

# ICAN E-news Line

International Cesarean Awareness Network

Volume 06

June 17, 2003

Focus: ICAN Conference

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Look what we have planned:

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1) From the Board of Directors

ICAN's 2003 Conference, "The Proactive Pregnancy: Defeating Cesarean Prenatally" was a huge success. It was a time to reconnect face to face with old friends, meet people that we already knew online, and to make new connections. The positive energy at the conference was palpable. Although one of our keynote speakers, Suzanne Arms, was unable to attend at the last minute, our other speakers were flexible and understanding. It also gave attendees a chance to share stories and support each other in a way that would not have been possible otherwise. On behalf of ICAN's Board of Directors, I would like to thank all of you who attended the conference.

We are already planning our next conference for April 2005 in San Diego. Sign up now for that frequent flier credit card account to start saving miles if you think you live too far away!!

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Tapes of the ICAN conference sessions will be made available in the next E-news! Learn from our speakers - even though you couldn't be there. Even if you were there, the tapes will refresh your memory. Watch for more info...

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2) Essay: Conference by Tami Powell

In the weeks since the ICAN conference a remarkable thought has planted itself firmly in my mind: "you essentially grow a new uterus during each pregnancy." I remember smiling at the thought when I first heard the sentence, but I didn't even include it in the notes I was taking during Gail Sforza Krebs' session Sunday morning. But variations on the idea that I can grow a new uterus kept returning to me so I began to explore its many possible meanings.

During her informative conference session Krebs spoke about nutrition as it relates to a healthy pregnancy and a healthy, strong uterus. A healthy uterus is important in every pregnancy and exceptional nutrition is necessary to nourish the uterus. I knew this. I told women this daily as I shared the specifics of what getting the proper nutrition entails. I told women their uterus is powerful and strong, but I didn't own the belief for myself.

Earlier in the week one of my ICAN sisters presented me with a visual image of a healthy (non-infected) placenta. Of course I'll grow a new placenta for each pregnancy. My future placentas would not be haunted by the legacies of my past placentas. And now I resolve that I will also grow a healthy, strong new uterus.

As Krebs explained the protein and micronutrients needed to grow a "new" uterus to the size needed to protect and nourish a baby I understood the importance of nourishing our bodies. I also understood the importance of

nourishing the spirit of that growing uterus. I had abandoned much of my body and spiritually disowned my uterus.

If it was only a matter of physical strength and scientific reassurance I would only need to look at the evidence and do everything in my power to limit my risk of uterine rupture as well as other pregnancy and birth complications. I have done this. I continue to do this. Fear and doubts linger. Emotional scars remain. Not only do I have a scarred uterus, but I also have a scared uterus. I may invite healing in many ways, but a fresh start is still so appealing to me. I want to shout as a young child does "do over!"

Of course technically, physically, and medically my uterus is still the uterus I was born with. It's still the same uterus that was cut open almost six years ago. It's still the same uterus that harbored an unhealthy placenta, that became infected, that allowed my daughter to get sick. It's also the same uterus that created a welcoming womb for my daughters and functioned so well in so many ways. As old cells die within my body and new cells form I visualize only vibrant healthy cells remaining. I'm infusing those healthy new cells with the energy of my spirit. Because I know it is possible I believe my uterine scar is now invisible. I see a whole, healthy uterus. My uterus, my body will no longer be haunted by its past, but will welcome its future as it grows anew.

by Tami Powell  
ICAN of Greater La Crosse chapter leader

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### 3) Birth Announcements!

Congratulations to ICAN's Webmaster, Jane Fruendt, Two Adoptions After Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (2AAVBAC), for the adoption of Jonathan (age 3) and Alexander (age 1) from Russia. They join big sisters Georgia and Emily, and their father, Karl, at home.

Congratulations to ICAN's Past President, Connie Banack, on the birth of her fourth child and first daughter, a homebirth after three cesareans (HBA3C). Breanna Erin was born on April 9 and weighed 8 lb 6 oz. You can read her birth story at [www.mother-care.ca/breanna.htm](http://www.mother-care.ca/breanna.htm).

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### 4) Conference Report

ICAN's 2003 Conference in Florida was wonderful! It was learning and growing experience. We cried, laughed and shared. We got angry. We took a step or two towards healing. We gave support, comfort and encouragement to each other. There is something truly amazing about each woman who came. Everyone's strength, empathy, and passion were strongly felt throughout the conference. Friendships were renewed and hugs given. Many were missed; the ICAN email list was discussed regularly. The speakers were excellent. We loved the interaction between the speakers and the attendees. The speakers taught and in turn, learned from us.

Friday night's mixer was a brain storming session, challenging each of us to do more to change birth trends. Saturday started off interesting, since our first speaker, Suzanne Arms, was ill and unable to come. Pauline Scott filled in wonderfully, sharing with us slides of her country, New Zealand.

Jamie Stouffer led us in learning ways to prevent physical and emotional trauma in birth. We are looking forward to seeing the compiled lists from everyone's suggestions.

After lunch (a potato bar that included vegetarian chili!) Pauline Scott taught us about the role of posture in keeping babies in good positions for birth.

Cathy Daub gathered us in a circle and led us in several Bodywork exercises. It was empowering and interesting.

Susan Hodges shared lots of new information with us regarding midwives and VBAC. Her session caused a rather lively discussion. We all learned from each other. Susan brought the idea of filing complaints with medical boards, which drew a very positive response. Susan was using an overhead projector when a stray gecko (those little guys were everywhere!) crawled across the screen and had to be rescued from the machine by our very own veterinarian, Gretchen Humphries!

Gail Sforza Krebs' session on nutrition during pregnancy was excellent. We really learned some fascinating things about how the body works from her.

The movie night Saturday night was fun and complete with popcorn. Kmom shared with us a wonderful slide show entitled: Plus-Size Pregnancy and Birth. She had us singing before the video started and crying before it ended. The conference ended with Bonnie Annis's session: Building a Community of Birthing Women. It was a tear filled session as we shared deeply guarded thoughts and emotions surrounding our births.

We did not want the conference to end and in a way, through the ICAN list, this E-news, our local ICAN efforts, and the efforts of ICAN members around the world, the spirit of the conference does continue.

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ICAN E-News invites you to send your thoughts, comments, favorite quotes, stories, websites, to [enews@ICAN-online.org](mailto:enews@ICAN-online.org) We love to hear from you!

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#### 5) Website Worth Visiting!

Gail Sforza Krebs' recently published book "The Brewer Pregnancy Hotline" explains the protective role of nutrition in pregnancy and includes the nutritional information she spoke about at the ICAN conference. You can find out more details at <http://www.pregnancybooksonline.com/>

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#### 6) New at the ICAN Website

*Books, books and more books!!*

These are *must-haves* in any personal or professional birth library. The following books are available directly through ICAN on our website at [www.ican-online.org/about/shop.htm](http://www.ican-online.org/about/shop.htm).

**Pauline Scott's new book, "Sit Up and Take Notice"**, an update to Optimal Foetal Positioning, is written more to expecting moms than to midwives.

*The Doula Book* by Klaus/Kennell/Klaus

*Ina May's Guide to Childbirth* by Ina May Gaskin

*Labor Progress Handbook* by Ancheta/Simkin

*Silent Knife* by Nancy Wainer

*VBAC Companion* by Diana Korte

*The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* by Gotsch and Torgus

*Your Amazing Newborn* by Klaus and Klaus

*Sit Up and Take Notice* by Pauline Scott

*Optimal Foetal Positioning* by Pauline Scott

*Sophie's Birth* video -- awesome! by Pauline Scott -- it is actually the birth of her last child at the age of 41

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ICAN now has a toll-free number! (800) 686-ICAN

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