

PREGNANCY & BIRTH

By Nicole Parish

IN BRIEF



PREGNANT women wanted

Researchers at Massey University need 1000 pregnant women in the lower North Island for a study that looks at whether poor sleep in late pregnancy affects labour and delivery as well as the likelihood of post natal depression. A pilot study by the Sleep/Wake Research Centre suggested pregnant women with the poorest sleep quality were more likely to experience longer labours and need unplanned assistance.

Centre associate director Leigh Signal says while disturbed sleep is an accepted part of pregnancy and early parenthood, it is important to work out what is normal and what is extreme and to come up with strategies for improving sleep quality. For more information visit <http://sleepwake.massey.ac.nz>, email mumsleep@massey.ac.nz or ph 0800 686 7537.

Pooch preparation

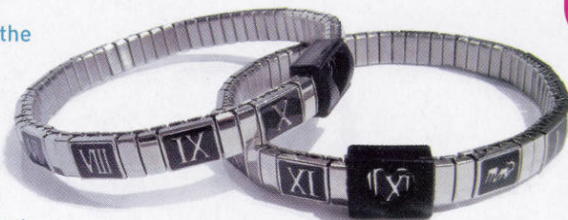
Worried about how your beloved dog will cope when your first baby arrives? Developed by vets, *Sound Soothing* is designed to prepare Fido for the changes ahead. It includes an advice manual and a CD of baby crying and small children playing noises, so he gets used to these sounds ahead of time and is hopefully less likely to misbehave at nappy changing time. Available from www.petpost.co.nz, \$24.90.



MOTHER'S MINDER

We spied these nifty bracelets on the Breastmates website that would make a great gift for a pregnant mum-to-be. The stainless steel bracelets are really designed to keep track of breastfeeding times and from which side you fed from, but

breastfeeding expert Frances McInnes says they also work for monitoring baby movement in late pregnancy. Available from www.breastmates.co.nz for \$35.70.



Finding out the sex – costly

A urine test claiming to be 90 per cent accurate in predicting gender is now available in New Zealand – but it's expensive. Based on measuring hcG hormone levels and available from pharmacies, the IntelliGender kit can be used from eight weeks pregnant to 34 weeks (though it is more accurate from eight to 15 weeks) and costs \$129 – more than three times the US price.

The Australian product launch sparked gender selection abortion fears, but distributor David Portnoy says the US experience hasn't borne this out and believes it is because of the 10 per cent chance of error "It would be a pretty drastic action to take if there is a chance the test result is wrong."

IntelliGender promises to refund the \$129 to women who register their details, if the test turns out to be wrong.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists' New Zealand committee chairwoman, Dr Gillian Gibson, doesn't view the test as useful due to its room for error. "I can understand



people wanting to find out the sex of their baby before their scan out of pure curiosity."

But she hasn't seen the science behind IntelliGender and wouldn't advise painting the nursery on the basis of its results. "I won't be recommending it to my patients."

LITTLE TREASURES

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