

► NURSERY FENG SHUI ► CREATIVE WAYS TO DOCUMENT BABY

# Pregnancy

Expect  
Good  
Things

## Baby Gear BONANZA!

**43** NURSERY ITEMS  
you **NEED, WANT,** and **GOTTA HAVE**

**SPECIAL REPORT:**

## YOUR **BABY** or YOUR **JOB?**

HOW TO FIND YOUR  
**IDEAL BALANCE**

## **DIVISION** of **LABOR**

Deciding **WHO DOES**  
**WHAT** after baby arrives

PREGNANCY  
**envy**  
**5** WAYS TO COPE

MSNBC's Chief  
Washington  
Correspondent  
Norah O'Donnell

**BIRTHING**  
**CLASS**  
**101**

WHAT'S A  
**BABY**  
**CATCHER?**

LOOK INSIDE  
TO LEARN

JULY 2007 ► Vol. 8, No. 8

\$5.99US \$7.99CAN





# TATTOOS & EPIDURALS

Back in the day, you sat perfectly still so as not to disturb the artist's needle as he created a lasting design on your lower back. Now you're in the same position, but this time the contractions render stillness nearly impossible. And this time, the needle is for an epidural, but the anesthesiologist doesn't feel comfortable administering it through your lumbar tattoo.

While many women with a lower-back tattoo have received epidural medication, others have experienced too late the painful reality that not all anesthesiologists feel good about the procedure. Their concerns spring from the lack of adequate case studies, fear of violating the artwork, and even the desire to be cautious in a culture of malpractice. But William Camann, M.D., director of obstetric anesthesia at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and author of *Easy Labor*, doesn't feel that a tattoo stores any infection that could cause an epidural needle to open the body to contamination. "Tattoo ink is safe," he says. "It becomes part of the skin and it is in the person's

body for the rest of her life." And while most anesthesiologists share his belief, this doesn't keep some from having reservations. The decision to complete the epidural procedure is at the sole discretion of the anesthesiologist.

So, now that nearly one-quarter of Americans between 24 and 50 are tattooed, according to *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, how can a woman with a low-back tattoo ensure that pain-relief options will be available to her? First, speak to your care provider about your concerns and inquire about similar situations in his or her practice. Next, contact your chosen hospital and check the policies of its anesthesiologists.

And remember that epidurals are not your only available options, medical or otherwise, to ease the pain of childbirth. If a chat with your ob/gyn or midwife leaves you in doubt, investigate other methods of pain relief. Most importantly, don't wait until labor to find out what your choices will be in the delivery room.

—Kimberly Selby

**PLANNING BABY'S REGISTRY?** Babydagny.com gives back to moms-to-be with a gift certificate for 10 percent of every purchase from her wish list, plus a gift for signing up.