




Quality Care



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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Book Nook

By Nancy Muller, NAFC Executive Director

With the abundant number of books on retail shelves covering pregnancy and childbirth, one would think that everything women need to know about pelvic health had been written. Perhaps so, until the advent of **Pelvic Health & Childbirth**, by Magnus Murphy, MD, and Carol L. Wasson (Prometheus Books, 2003). Since the leading factor for the development of pelvic floor dysfunction in women is vaginal delivery, much more needs to be understood by women of all ages about the high risks of pelvic floor injury sustained during

childbirth. Childbirth is also a leading causal factor of urinary and fecal incontinence, sexual dysfunction, chronic pelvic pain and sagging, and protruding pelvic organs. Nerve and tissue damage, follow-up surgery, and a progressive discussion of vaginal birth verses elective cesarean are all covered in detail by Murphy and Wasson.

Its contents empower the reader to make informed choices about both a birthing plan when pregnant, as well as subsequent care and treatment, even years later, for injury sustained in the life-giving event of pregnancy and childbirth. The foreword by Linda Brubaker, MD, is an essay worthy of reading by itself.

This summer another book on pregnancy, **Ever Since I Had My Baby**, by Northwestern University urogynecologist Roger P. Goldberg, MD, MPH, will be published (Crown Publishing Group, 2003). It provides a newly expanded perspective on reproductive health, by illuminating a number of often-overlooked connections between obstetrical events and their gynecological repercussions. Whether you are an expectant mother or already a mother, this book will enhance your ability to make informed decisions regarding your birth plan and help you know what to expect in the years that follow childbirth. The author clearly illustrates the anatomical change that is the most common culprit of stress incontinence during or after childbirth: weakening of the vaginal wall that lies beneath the urethra. Thinning and weakening of the walls of the urethra is also discussed so that the different treatment options can be more readily understood. Pelvic prolapse is discussed in detail, as are the use of and potential problems associated with pessaries. The book has important tips for restoring satisfaction, sensation, and self-confidence with sex after childbirth. The reader is delicately but factually

prepared for pelvic reconstructive surgery as well as apprised of emergent technology and therapies such as radio-frequency therapy, implantable devices, botox injections, acupuncture and percutaneous tibial nerve stimulation. Dr. Goldberg makes an otherwise complex topic very accessible to the reader.

The Incontinence Solution (Simon & Schuster, 2002)

written by William H. Parker, MD, Amy E. Rosenman, MD, and Rachel Parker, gives a straightforward explanation of causal factors for all types of female incontinence and related disorders that women suffer from over their adult lives, along with surgical and non-surgical treatment options. The chapter on diagnosis is superb for its completeness, clarity, and simplicity. This book answers those questions so many women typically have about "what's normal." The illustrations enable the reader to easily grasp every explanation along the way. Descriptions of surgical procedures are concisely presented without embellishment or unnecessary encumbrances for the reader. Because its contents are so accessible, I keep a copy of **The Incontinence Solution** on my desk should a telephone call from a consumer warrant a simple but clinically astute answer to an otherwise complex question.

Canadian physiotherapist Kelli Berzuk, PT, has just published, through the assistance of Nova Physiotherapy & Sports Fitness Clinic, a serious and thorough treatise on pelvic floor health and rehabilitation with her first book, **I Laughed So Hard I Peed My Pants!** (2002). The author lends extraordinary warmth and insight to discussing the value of the pelvic floor muscle functionality – sphincteric, supportive, and sexual – so that women of all ages can be motivated to protect and strengthen this essential element of their health. When a 30-second explanation of how to properly "do a Kegel" isn't enough – and for the majority of all women it isn't enough – this is the handbook to have for encouragement and instruction. In understanding what the pelvic floor was designed to do, Kelli Berzuk's book allows women to better grasp how to keep the pelvic floor muscles functional. There is ample coverage on relaxation techniques, toileting posture, urge delay techniques, and much more.

While none of these books is intended to be a substitute for medical attention from trained professionals, the education and encouragement they provide enable the patient to participate in the care equation herself. While future research and concepts may lead to changes in some of the ideas presented by the authors, these four books provide a reliable arsenal of resources for women to direct the course of their own pelvic health. How refreshing! ❖

