



Living here parenting

WITH ALICE GORMAN gormana@goldcoast.com.au

Blokes raising a glass to childbirth



Men learn how to help their partners during childbirth at a session at Beer+Bubs

Photo: SUPPLIED BY LUCY PERRY



MY enduring memory of being in labour is my husband's behaviour.

As I was writhing in pain, my husband was sizing up the hospital dinner menu.

"Al, do you want sandwiches or a hot meal?" he asked. "Yum, desert sounds good."

Apparently the only part of our antenatal class he had retained was the advice to keep plenty of food on hand.

It seems Dads are often unsure what their role should be during the labour.

Doula and childbirth educator Lucy Perry knows this better than most and has designed a course just for dads. And to ensure they attend she delivers it at the pub.

It's called Beer+Bubs and is a one-night session which focuses on the dad's role in labour and birth, giving men practical tips for being calm, engaged and useful during the birth. The next Queensland session is on February 28 at Murrumba Downs.

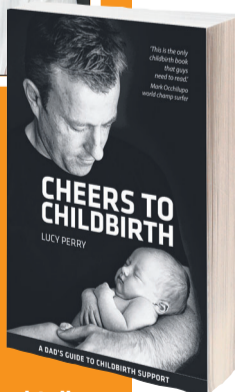
Dads share dinner together before discussing ways they can aid their partner through birth.

Some of the topics covered include what to say and what not to say to a labouring woman, how to be an advocate for their partner and how to provide practical, hands-on techniques for pain management.

"We give expectant fathers specific details on what they can be doing during each stage of labour to support their partner effectively," says Lucy, a mother of three. "We also invite a dad from a previous session to tell his story – usually a dad whose baby is only a



LUCY is looking for a midwife, doula or childbirth educator to facilitate her Beer+Bubs courses in the Byron Bay and Gold Coast region. Call Lucy on 02 9440 9099. Lucy is also offering two free copies of her book, Cheers to Childbirth (RRP \$29.95), to Gold Coast Bulletin readers. To enter, email gormana@goldcoast.com.au and tell us about the role your husband played in the birth of your kids. Entries close 5pm tomorrow. You can buy the book at www.cheerstochildbirth.com.au



few days or weeks old and who is still buzzing from the experience."

Lucy has written a book, Cheers to Childbirth: a dad's guide to childbirth support, which recounts the birth stories of 15 well-known Aussie dads, including Gold Coast surfer Mark Occhilupo, radio host Adam Spencer, TV newsreader Mark Ferguson and brain surgeon Charlie Teo.

"My birth philosophy is about being positive and empowering women," she says.

"No one had ever asked these men what the birth of their babies was like for them. Some were bursting to tell their story."

Lucy says she found men do not feel part of the birth process.

"Their wife is going through this hideous thing and they

Lucy's birth tips for fathers:

- Remember you're there to support your partner, protect her and advocate for her.
 - Pack some deodorant and a toothbrush. Women in labour have a very sensitive sense of smell and your bad body odour or coffee breath may put her off.
 - Use emotionally sensitive words to encourage your partner.
 - Learn about the many natural pain relief methods you can use to help your wife through the pain of labour. It's not all about drugs.
 - When all else fails remember the senses:
- Touch:** Use massage and heat to help her through the labour pains.
- Sound:** Have a catalogue of carefully selected music ready to play. Have it all loaded on to an iPod.
- Taste:** Use sugar to sustain her (barley sugar is great).
- Sight:** Use a visual stimulant like a baby's singlet to help her refocus.

How these high-profile dads handled childbirth:

- Boxer Danny Green shadow-boxed between contractions in readiness for a world-title fight.
- Neurosurgeon, Dr Charlie Teo, stopped his wife from having an epidural. She has never forgotten it.
- Broadcaster Adam Spencer (whose dicky eye is the result of a botched forceps delivery – was worried about the shape of his daughters cone head after birth.
- Surfer Mark Occhilupo says the birth of his son eclipsed winning the world title.

can't save her from it," Lucy says. Lucy's husband Bruce co-presents the Sydney sessions.

"When (men) learn that they can influence the pace of the birth and take advantage of a woman's natural pain management chemistry, most men realise this is not a spectator sport, it's not just about ducking punches and they are a critical part of the birth team."



Dinner in 20 minutes

Time poor? Never fear. Each day we will include a fast, simple recipe guaranteed to be a hit with the kids and most importantly it will only take 20 minutes (or less) to whip it up

Chicken florentine



Ingredients (serves 4)

- * 4 small chicken breast fillets, trimmed
- 1/4 cup plain flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 200g baby spinach
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 125g mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
- 700ml bottle Italian tomato pasta sauce
- 2 teaspoons white sugar
- 1/2 cup basil leaves, finely shredded
- oven-roasted chat potatoes and steamed broccolini, to serve

Method

Cut each chicken breast in half through the centre.
Cover 1 piece of chicken with a piece of plastic wrap.
Using a meat mallet or a rolling pin, pound chicken until about 1cm thick. Repeat with remaining chicken pieces.
Sprinkle flour on a plate and season with salt and pepper.
Coat chicken pieces in flour, shaking off excess.
Heat 2 teaspoons oil in a large, non-stick frying pan over high heat. Add spinach and garlic.
Cook for 1 to 2 minutes or until spinach wilts. Season with salt and pepper.
Remove to a plate. Wipe pan clean.
Heat remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons oil in frying pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook, in batches, for 2 minutes each side or until golden.
Remove to a baking tray lined with baking paper. Arrange chicken in a single layer. Top with spinach mixture and mozzarella. Preheat grill on medium-high heat.
Pour pasta sauce into frying pan. Bring to a simmer. Cook for 5 minutes. Stir in sugar and basil. Place chicken under grill and cook for 2 minutes or until cheese melts.
Divide pasta sauce between shallow serving plates.
Top with florentine chicken and serve with potatoes and broccolini.

Source: www.taste.com.au
Send your recipes for Dinner in 20 minutes to editorial@goldcoast.com.au