



**HEY! DIDN'T YOU SEE THE SIGN? I SAID THIS ONE IS  
FOR THE FELLAS ONLY**

**By Christopher Wallden**

**June 2003**

So ..... you and your good lady have decided to go for a baby. Now - I know that your exceptional virility and abounding good looks would imply that conception will present no problems. However, as one man to another, there may be one or two tips you may wish to pass on to your less virile mates at the bar.

**Adonis and his lunch box**

Assuming you're in good nick (?); and/or that you and your lady are the right side of 40; that you aren't excessively obsessed with the evil weed or alcohol; that you eat and drink sensibly and that you don't suffocate the meat and two veg all day, you should have no problems.

A fitter body means fitter fishes. Fishes get stronger with regular training. Drunk or drugged fishes have a habit of losing their way. Your two veg prefer a cooler environment than the meat in order to function properly (after all, their natural position is designed that way for a purpose). So, back to the boxers.

### **Venus and her cookpot**

Most of the same things apply, but remember that, whilst you can potentially function very well 24:7, she has times of the month (and even the day) when she is far more likely to conceive. Do you know this? Does she know this?

### **Some useful tips :**

If she's been on the pill, then it's best to wait until she has had three normal periods before either of you get excited about the prospect of immediate conception.

The most likely time for conception is about 14 days before her period is due so before, during and after that specific day is your best time of the month.

Nature also says that Venus's ability to conceive reduces somewhat as the years roll by and, if you're both thinking about it when she's 40 or so, you're on odds of about 17:1. Just don't panic. OK, so the odds aren't stacked in your favour but, with a little more determination you can still achieve your goal. Remember also that the world is fairly well populated with people who were fraught and disappointed but who, as soon as they stopped worrying about it, hit the target.

### **"Happy Mum - Happy Baby"**

One of those phrases which probably come from our grandmothers and, as with so many of these clichés, arguably closer to the essentials of Venus's health than many other current imperatives. So, Dad, try to keep it calm and happy but, if she wants to party for a while or have a drink or two (but that's all!) or eat sardines on peanut butter, just go along with her. If Venus is happy and content, these feelings will be transferred to her baby and to the benefit of both.

She may, as time goes by, despair about the look of her body. She's allowed to do this .... you're not. So don't encourage or instigate "beached whale" conversations and remember that she is in the process of doing something infinitely more clever and challenging than anything you will ever encounter.

### **Eating for 2**

Alright, I know that this old adage has been scotched, but it's actually now more true, in a different way.

It's a sad fact that most of the food and drink available to us in the shops is so full of additives; colourings, flavourings, artificial sweeteners, anti-oxidants, preservatives, etc. that the end result in terms of nutrition is (he said kindly) less than satisfactory. The water coming out of our taps is also polluted and, sorry, but filters don't help a lot.

So "you are what you eat" is perhaps a more appropriate adage. But now there's two of you sharing the same body and the same food.

As you will soon come to realize Dad, you are now in that period of your life which could best be described by the words "open your wallet and say after me, "help yourself" ". Hopefully you will do this, not only willingly, but also wisely. So, even before she's pregnant, you may need to accept that shopping will be more expensive. Encourage her to buy organic food wherever possible and stock up the drinks cupboard with mineral water. Believe me, this will be a far better investment in your growing baby's health than spending the extra £100 on a "super-pram". It will also have the added advantage of ensuring that Venus remains healthy and that, when the time comes, the toxicity of her breast milk is kept to an acceptable minimum for junior's taste-buds.

### **Exercise and over exercise**

Of course it makes sense for Venus to maintain some healthy exercise. However, if she's a gym bunny, just try to persuade her to relax the intensity for the first 12 weeks or so and most importantly to just listen to what her body is telling her. As far as the baby is concerned, there are no medals for her exhausting herself just for the sake of it – procreation and survival are far higher on the list of priorities. Perhaps go for a walk instead or attend the local ante-natal classes. After all, if a massage therapist (which is what I am) would proceed with caution during this period, she certainly shouldn't be pumping weights nor on the treadmill for extended periods.

Following this cautionary time, hopefully her body will have slowed down a little (and grown a little) thus discouraging any unrealistic and inappropriate exercise.

### **Venus's larger sister!**

So, she's getting big and many parts of her body may begin to creak and stretch. Anti-natal classes, massage and relaxation classes will help, but just keep an eye on

her. Make sure she puts her feet up (metaphorically and literally) and pamper her a bit. Do also make sure that she continues with that quality food and drink. You don't both have to go into hibernation - just take it easy.

### **The time is nigh**

Now - what about the redecoration of that bedroom? Do try to do it before she gets up the ladder for herself or displays other somewhat dangerous "nesting" instincts. Take her on shopping trips to look at the cots, the playpens, the mobiles, the rattles and the baby play things and remember that, in terms of your baby's development, the mobiles and playthings will play a far larger part in junior's development than most space aged gizmos.

### **Whoopee it's a .....baby**

If this is your first, just be prepared for the experience. This of course will include elation but, if you're anything like me, it will also bring with it substantial feelings of care and responsibility with perhaps a twinge of guilt as to the self centered nature of your life so far. So, you're into a life changing experience which will also be quite wonderful.

Now you really do need to look after the new Mum. Do encourage her with the breast feeding but, if she has real problems, get her to see the NCT breast feeding advisor. Please don't be persuaded to switch to the Soya alternative - it's not good news!

Later on, influence Mum to try to avoid the shelves stacked full of baby food. Liquidizing your own meals (assuming they're wholesome) for juniors consumption is a far better alternative. If you can afford it, stay on the organic food and the mineral water and remember that this investment at this stage will continue to optimize your baby's development.

Sorry about the list, but don't panic! Recognize that kids are actually amazingly resilient and tough. They all have their own defense mechanisms to bugs and germs (more so if they've been breast fed) and their immune systems will quite naturally be kicking out stuff that their bodies don't want. So, congestion and snuffles and the running of the odd temperature are the norm. Just use your common sense and don't expect your GP to provide a magic tablet or potion for every minor ailment.

**And later?**

Yes, Dad your first thoughts are probably your best ones. Let's face it, your wallet will never be as full as it was but, in your enthusiasm to buy things for junior, always spare a thought as to what your purchases will do for your child in terms of fresh air, exercise, physical development and co-ordination combined with fun. So, the brick trolley, the swing, the football; colourful things that move and make noises .... all of these things are far better than huge doses of the TV or the PC.

Of course, you've guessed it ... this means that you could spend a lot of your free time playing with junior. If you're honest, you'll find that this is actually great fun

AND

you won't miss a thing in terms of their development

AND

Venus will think you're wonderful.

Not a bad pay off. (But that, of course, is just between you and me!)