Countries with the highest infant mortality have the HIGHEST breastfeeding rates.

So why has breastfeeding become moralized? Follow the money. The moralization of breastfeeding parallels the monetization of breastfeeding.

La Leche League was started as a volunteer organization but in the 1980's LLL asked itself why it was giving information and support for free and spun off an organization that created the lactation consultant credential. 100% of the income of lactation consultants depends on convincing women to breastfeed. That's not to say that lactation consultants don't believe what they preach, but to paraphrase Upton Sinclair: It is difficult to convince to convince a woman to understand something when her salary depends of not understanding it.

Hi there Amy, and thanks for doing this AMA!

In these times of ever-stronger information bubbles, how do you reach the misinformed who believe they are informed?

[helm](#)

I have a blog persona that encourages people to parachute in to argue with me!

The truth is that I'm not aiming to inform those who have created an identity around their parenting choices. I try to inform women who just want to know what the science shows and are being hurt by the irresponsible claims of the natural childbirth, breastfeeding and attachment parenting industries.

First, thanks for your work in this field--holding up the skeptical lens on "sacred" issues is one of the most important things in the world to me.

I've had some friends who advocate for midwifery and home births by pointing at [US infant mortality rates compared to other countries](#). They explain by saying the US system is more dehumanizing or some such hokum, and is in some way counterproductive to safe child delivery. I'm not an expert in this (and am not a parent), so I'd really appreciate your better explanation for what I assume are reductionist statistics.

I assume there's a fair amount of measurement inconsistency between countries? Inconsistent levels of care across such a large, internally-diverse country? What's a good resource for better data? Any recommendations on increasing likelihood of safe delivery?

[boss413](#)

Infant mortality is a measure of pediatric care, NOT obstetric care. The best measure of obstetric care is perinatal mortality (late stillbirths + neonatal deaths) and the US has one of the lowest perinatal mortality rates in the world.

This is an excellent example of how the natural childbirth industry promotes itself. They deliberately use the wrong statistic to demonize obstetricians and hide the right statistic that would totally undermine their argument.

Are there any specific aspects that are actually true/supported by data? IE lower allergies for children who's mother consume certain foods while pregnant etc?

[veive](#)

The strongest scientific data concerns premature infants. There is strong evidence that breastmilk instead of formula leads to a lower incidence of the devastating condition necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC),

Breastfeeding isn't better than formula? [Wikipedia lists a number of health risks.](#)

[Youma](#)

In first world countries with clean water, the differences are trivial. Go into any kindergarten class and tell me which children were breastfed and for how long. Impossible, right? That's because the differences are limited to a few less colds and episodes of diarrheal illness across the entire population in the first year.

Another thing to think about: In rise and fall and risk again of breastfeeding in the 20th Century had no impact on infant mortality rates. Mortality rates fell dramatically as breastfeeding rates fell dramatically and they've fallen less slowly as breastfeeding rates have risen again.

What should every expecting mom do to advocate for herself and her baby and get the best care from both her OB/GYN, and from the hospital/birth center/wherever?

I had a normal (as far as I knew) pregnancy, gained too much weight and my blood pressure went up quite a bit, but my nurse practitioner seemed to think that was within normal parameters; then when my son was born at four and a half pounds at full term, hospital doctors and nurses were asking me what went wrong?

[ExProEx](#)

There was nothing you could do to prevent that. Your doctor should have noticed that. You may want to consider finding a new OB.

What books/blogs should I check out to read about the *right way* to parent?

[thegouch](#)

You should pick a pediatrician you trust and listen to him or her. You should also trust yourself.

Over time you will find friends whose parenting philosophy seems attractive to you and you can ask them questions and find out what resources they favor.

I was wondering your opinion on the way that the relentless presence of pseudoscience in the media and online has shaped parenting issues like the anti vaxx movement or, to refer to a [specific case going on right now in Canada](#), parents foregoing medical treatment in favor of "natural" remedies.

Do you find this is getting more common as time goes on? Do you think there's anything that can be done to combat it?

[mrning](#)

There have always been tragedies like these. The current problem is that some of the thinking that leads to these tragedies has been monetized so now there are people pushing it into the mainstream in order to sell their goods and services.

What are some factors that decide how painful labour is going to be? The only reason I ask is because I have had stomach viruses and gallbladder attacks that I found more painful than childbirth. I wanted to do natural because an epidural scared the crap out of me, but I was also not against getting one if the pain was bad. But it never came to that, I never yelled or cursed or cried. The worst part was when she came out. Am I just super woman or was there something special about my labour that made it so easy? Even the midwives were impressed, they told me I could have babies full time. I will mention that my pregnancy was a nightmare, gallbladder attacks, HELLP, cholestasis, group b strep, gained 65 pounds. And the HELLP and cholestasis weren't diagnosed until I was in labour.

[ChronoTriggerHappy](#)

There are three factors: luck, luck and luck!

Most women have excruciating pain in labor, but some women find it tolerable and I've cared for women who've had virtually no pain at all. No one really knows why.

I guess as a barefoot runner, I'll throw this out there: Nike didn't have any science to say their shoes were "better", but we all bought into that as obvious. Now there are lots of people running minimal because it seems to cause less injuries. So the question isn't "is there science behind barefoot running?". It's really "Is there science behind anything else?"

So in this case, it seems to me like attachment parenting and breast feeding are "normal" and what we would have done before there were any other options. What science shows anything else is better?

[bonzai2010](#)

Nearsightedness without glasses is normal.

Smallpox is normal.

Dying in childbirth is normal.

There's nothing inherently better about normal!

Dr Tuteur, thanks for doing this AMA!

1) What are your thoughts about the CDC recommendations for preventing alcohol exposure in pregnancy?

2) I shadow a pediatrician, and I've heard several working women who choose to pump breast milk or to use formula express feelings of guilt about not breastfeeding. Parents also felt guilty about sending kids to nursery before age 1-2 or about hiring a nanny.

Based on your experience, how would you counsel these women about their concerns?

[Codes4Nailpolish](#)

My thoughts on the CDC alcohol recommendations: What on earth were those people drinking when they came up with those recommendations??!!

As to your second question, I would encourage women to view the natural parenting industry with the same skepticism they view other industries. They should be asking themselves who really benefits by the industry's promotion of the product. Who really benefits from putting intense pressure on women to breastfeed? It's certainly not children.

Hi Amy,

What're your thoughts on NIPT?

[RealBean](#)

It's revolutionizing prenatal testing and that's a good thing.

Thanks for doing this AMA! Why do you think there has been such a pushback against epidurals in particular, at least in the online community? Is there any real evidence associating them with negative outcomes?

[GoingToFlipATable](#)

That's easy to answer. Natural childbirth advocates demonize anything that doctors can do that they can't.

Epidurals have risks just like narcotics after gall bladder removal has risks, but you'll notice that we don't suggest to gall bladder patients that they should forgo the narcotics and be empowered by the pain.

Hi Amy - first of all : thanks for doing this, there's so much I have to ask... but here's a condensed version . When I became pregnant for the first time, I became obsessed with the idea that I was going to lose my baby. I had regular intense vivid nightmares that during birth I bled to death, just before dying I could hear a woman saying that it was better this was as the baby died too. This happened through out my pregnancy. At 3 months, i started bleeding heavily and was told I had miscarried. The NHS refused me an immediate scan. After 10 days of bleeding but still suffering from morning sickness I paid for a private scan which confirmed that my baby was totally fine, alive and well. However, the nightmares and the bleeding continued for the duration of the pregnancy. I was a wreck. I refused to buy any baby clothes, buggy, car seat etc because I feared the worst each day. At 34 weeks I took myself to hospital because of a really heavy bleed and intense cramping. The hospital was understaffed and begrudgingly kept me over night but were very quick to discharge me in the morning. I refused to leave and stayed on the ward crying: An hour later I had a placental abruption. There was blood everywhere, like some kind of terrible horror film. I had an immediate general anaesthetic and c-section which saved my baby's life : He is 9 years old - super fit and well. So my question : Some people have suggested that I brought this on myself , by constantly thinking of bleeding to death, i brought about the circumstances. Is this possible??

[massilia22](#)

Absolutely not. If that were the case, women who dream of an uncomplicated pregnancy would always have an upcomplicated pregnancy and we know that doesn't happen.

As a guy who doesn't want any kids, I couldn't care less about woman's parenting styles. But I'm a bit bummed that someone advocating against pseudoscience uses pseudoscience and anecdotes herself. In fact, the responses to OP often contain a lot more relevant and compelling citations.

Amy sounds more like a counter-culture blogger than an actual scientist, to be frank.

[qaghan](#)

In order to understand the literature of any scientific discipline you have to read the depth and breadth of the entire literature on that subject. Advocates like to cite individual cohort studies or studies that are riddled with confounders. The truth is that the depth and breadth of the scientific literature on childbirth does NOT support natural childbirth; that's why obstetricians don't advocate it for themselves or others. The truth is that breastfeeding simply isn't that important; that's why the breastfeeding industry has tried to muzzle doctors and nurses in hospitals to force them to promote breastfeeding even when it's wrong for specific mothers and babies.

This is a battle for two really important things: money (and everyone knows how important money is) and the desire of some women to feel superior to other women. Science is being ignored in the process.

How can we best nicely challenge potential parents and parents to do some analytical thinking about subjects like vaccines, Vedic astrology and other pseudoscience concepts without "offending" them?

[misslolomarie](#)

There's no requirement to challenge people, but if people challenge me I ask them to think long and hard about the medical conspiracies that inspire such movements. For example, how can vaccines be dangerous if pediatricians are giving them to their own kids? What kind of conspiracy involves sacrificing your own children in an effort to hide the truth?

Are there any studies on the health impacts of breastfeeding on mothers?

[shibamo](#)

Yes. They show that breastfeeding can reduce the risk of breast cancer though probably no as much as having children in your teens or early 20's reduces your risk of breast cancer.

Hi Amy! I have a couple of questions.

Is natural parenting really dominant in the US, or is it just dominant among a certain segment of the population and certain circles of bloggers?

I've previously read that C-sections are generally bad for mother and child and should be avoided unless medically necessary, is this just a myth or is there some truth to it?

[IDontFuckingThinkSo](#)

Natural parenting is the dominant ideology of the privileged and therefore has become the dominant ideology of everyone.

C-sections have more risks for mothers than for babies. That's why I admire women who have C-sections. They were undoubtedly told that there was a risk to the baby necessitating a C-section, but there was also a risk to them from the C-section. Nonetheless, they chose to bear that risk in an effort

to reduce the risk on the baby. That's pretty admirable in my view.

Hi Amy!

Something I've noticed is that my wife and others I've seen are caught up in this "a good mother is a mother of sacrifice" attitude where if they're not suffering in some form then they're not being a good parent. To the point where help for even menial things is rejected.

Having said that, my wife is finally letting go some of that and admits that co-sleeping is ruining her ability to rest, and that she resented me for getting more rest than her (having to drive 40 miles one way to work each day is not an activity I want to risk my life over lack of sleep to prove a point, while also pointing out that we can't afford her to work at this moment due to child care rates).

My question is this, what method to get a child to sleep in their crib do you recommend? Baby's 8 months old. We're both having an open dialogue about how to best achieve this and both under the assumption that it may take a week or two of sleepless nights to get this done and are both willing to stick with a method that works. We've made many attempts and both suffered long nights and allow set backs to fall back into bad habits and simply want to help him get used to not wanting mommy all the time and allow him to sleep properly (and us/her!).

[TR Ollington](#)

If I had a method guaranteed to work I would have written a book about that and become a billionaire! Every child is different and it's difficult to know what will work.

I personally had a tough time letting my kids cry and I spent a lot of nights sleeping on the floor by the crib. On the other hand I know that many parents have had sanity saving success with cry it out methods.

In your Youtube video 'The Truth about Homebirth Midwives' you mentioned a statistic about the Netherlands having a high home birth mortality rate. (This in a country that has much higher midwife regulation and licencing requirements than those in the US discussed in that video, and, I presume, the attendant hospital relationships and/or privileges.) Do you have any information about what that country has been doing to address this problem?

[crepuscular10](#)

There has actually been a nationwide effort to address the problem and to address the problem of maternal mortality. I don't have the references to hand but I'll try to find them and post them later.

Why is it that mothers, especially relatively new ones seem willing to put faith in all sorts of quackery to solve their problems? Most of my friends are married and having children and the old wives remedies, along with new ones that make no biological sense, run rampant. I don't know if my experience represents a larger population group or if there is a localized gullibility issue at play but I am curious if this trend holds true in your experience.

[Every Name Is Tak3n](#)

I think it is a reflection of the intensive marketing efforts of industry players like Lamaze International and La Leche League. There are millions of dollars at stake and some pretty sophisticated advertising campaigns have been created in order to capture them.

Mothering is very hard. There's very little feedback so it's often impossible to know how you are doing. For example, no child ever says, "Thank you so much for putting me in time out. It undoubtedly helped me achieve self-mastery." That's why recipes guaranteed to produce superior children (and natural parenting is a recipe) are so attractive. That goes double for recipes that claim merely by employing them you have demonstrated yourself to be better than other mothers.

It is extremely difficult to find anything remotely resembling an unbiased opinion on home birth vs hospital birth. My understanding based on [this study](#) is that among low-risk pregnancies, home birth is just as safe as hospital birth. However, in some places (my home state of North Carolina, for example) practicing midwifery is illegal. I would like to hear your thoughts on how to motivate change in the popular understanding of how hospital vs home birth compare in light of the fact that a lot of home birth activism is accompanied by pseudoscientific "woo"?

[mary-o-e](#)

International studies on homebirth have no relevance to US homebirth because unlike US certified nurse midwives (who work in hospitals) and midwives in Canada, the U.K., the Netherlands, Australia, etc. American homebirth midwives (CPMs or certified professional midwives) don't meet international midwifery standards for education or training. They would not be allowed to practice in any countries where homebirth has been shown to be safe.

The vast majority of US homebirths are attended by these poorly educated, poorly trained midwives and they are deadly!

What do you think about the risks of hospital birth, for example, hospital-acquired infections for either the mother or baby? If a pregnancy and birth are uncomplicated (as far as the mother knows at the time of labor, that is), is a hospital birth the safest option?

[slowlyslipping](#)

The biggest infectious threats to babies are group B streptococcus and herpes and both live inside the mother. Hospital acquired infections occur, of course, but most hospitals take make great effort to separate labor and delivery and the postpartum floors from the rest of the hospital.

What is your perception of the Gardasil shot? I am not anti-vaccination, but do you truly believe it could prevent cervical cancer in someone who comes in contact with HPV? Also, do you believe that there was enough testing done on the vaccine?

[golfbang](#)

Yes. Absolutely!

Thoughts on the Food Babe?

[IvermornyAlumna](#)

She's hilarious until you realize she's not a parody.

Hi, Dr. Tueter! Thanks for doing this AMA! I hadn't come across your blog before, and it's great to hear

a scientific, skeptical voice. My husband and I are both scientists, so rational, evidence-based medicine is important to us.

I have a couple of questions. First of all, can you give me a realistic, non-sensationalized idea of what complications I'd most likely experience with both a C-section and a vaginal birth? I'd like to be informed, so I've tried to find out what I can realistically expect in terms of recovery time, likely complications, etc., but both sides seem to trot out their worst horror stories. The anti C-section people are the worst, in my opinion- I'm just looking for information, and they're often throwing shock photos at me. However, a lot of women who've given vaginal birth seem to talk about incontinence and sexual dysfunction problems, which is also something I'm not that keen on. Are there any good articles you'd recommend that discuss the risks and benefits in a non-sensationalized, informative fashion?

Also, what are recovery times generally like for both forms of birth? My husband and I are planning to start a family in the next couple of years, and I plan to keep working. (No offence to women who choose to stay at home, but it's just not for me!) I'm also really active- I dance, lift weights, do gymnastics, etc. Would a vaginal birth be more likely to allow me to be up and about sooner? I understand that it's impossible to predict for me specifically, but I'd love to have an idea for women in general.

In your opinion, which prenatal tests should everyone get? Are there any that are generally unnecessary? Are there any tests that you think more people should get?

Finally, are there any books about pregnancy that you'd recommend? Most of the books I've found talk about the *magic* of pregnancy, whereas I want to know about the gross, practical reality so that I can be prepared for it. Are there any other good blogs that might be helpful?

Thanks again! I'm definitely going to be pouring through your blog.

[Felisitea](#)

These questions require a longer answer than I can give at the moment. I'll try to come back later and give a full answer.

What is your opinion on the increase of proportion of caesarian sections in total births because of women asking for it to avoid pain, without medical need for it? Would you recommend women to stick to the natural birth or do you think that enabling caesarian for those who express a wish for it should be allowed?

[Ishana92](#)

Cesarean sections are a form of preventive medicine. We use them when there is risk to the baby. It's hardly surprising that the C-section rate has risen as we have become a very risk averse society.

I do think maternal C-section should be available because the long term consequences of vaginal birth (including incontinence and sexual dysfunction) are serious issues worthy of our concern.

Thank you for the AMA I'd like to ask if you think that this myth has anything to do with blank slate and believing in brain plasticity

[arashixb](#)

There are lots of factors but I believe that this is a thoroughly modern myth: we want to believe that by treating children as products and giving them the right inputs, we can reliably create successful adults we can boast about. If only that were true!

I'm so glad to see you on reddit promoting your book, Dr Tuteur!

It seems that most of the public health recommendations come from poorly designed studies that don't properly control for confounders like socioeconomic status (which is huge and terribly misleading, as I know you write about a lot). Unlike a lot of other public recommendations (that seem to be changing day by day with regard to diet health and the like), breastfeeding advice has only gotten more pressuring and almost oppressive for new mothers even as the PROBIT study and sibling cohort data questions initial research findings. How is it that there has never been a push to get better breastfeeding studies? Do public health advocates really just not want to rock the boat? Or is it possible that there will be a counter push soon to get some better evidence for what breastfeeding legitimately does or does not do?

[elfstone08](#)

No one is opposed to breastfeeding and the lactation industry has been extremely aggressive in promoting it and moralizing it. Their voices have dominated the discussion, but we may be on the verge of change.

LLL was started explicitly as a way to keep women in the home. It was started by 7 mothers from a devout Catholic family group who were disturbed that mothers of young children were working outside the home. They reasoned that Mary, mother of Jesus, would never have worked because she would have been breastfeeding and set out to convince other women to emulate Mary and breastfeed, too.

LLL is pretty coy about these origins, but they are not a historical artifact. The truth is that the war of formula is a war on women's independence and some feminist scholars are starting to address this issue.

What is your position on "immune system building?" Broadly speaking, it's obviously a good thing, but...

...my daughter was born a day short of being full term and was perfectly healthy up until she caught a nasty rhinovirus at 6 months. The situation got so bad that she was put on a vent and was sedated for three days. She made it out fine and after a month at home the doctor's determined there was no underlying issue, thankfully, and that she could return to daycare. We were in fact encouraged to return her to daycare to build her immunity.

After about a month in daycare and cold season (she was constantly sick as daycare kids are), she started showing of serious respiratory issues again. Nothing that prednisone couldn't fix (I say this flippantly intentionally; it was terrifying).

The pulmonologists insisted she was fine to stay in daycare, and I'm sure they are right in that with the proper at-home medicines, she would most likely not have to be hospitalized for the same issue, but we decided to go the nanny route after discussing the matter with our pediatrician.

Is there a right or wrong answer here?

[landops](#)

There's no right or wrong answer. You should do what seems right for you and for your child.

Wow, it seems the PhD neuroscientists are on here calling you out. How do you feel about the stuff coming from neuroscientists like John Medina who say literally the opposite about what you're saying

with regards to attachment parenting, claiming that ensuring the safety of a child is the most important to improving resilience in a 'normal' child rather than trying to even have a discussion about these parenting models? It's odd to me that you've decided to create a polemic against certain parenting models when the neuroscientists are saying these type of polarizing views are the only views absolutely incorrect because they void the space of gray areas.

[chusmeria](#)

It's really hard to keep up with the volume of questions, so I haven't seen many of the responses to my answers. I'll try to go back and find them.

What evidence do you have that "natural parenting" is dominant in the US. Most parents I know have never even heard of attachment parenting.

[Pinkunicorms4](#)

It's not my idea. It's the view of scholars of parenting culture and the phenomenon of "intensive mothering."

I feel like Dr Tuteur is overstating her case to court controversy and boost book sales.

Breastfeeding is deemed as beneficial by every authoritative body I can find (Pediatric associations, the WHO, everybody - even Dr Tuteur, further down in a reply to someone's comment says that yes it is beneficial). So why does she cast aspersions on this claim in her opening post?

Similarly, I'm sure she can't be saying that a baby benefits from the use of heavy pain medication during childbirth? I'm not saying that doctors shouldn't be present, but if, like my wife, a woman is able to manage the pain without meds... she surely Dr Tuteur wouldn't oppose that. Would she?

Is she arguing attention for young children is not beneficial? Does she advocate Ferberising? etc? I bet she doesn't.

She seems to be making broad sweeping claims and just muddying the waters in a way that will make her ideas pleasing to parents who want to get "off the hook" and do things the easy, bad way, without admitting to themselves that's what's happening.

[Abu Spartacus](#)

You probably don't recall when formula feeding was deemed beneficial by every author active body you can find.

My point is that the breastfeeding industry's claims of benefits far outstrip what the scientific evidence actually shows. This is not a novel argument. Joan Wolf made it years ago and Courtney Jung made it again last year.

Hello & thanks for this very informative AMA; it's nice to be introduced to your work. I'm the mom of an only child (and, barring some kind of medical miracle, no more children). I'm curious about the frequency of attachment parenting across the number of children. Do you see it more with single children, or families with 2, 3, or more children? I'm also curious if parents of multiple children see a decrease in increase in certain parenting styles with the addition of each subsequent child. Hope my ? s make sense. Thanks in advance for the insight you can provide!

[opheliasmusing](#)

I've never looked into that. I'll have to do a little research and see if there's any data.

Some of your views sound a little radical.

all three ideologies originated in efforts to force women back into the home, occupied with pregnancy, breastfeeding and child rearing, and therefore too busy to participate in the wider world.

1. Have you been advocating vaccination? And circumcision?
2. Given that your views are relatively extreme, among those of your peers, do you feel like you are the public personal antithesis of Jeanice Barcelo?

*I'm 9 months pregnant, educated and trained in psychology, started PhD work, and now work with infants, particularly 6 weeks to 6 months, and have learned a lot about parenting styles but I don't see what you do- a conspiracy to push women into the home- at ALL! I understand your views, can see where they originated and how, and respect that, but I do not agree with it, the same way I feel about much of Barcelo.

[Dorothyslaundry](#)

You may not see it, but if you take a few steps back, it will be pretty obvious. All three movements were started explicitly with the intent of forcing women back into the home and that is their practical effect even today. Why do you think these movements are popular among fundamentalists?

I don't see myself as the antithesis of anyone. I see myself as an obstetrician free to tell you what obstetricians really think about what is going on. I'm also all about scientific accuracy. There's no science behind natural parenting, no matter how much and how often advocates insist there is.

Dr. Amy, recently a study from Canada demonstrated that under the correct circumstances, home births can be safe for mothers and infants. Is there a way to translate this into the USA in better regulation, certification and integration of midwifery care to serve the subset of women who will always choose home birth (for example, in many Amish communities)

[bustedminivan](#)

I've answered this a couple of times already so I'll just give a short answer here. Studies of homebirth from other countries have no relevance in the US because most American homebirths are attended by a second, poorly trained class of midwives (CPMs or lay midwives) that are not allowed to practice in any other industrialized country.

My wife is due to give birth in a month.

What's the absolute best thing I can do to be supportive during birth and in the hours after?

[trevdak2](#)

Ask her what she needs and do your best to provide it!

I'm so disappointed that Reddit is giving the author a platform and framing it as if she is some sort of respected figure. She doesn't practice medicine and hasn't for decades, she doesn't perform research. She "reads up on the literature" and formulates, then spews, judgmental opinion. Anyone can do that.

Literally everyone on Reddit does that.

Redditors, I am one of many **currently practicing** women's health providers who see through the author's vitriol. It is possible to provide evidence based care without "pushing" anything on anyone. As a nurse-midwife who works collaboratively with obstetricians, I offer guidance to my patients, provide them with current, accurate information, and support them in whatever decision they ultimately make. I support women who choose epidurals. I support women who choose cesarean. I support women who choose home birth. I support women and families and trust that they will make the right decisions for themselves.

I am a nurse-midwife who chose to have an unmedicated out of hospital birth, chose to not breastfeed my daughter, chose to be a working mother, and presently choose to practice midwifery in a way that celebrates and respects each individual woman's decisions.

I highly encourage anyone reading this AMA to look beyond this thread. The author is not a respected member of the medical community.

[Trishmael](#)

I love, love, love comments like this!

Lawyers have a saying: When you have the facts pound the facts; when you have the Law, pound the Law; when you have neither, pound the table. This is table pounding.

Don't listen to Dr. Amy because she's not practicing; don't listen to Dr. Amy because she's mean; etc. etc. etc. But the operative phrase is "don't listen" because you might find she's telling the truth.

Yes, yes. Some of these things are quite maddening. The issues that are purported to be in a child's best interest are more often in the interest of putting money in the physician or practices bank accounts. (I.E. Tamiflu-new expensive prescription that MIGHT lower an illness period by one day, and for that tiny hope of almost nothing, highly numerous negative side effects are what the that medicine gives; ADD and ADHD meds are pushed hard by medical salesman and by proxy are also pushed by a treating physician -with a "hard sell" - (that comes on stronger than any person who was peddling marijuana back in college) who often seems to forget that small children are supposed to be highly excitable and bounce their attention from one thing to the next. A large issue is the lack of access to proper care for many, a lack of listening to the patient or their parent/guardian, and the loss of the "family" doctor - the doctor who knew the current parent as a child, and actually cared to know in depth things about the family and individual - to the set up of a corporate type of atmosphere where patients are herded in and out like cattle.

[gladuknowall](#)

Since most doctors work on salary, it's hard to see how prescribing medication is in the interests of their bank account.

As the mother of two kids and a PhD scientist - THANK YOU FOR THIS.

One question: How do you feel about circumcision? My husband and I did circumcise our kids, mostly because we hadn't really heard a lot about not circumcising them. So it's really too late for us now, but just wondering your thoughts?

[yoteachcaniborrowpen](#)

There are benefits, but they are small so the decision should be left up to the parents.

Hi Amy,

Thanks for doing this!

My fiance and I had a discussion about few months ago where she let me know that she wanted to only use formula, and not breast milk, to feed our hypothetical future children. I haven't done much research into this, mostly because we're years away from kids, but I'm curious about what the possible pros or cons are of going formula only? What are some of the common myths associated with this choice that we should watch out for?

Thanks again!

[Gold Sticker](#)

Formula is an EXCELLENT way to feed infants. Two entire generations of Americans were raised on formula. During that time every possible health parameter continued to improve. In the past 50 years breastfeeding rates have tripled, there has been no discernible impact on the health of children or adults.

Where do you think the almost militant defending of breastfeeding came from? It's anti capitalist nature almost seems un-american, but it is pushed so hard here.

We were unable to breastfeed my daughter, and were often treated like abusers by fellow parents. With my wife receiving the brunt of the cold shoulders and sideways looks. This only helped to deepen the PPD that caused the issue in the first place.

[Furiou16](#)

Parenting is hard. It takes a really long time to judge the outcome and there's a lot of frustration along the way. Some people want to take a short cut and declare that as long as you use the right PROCESS (natural childbirth, breastfeeding) you can autonomically declare yourself an awesome parent. That's why some people cling fiercely to the idea that there is a right way to parent, they are doing it the right way, and you are an awful person if you don't mirror their own choices back to them.

I thought breastfeeding is based on science because human breastmilk has a unique composition, with a very high percentage of unsaturated fats vital for brain growth. Is this not supported by science? I've seen GCxGC chromatograms, and cows milk looks very different from human breast milk.

As far as "forcing women back into the home," I can't comment. In an ideal situation, employers would recognize that mother and child are a single entity until weaning, and do their best to facilitate this, especially in an office setting.

Maybe there could be tax incentives to have nurseries at locations with a certain number of employees. Allowing women back to work earlier without separating them from their children sounds like a win for everyone. Employer, mother, and child.

[rattrayc](#)

Although lactivists assert many benefits for breastfeeding in countries with clean water, the only ones supported by strong science are a few less colds and episodes of diarrheal illness.

For Caesarean sections, what do you think of wiping microbes from the birth canal?

<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/02/01/464905786/researchers-test-microbe-wipe-to-promote-babies-health-after-c-sections>

[toowm](#)

We know very little about the microbiome. We literally have no idea what a normal infant gut microbiome looks like or whether there are any effects of variations of normal. Natural childbirth advocates have seized on the microbiome as yet another way to demonize C-sections, but there's absolutely NO research to support vaginal seeding and it can be dangerous. The most deadly infectious threats to newborns, group B strep and herpes, live in the mother's vagina and are transmitted to babies through vaginal birth.

Can you explain to me why it's not beneficial to give birth while squatting?

[saralt](#)

You should give birth in whatever position feels comfortable for you.

For personal reasons, I don't want to get pregnant until I can be certain I'll be able to have an elective cesarean section. I live in Boston and haven't been able to find an ob-gyn who doesn't try to talk me into vaginal birth. Please tell me how I can find a doctor who will respect my wishes about my own body.

[BabyWishes2Day](#)

That's really difficult, because in this area insurance companies often call the shots and they don't want to pay for C-sections. I don't have any specific recommendations for you, but I wish you luck!

Why do you think doctors and hospitals are allowing themselves to buy into the natural childbirth and lactivist hardlines? It's so prevalent in my area that our new hospital is "baby friendly" certified and so pro-NCB that when I asked not to have pitocin with my first labor, the on-call doctor seems to have heard "no interventions at all!" and allowed me to labor with ruptured membranes for nearly 48 hours. I was literally begging for a c-section, got chorioamnionitis, and my son got bacterial meningitis.

I strongly believe this to be a direct consequence of the pro-NCB swing in the last several years.

When I got pregnant with my 2nd child, my regular OB tried to very gently break the news to me that he didn't recommend VBAC and was supremely relieved when I said I had no interest. He said he is amazed that OBs are allowed to deal with a procedure that has 1% risk of uterine rupture (or worse) in the healthy group and that risk factors orders of magnitude smaller keep anesthesiologists up at night.

Why do you think doctors and insurance companies are allowing the anti-science push for less intervention? Is medicine really a consumer-driven economy?

[thrombolytic](#)

One word: marketing.

Everyone is desperate for market share and they think this will help them get it.

Hello Dr. Tuteur. I have a question regarding teaching sign-language to infants. My wife is a family practice resident who has an attending who is against teaching sign-language to infants. According to her, it delays development of vocal communication. In other words, children who are taught sign have a delay in learning how to talk. Do you have any thoughts or studies on the topic?

[ExplosiveBEAR](#)

I don't know enough about it to say. Sorry I can't be more helpful.