



# OUR BODIES OURSELVES TODAY:

*A resource for perinatal providers*

The newly redesigned [Our Bodies Ourselves Today website](#) has the overarching mission of providing the public with accessible, reliable and relevant content using an intersectional and activist feminist lens. Based at Suffolk University, Our Bodies Ourselves Today is rooted in the radical grassroots activism of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective from 1969. We continue the work and the historical legacy of the many editions of the BWHBC’s “Our Bodies, Ourselves” books. At a time when rights to health and autonomy are increasingly under attack, our purpose remains as important as ever.

Our Bodies Ourselves Today highlights the diverse voices and experiences of people who identify as “women” and gender-expansive, inspiring and empowering users with the resources to engage in the movement for dignity, reproductive rights and bodily autonomy.

[Pregnancy and Birth](#) is one of 11 subject areas featured on our digital platform. It highlights 10 themes, with informational resources, stories and conversations to explore.

On the Our Bodies Ourselves Today website, prenatal providers can find reliable resources that not only make topics easily understandable to their clients, but also voice a much-needed feminist perspective. We center reproductive justice and name the social, economic and political factors that shape health and well-being. We do not accept commercial advertising or funding from the pharmaceutical industry.

The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, navigation menu, and a 'DONATE' button. Below the header is a hero section with the tagline: "Your accurate and inclusive guide to health, sexuality, and reproductive justice". The main content area features a 'FEATURED CONTENT' section with three cards: "Charting Your Menstrual Cycle", "Ten Tips for Taking Charge of Your Maternity Care", and "Being in a Relationship When You Don't Like Your Body". Below this is a 'SUBJECT AREAS' section with a grid of 10 topics: Abortion, Birth Control, Gender-based Violence, Growing Older, Heart Health, Menstrual Cycle, Menopause & Perimenopause, Mental Health, Pregnancy & Birth, and Sexual Anatomies & Sexual Health. At the bottom of the screenshot, there are links for "quick topic finder" and "browse all topics A-Z".



### Who We Are

Our work is powered by scores of volunteers, staff, and consultants who share their expertise, skills, and wisdom to further the mission of Our Bodies Ourselves.

[Meet our team](#) →

< WHAT IS?

## Pregnancy & Birth



We bring so much to childbirth: our histories, our relationships, our rituals. Our needs and values related to intimacy, our sexuality, family life, and community. Our deepest beliefs about life, death, and birth.

Pregnancy and childbirth are as ordinary and extraordinary as breathing, thinking, or loving. Whether we are having our first babies or are already parents, each pregnancy calls on all our capacities for creativity, flexibility, determination, intuition, endurance, and humor. Similarly, each pregnancy should be accompanied by high-quality prenatal care, accurate information about pregnancy and birth, access to the full range of safe

more about  
PREGNANCY &  
BIRTH

MORE TO EXPLORE



RESOURCES

### Pathways to Parenthood for Trans People

This concise factsheet addresses pathways to parenthood for trans people, as well as what we can do to protect our fertility.

READ

< STORIES & CONVERSATIONS

## A Conversation about Mental Health during Pregnancy

New mother Jorelle Godwin and obstetrician Dr. Joy Baker talk about the challenges Black women in rural Georgia face finding mental health support during pregnancy. This short interview describes how having access to mental health through various stages of pregnancy can support overall health.

The pandemic has exacerbated the crisis in rural health care and mental health in America. To raise awareness, educate, reduce stigma, and change the national conversation, Remote Chance: Health Care in Rural America shares a portrait of the disparities in rural and frontier regions of the United States in care and mental health.

Read the full article →

SOURCE: Well Beings • AUTHOR: Elizabeth Arledge/Gurney Street Films • LAST UPDATED: January 11, 2022



Dayvison de Oliveira Silva/Pexels

TOPICS

- mental health
- pregnancy & birth
- Black / African American
- depression
- pregnancy
- anxiety
- maternal health
- therapy (psychotherapy)
- BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color)
- health disparities

### Why You Can TRUST US

- We rigorously evaluate all content
- We embrace a reproductive justice framework
- We don't accept ads or sell products

The [introductory essay on Pregnancy and Birth](#) sets the tone — informative, supportive and inclusive as it advocates for birth justice and an equitable health care system.

“Pregnancy and childbirth are as ordinary and extraordinary as breathing, thinking, or loving. Whether we are having our first babies or are already parents, each pregnancy calls on all our capacities for creativity, flexibility, determination, intuition, endurance, and humor. Similarly, each pregnancy should be accompanied by high-quality prenatal care, accurate information about pregnancy and birth, access to the full range of safe and healthy care options, and enough time for maternity leave. We deserve encouragement, love, and support from those close to us; a safe work and home environment; nourishing food; and plenty of time for rest and exercise.

“Ideally, we will experience our pregnancies and births within what childbirth advocates call ‘a climate of confidence’ that reinforces our strength and innate abilities and minimizes fear. We have personal control over some aspects of pregnancy and birth. But we need to work collectively to fix major problems in our maternity care system in order to create birth justice and a full climate of confidence for all.”





Individual resources on the Our Bodies Ourselves Today site reflect the Our Bodies Ourselves perspective on specific topics. We both create and curate content from multimedia sources that meet our criteria. For example, [a video workshop by Helping Hands Doula](#) discusses how partners can be most supportive during pregnancy and birth; and Rina Mauricio, another content expert, provides advice on [maintaining a healthy heart during pregnancy](#). One of our newest resources, written by midwife Stephanie Tillman, carefully maps out a [feminist cervical exam during labor](#) for medical providers and birth workers.

As those familiar with Our Bodies Ourselves would expect, our website integrates first-person accounts of pregnancy and birth. While we learn from professionals and experts, we also learn from what we live through. The powerful, diverse personal stories on our site share experiences like that of endometriosis during pregnancy, confronting fatphobia, and pregnancy loss. They include BIPOC, trans, nonbinary and multigenerational testimony.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar with the logo 'OUR BODIES OURSELVES', a menu icon, a search icon, and a 'DONATE' button. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail '< HEALTH & SEXUALITY INFO'. The main heading is 'Tips on Maintaining Heart Health during Pregnancy'. A sub-heading reads: 'Keeping your heart healthy during and after pregnancy is possible and may be easier than you think.' A quote box contains the text: 'Approximately half of pregnancy-associated heart attacks are in the postpartum period, when a woman's heart is still working harder to pump excess blood but the focus has shifted to her newborn's health. More than 75% of pregnancy-associated heart attacks are in women 30 and older.' A 'Read the full article' link is provided. Below the text is a source line: 'SOURCE: UTSouthwestern Medical Center • AUTHOR: Rina Mauricio, M.D. • LAST UPDATED: October 26, 2021'. An image shows two pregnant women sitting together. To the right is a 'TOPICS' sidebar with categories: heart health, pregnancy & birth, heart disease, pregnancy, healthy habits, and heart disease risk factors. Below that is a 'Why You Can TRUST US' section with a list of five bullet points: 'We rigorously evaluate all content', 'We embrace a reproductive justice framework', 'We don't accept ads or sell products', 'We reject funding from the pharmaceutical industry', and 'We counter misinformation and disinformation'.

The video thumbnail features a woman and a man in a close embrace. The text overlay reads: 'WOULD YOUR PARTNER KNOW WHAT TO DO? PREGNANCY, BIRTH & BEYOND'. The 'HELPING HANDS Doula' logo is visible in the bottom left corner. A 'Watch on YouTube' button is at the bottom. A 'Share' icon is in the top right corner.

A [video workshop by Helping Hands Doula](#) discusses how partners can be most supportive during pregnancy and birth.

## Lessons from Black Midwives

During the early 1900s, Black women midwives cared for pregnant and birthing women in their communities; however, they were soon stigmatized and replaced by white medical doctors. Today's worsening Black maternal and infant mortality rates bring this shift into question. What can we learn from the Black midwives of today? Is a return to Black midwives part of the solution to today's rising rates of Black maternal and infant mortality?

For Black and brown mothers who I think have tons of fear around childbirth, I want them to know you can still have a healthy, normal birth. Not to say that the risks aren't there, but don't let the fear paralyze you or rob you of what is intended to be a joyful experience.

[Read the full article](#) →

SOURCE: HuffPost • AUTHOR: Marie Holmes • LAST UPDATED: January 30, 2024



[Toyin Akinbuli](#) is a doula and activist who has worked as an HIV/AIDS advocate in Nigeria.

OUR BODIES OURSELVES

ADVOCACY & ACTIVISM

### Global Translations and Adaptations of "Our Bodies, Ourselves"

Ever since the 1970s, when "Our Bodies, Ourselves" became a bestseller in the United States, women's groups from around the world have translated and adapted it for women in their own countries.

Books about women's health are not woman-positive and/or designed to be used by women. Of all the books we have looked at, OBOS is the one volume that [does]... We want women to say, "I read a book, and it changed my life!"  
—Mavi Kalem, Istanbul, Turkey

As of July 2024, resources based on the book have been developed in 34 different languages. Excerpts from these books -- and in some cases the full books -- are available online.

Moreover, we also have excerpts, and in some cases the full text, of the dozens of [global adaptations and translations of "Our Bodies, Ourselves."](#) Many of these include pregnancy and birth in their subject matter.

We also continue the Our Bodies Ourselves legacy of advocacy, spotlighting how we can work for change. We list activist organizations with [volunteer opportunities](#). And we, too, get involved. Of special concern to us is the perinatal mortality and morbidity crisis, including how it acutely affects Black birthing people, in particular.

Our Pregnancy and Birth resources have benefited from the insights and expertise of diverse prenatal care providers, who review and curate the site's content in that area. Last year, [Cris Alonso](#) led the group; Cris is a midwife specializing in sexual and reproductive health, with a doctorate in public health and more than two decades of experience in Latin America, improving

access to safe abortion and childbirth. Former chair [Toyin Akinbuli](#) is a doula and activist who has worked as an HIV/AIDS advocate in Nigeria. The current chair, [Mickey Sperlich](#), is a researcher, midwife and lifelong advocate for trauma-informed perinatal care. Other pregnancy and birth experts include full-spectrum doulas [Yuki Davis](#), [Caroline Goldfarb](#) and [Sabia Wade](#). Wade is the author of the recent book "Birthing Liberation" and founder of Birthing Advocacy Doula Trainings, an accessible and inclusive training program for community care workers, and For the Village, a nonprofit providing doulas at no or low cost to low-income and marginalized communities in San Diego, California.

If you would like to suggest additional resources for our site, or learn more about becoming a volunteer, you can reach us by [email](#). 🌸



[Mickey Sperlich](#) is a researcher, midwife and lifelong advocate for trauma-informed perinatal care.

