

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's Taking Birth Back series of podcasts here on iTunes: Taking Back Birth. I've been doing these podcasts for a month or two now. And we've been focusing on self care in pregnancy and what that means. So if you haven't listened to the four or five podcasts prior to this feel free to look them and take a listen discussing what prenatal care is, why it's important or not, where as pregnant women we can receive prenatal care, and accepting all decisions as our own in pregnancy. Whether or not we choose to see a medical care provider, whether we choose to see a midwife, whether we choose to just go through our pregnancy with a friend or our partner, these are all valid choices. The idea is for us each to have as much information as possible so that we know what choices we have and so that we can take the best care of ourselves. Because no matter what we do, in addition to that, taking care of ourselves is something we all need to do in pregnancy no matter what. And by doing this, you'll find that you're accepting more responsibility for your pregnancy and your birth which is as it should be, in my opinion.

So this self care means lots of things to every one of us. It can mean something different. For me in this pregnancy, it means not looking to the outside to any medical professional or to any other practitioner fully unless I would really need to for some kind of reason that might surface but looking within myself and understanding the process well enough at this point that I'm able to be confident in it.

So today we're going to talk about alternative care options in pregnancy. So by this, I mean different practitioners that we might choose to see or different modes or methods of healing or nourishment for ourselves in pregnancy. Because, again, when you're choosing to do your own care or really taking responsibility with your health, it's not a matter of not getting any care as some medical professionals choose to view it. If you don't see a doctor, to some people that means you're being irresponsible, and you're not receiving care.

And those of us that don't walk that route know, of course, that that is not true. That we can take great care of ourselves without involving people that we don't want to involve or methods or technology we don't want to involve. So what about alternative care? A lot of us use alternative health methods and care in our lives just normally. And so

when we get pregnant, it's really not all that different to turn to these ways, these often ancient ways of knowing and healing and balancing.

But I wanted to talk about just five of them today that I feel are really interesting and very much an option. So for those of you who aren't familiar, hopefully you'll get some information today and feel more confident about things that might come up in your pregnancy whether it be emotional or physical. That you may be able to turn to some of these methods before or instead of turning to the medical world. Now, of course, in any kind of an emergency situation these may not be the kinds of things that you turn to. But we're talking about a normal healthy mom with a normal healthy baby, who doesn't have any issues in pregnancy. But things will come up. Just benign things. Maybe a little backache, or hemorrhoids, or dealing with trauma from another birth. So those are the kind of issues I'm referring to today that you might look elsewhere and always starting within yourself is great because sometimes that will tell you which way to go.

So when we outline these different options or some of the options today that you can still turn inward and say, "What feels right to me?" Some people really identify with using herbs and herbal products in their pregnancy. Some people don't. They don't feel as comfortable or as called to do that. And vice versa. So always check with yourself first. There is really no right way. And often there will be many recommendations for many people, if you ask. So you need to look inside of yourself and figure out what it means for you.

So alternative care, it's hard to know what else to call it. In most cases, what we're calling alternative care is really where healing began. Centuries ago before doctors and the medical world and the AMA ruled the earth, there have been healers in all cultures really. So the idea of having these other ways—we think of them now as other ways of healing and balancing, these are not new ways in most cases. The premise that most of these modalities are based on is not new. In fact, it's quite ancient. It's only in very modern times where we stopped looking at the whole person and the whole picture and stopped wanting to balance a person. And now it's all about symptoms and just making ailments and symptoms disappear rather than addressing deeper issues.

So, again, these are not new ideas, but they're alternative, I guess, in our day and age even though they started off as just what everybody used to do and how everybody used to take care of themselves. So you may desire to look into these things or others for many reasons. You'd like to take responsibility for yourself. And you'd also appreciate sometimes another opinion or thought or idea outside of yourself because, certainly, we don't know everything. Each one of us has certain areas we may know

more about. And it's great and exciting to learn new things especially in pregnancy, we think, when things come up.

So, again, alternative care is usually going to address a problem or an issue at a deeper level. And, again, that's the whole person emotional, physical, mental, spiritual rather than just making a cure or making something go away. And this is, obviously, great in pregnancy for very practical reasons. Most of us want to avoid medications, pharmaceuticals, even over-the-counter drugs. And we can find relief to sort of non serious complaints with these things. And also I think one of the greatest reasons for experimenting with different ways of doing things when you're pregnant is it really sets you up especially if you don't have children already to learning to care for your children in this way.

Because going through a pregnancy, doing your own care, tuning in, asking for help when you need it, this doesn't stop or shouldn't stop once your baby is out and you are now caring for this baby on the outside. We don't need to obey the status quo there either unless the baby needs medical attention for some reason. So in other words, the five things I'll talk about today are most definitely able to be incorporated into a baby health routine, a child health routine, and that's a wonderful feeling as a mom to be able to help your children in a natural way without harming them with unnecessary drugs.

And always be open to learning. And that is very much the case for myself as well. So the five things we're going to talk about today do not include, obviously, all the possibilities, by any stretch. And I wanted to keep it to five just to keep this brief. But I've certainly used more than these five as well. So these aren't necessarily my favorite or the best. They're just the ones that came to mind first and what I felt like sharing with you today. But there are many ways to incorporate alternative healing and care for ourselves.

So the first one today is chiropractic, which I find many people are familiar with now—this day and age. And many moms that I see are regularly getting adjusted by their chiropractors, and, even better, they're bringing their newborn babies and their children in to be adjusted regularly as well. And I think this is great. Chiropractic is based on the idea that when our skeleton, our spine, and all the other bones are out of whack basically that we can experience disease. That we can have all kinds of things go on from just being sick all the time to headaches to something really obvious like back pain.

So it's probably pretty obvious to you that in pregnancy a good chiropractor can be a lifesaver. And this, again, is just purely physical really on many—on the deepest level this one can just be purely physical. Your back hurts. Your hips are out of alignment.

There have been studies done that women that receive chiropractic regularly do have shorter labors. And I believe that because I think many of our bodies in pregnancy do get out of whack perhaps more than used to happen centuries and centuries ago when we were squatting in fields and that kind of thing. Now we're sitting in cars all day long or sitting at a desk or holding our other children.

So our bodies really can get out of alignment quite easily. And a good chiropractor is usually not hard to find. You'd want to find somebody that's used to adjusting pregnant women and feels comfortable doing that. And really that seems to be most chiropractors nowadays. But you can certainly ask. And you can visit a chiropractor anywhere from several times a week to every week or every other week. My experience has been most successful in visiting probably every week at least towards the end of pregnancy. That has really helped me.

So chiropractors can help just with the aches and pains of pregnancy as well as some baby positioning issues. So a persistently breech baby that your feelings needs to be turned head down or somebody else is feeling like needs to be turned head down, a chiropractor can often help with specific maneuvers. So, again, the idea is if your skeleton is in alignment and everything is functioning the way it should, then the baby can also align himself in your pelvis optimally.

So I like the theory. I think chiropractors are great. I really would recommend a chiropractor to everybody. And when cost is prohibitive sometimes chiropractors will work with you. Most of the ones I've met are pretty affordable. And if you do have insurance, I think some of them do work that way as well. Technically, they are medical providers. They are considered doctors. They're doctors of chiropractic. So if you're needing somebody to give you a proof of pregnancy letter, for example, or to say they saw you during your pregnancy, if you're not receiving medical care, then, in my experience, a chiropractor can be a great ally in that regard because, for our family, our chiropractor sees us more than any other provider, medical or otherwise.

The chiropractor is somebody we see a couple times a month. So he is very in tune with what is going on with the kids and how they're feeling and what he is able to help with. So chiropractic is definitely a great way to just balance your body during pregnancy. And like all of these modalities, is it 100 percent necessary? Are you unhealthy if you're not receiving chiropractic? Are you going to have a long, difficult labor? No. Not at all. I don't think that.

That could be said about any of these modalities. What we're going for when mentioning these and describing them to you is just that you can pick what's right for you and consider what optimum health means for you. I think optimum health is a great

way of looking at what we're trying to do when we're pregnant. Nobody is perfect, and there are no hard and fast rules. Not everybody can do everything or afford every kind of healing or herbs or whatever. So we have to pick and choose.

And we know deep down that nothing is 100 percent necessary for a successful pregnancy and birth. Really the best thing we can do for ourselves is to eat really well and take care of ourselves on every level. So none of these things—I don't want you to get the impression that we need them more than we'd like them to have a healthy experience. I do not believe that is the case.

And the next one, I think, illustrates that fact pretty well. Homeopathy. So I feel like lots of people know what homeopathy is. But then just as many seem not to, for whatever reason. So homeopathy is definitely one of the oldest, oldest modern systems of healing and balancing. So it's been around for a long time. And the best way to explain it is that the medicine—because it is, indeed, medicine, so extracts of plants mostly—are put into a tiny little sugar pellet. But they're diluted to the point of—that there's no way it could hurt anybody. It couldn't hurt a child. It couldn't hurt a pet. It couldn't hurt you being pregnant even if you ingested many, many of these little sugar pills because it really works on an energetic level.

And they, the homeopathy experts, describe the principle itself as—and this is in quotes—"like cures like". So what that means is say you're really feeling nauseous. Your stomach is upset. You're about to throw up. Then the medicine, ipecac, that's a good one, maybe the homeopathic remedy that you choose. Whereas ipecac itself could induce vomiting when it's not diluted in a homeopathic remedy. That's actually the cure for the stomach illness. Hopefully, that makes sense.

So that's the principle. I'm trying to think of another one. There are so many remedies. There are hundreds and hundreds of remedies, and they all have Latin names. And some of them are shortened. The name itself. That way people can just kind of get around a little bit easier. And some of them are really well known. So arnica is a really well known homeopathic remedy, and you can just go into a health food store and buy a little vial of arnica. And that's a great one. Just to keep in your bag when your baby or child falls down at the playground or hits his head on the table or has any kind of bruising or physical trauma. Arnica is great, allegedly, for soothing that.

So you have to do a little bit of research and learning to understand what remedies you would potentially want for different issues. And it can be quite complicated. I don't think homeopathy is one of those things that I do really well because it's very complicated. So basic acute kind of things, especially with kids, I find I can sometimes have luck with such as a cough or a cold. But if I'm trying to maybe treat myself for something deeper

like a chronic issue like long term headaches or something like that or something emotional, then I would certainly consult a professional homeopath. And I don't feel like there are tons around. I mean you can look in your area. In some states, they're licensed. Some states they're not.

And if you can find a good one, they're just often really good because they've studied for years and years. And they also have computer programs and sort of complicated ways of helping you figure out what you need because, again, there are hundreds and hundreds of remedies. So not only would you go broke trying all of them, but there really is a method in how you try them and how long you wait and what results you're looking for. And it's, again, a very intricate modality, I think, especially for being quite old. It's quite complicated. But, again, the kind of things that you might look to a homeopath to solve or to help you with could be something like morning sickness. It could be something like previous birth trauma or fear. It could be, again, chronic headaches throughout your life or something really long term. It could be an acute infection. So maybe a cough or a respiratory infection or something like that.

So pretty much anything that you could think of you could either consult a homeopathic book and learn it yourself for basic things and/or consult somebody that has spent many years learning. And, again, for me that's proven most valuable although it is fun to learn. And there's certainly things you can solve at home with basic remedies. You can buy kits. So you can buy sort of a first aid kit for your family. You can buy a birth kit. You can have your collection.

And, again, perfect for pregnancy because you can't hurt yourself with these remedies. You can't cause ill effects. If it's not the right remedy, it's just not going to work. So perfect for you. Perfect for children and babies. Perfect for pets even. There are no bad effects. It just won't work which can be frustrating. But at least nobody is getting worse with homeopathy. So that's my recommendation. There are homeopaths everywhere. And I use somebody in Sedona, Arizona, that's wonderful. And her name is Jenna Blasi. I have found that she just really, really knows her stuff and has been really helpful to me and also my children and even treated one as a newborn when he had a rash. And it took awhile. Homeopathy isn't necessarily something that happens overnight because it works on this deep energetic level to shift things in your body to acquire balance.

So it's not like taking a Benadryl, if you have allergies. Sometimes it's going to take a long time to deal with allergies or a deeper issue. But I would recommend her, and you can certainly look up people in your area. But she does work virtually and on Skype. So really is accessible to anybody. So homeopathy, that's the second one.

Moving on. Herbs. That probably should have been the first one just because I think that seems to be pretty well understood by most people. So herbs. Plants. Roots. Leaves. Flowers in dried form. And the dried flowers and roots and leaves can be concentrated into tinctures, which are really concentrated alcohol based or glycerin based medicine essentially. We can make salves and ointments as well with herbs. And we can just enjoy gentle teas or infusions with herbs, and that's the most common use, I think, especially in pregnancy is a pregnancy tea. Red raspberry leaf and nettles and oat straw and rose hips and whatever else you're going to put in there.

And a pregnancy tea is a great example of just a really gentle nutritive supplement essentially. Herbs can be or should be treated like medicine. They are medicinal. And you don't have to research very much to know that even a drug like Tylenol has roots—literal roots—in plant—the plant world. So all the pharmaceuticals really did, at one point, start off as something that came from the earth. And then, of course, they were manufactured to make these strange, strange pharmaceutical drugs.

But my point is herbs are medicinal. So we want to treat them with respect, and we want to understand that, yes, a pregnancy tea is very gentle and very nutritive. And that's perfect in pregnancy. But there certainly are herbs and different ways of taking them that are very aggressive in pregnancy. And that may be desired for short term problems or maybe infection. But, again, just treating them with respect and understanding that it is possible to sort of do the wrong thing or take the wrong thing and think that it won't be harmful since it didn't come from a drug store. But plants can be very powerful as well.

So there are lots of resources out there on herbs. I am, by no means, an expert either. So do your reading, ask questions, find somebody you can trust. Find an herbalist in your area and learn from them or just compile your questions. There are plenty of herbalists who have resources available online. Susan Weed is one of the most prominent ones and has been for awhile. She has a couple of books on herbs. And one is specifically for pregnancy. So *The Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year*. Susan Weed.

And that's a really interesting book. Herbs have a lot of controversy. So I guess don't ever take anything you read in just one place as the absolute truth. Do your research. Back it up. See if you can find the same information a couple of times especially if you're looking to do something more aggressive with herbs. Again, maybe treating a UTI or something like that because herbs are definitely capable of that kind of treatment and that kind of balancing. But, again, the gentle infusions, the teas that we're used to

hearing about are really wonderful. And especially if you can find organic, wild crafted herbs then that's even better.

And these kind of herbal mixtures are really providing excellent nutrition. They really are. If you look at the break down of what's in a general pregnancy tea—and wow. It's fascinating. The iron content and the calcium in the nettles and red raspberry leaf and oat straw and the vitamin C. And it's really amazing. So they don't take the place of food like any supplement. But to me, I would prefer that over a vitamin, for example, because herbs are really nutritive. And they know how to go into your body and balance it efficiently as opposed to a pill. So herbs are great.

Herbs come up a lot. However, in talks of the end of pregnancy and you'll see a lot if you're reading online about using herbs for induction or getting birth going, and I have to say I'm just not a big fan of that. Herbs, again, are medicinal. They can be abused like drugs. And I think many of the people trying this kind of stuff online don't have even a basic knowledge of what they're using. So you hear a lot about, "Oh, just take some black and blue cohosh if you're overdue." Now that's a whole other topic. But black and blue cohosh, especially in tincture form, are not benign. And they have side effects, and they affect blood pressure. And they can mess you up. So, again, just a word of caution that even if you're reading online or you have friends that think these things are just no big deal and where they might be better I suppose in the long term than a pharmaceutical induction, it's not something to be taken lightly.

And the same goes for herbs that prepare you for birth. Now a cup or two of pregnancy tea a day with red raspberry leaf is thought to be a wonderful uterine toner. In fact, cultures, Mexican cultures in particular, that would be all they gave the moms throughout pregnancy. That was their way of making sure that she got the minerals and vitamins she needed and was ready for birth. So red raspberry leaf, in particular, is a great uterine toner. But nothing is necessary to get you ready for birth. So I see many midwives and even women just prescribing themselves sort of these herbal tinctures in preparation for birth that they take daily a bunch of weeks before or those kind of things.

It's not that you can't do it. That's your call. But please understand what you're doing and what the effects of the herbs are. Because, again, herbs in tincture form—so that's like in the little dropper bottle—they can be and are quite concentrated and strong. So it's not—it's really not as innocent as you may think. And especially when we're talking about getting ready for birth or any kind of inductionish type information. Just be really careful.

I think if you don't know a whole lot about herbs and you're just starting out then just learn about nutritive herbs. Tonic herbs such as the pregnancy tea and how you can

use those to support your health in pregnancy in just a gentle way. I think that's a fabulous way of using herbs in pregnancy. Okay.

Last two. Number four, flower essences. So we're going to finish this talk off by talking about flower essences and essential oils. Now we've already talked about herbs. Herbs are, again, plant material. So picture the actual plant or leaf or flower, like I said. Dried. And then prepared. So it's really the plant prepared some way.

Flower essences are using plants and flowers, specifically flowers. Hence the name. Flower essences. But there is no plant matter in a flower essence. So the idea is more along the lines of homeopathy. There's not actually plant matter or anything tangible. It's a bottle. A tincture bottle. And there is essentially a dilution of plant energy or flower energy. I keep saying plant but really they're flowers.

So the way a flower essence could be made—and I'm not an expert by any sense here. So hopefully, I'm pretty accurate. One way would be to gather the flowers and to leave them outside in some water in a bowl under the moon and allow the energies to just sort of seep out of the flowers along with whatever other energies are around such as the moon or the setting where you've left them. And then this water can be bottled or added to some kind of solvent sort of such as alcohol and bottled in a tincture bottle.

So it's nothing you can see. It's really nothing you can taste usually. Maybe very subtly. That it's just the energy and the personality and the way these flowers want to help heal and balance us. It's the essence of that. So flower essences. The essence of that in a bottle. However, don't be fooled. It's very subtle, again, in looks or taste or smell. And often the effects can be subtle, but they are very effective. That has been my experience.

And I suppose it is subtle. You don't take a few drops of flower essence and cure yourself of anything. They're really for more emotional type issues, for sure. Even if there is a physical concern, it's addressing the deeper emotional component. So maybe that's fear. Maybe that's not being able to surrender. They're really such a wonderful tool, and I feel like it's not something most people know about. And personally, I have had just really great luck using them myself and also on children and pets who are just simpler than us adults and respond, usually, amazingly well. So that can look all kinds of ways.

Sometimes the energy of the person just changes. Sometimes if you're using it on yourself, you'll notice that it brings up other stuff for you to focus on and work on. So there's not one way that they work. And, again, it's subtle. You need to just do it and see what you experience. The best example of flower essences is Rescue Remedy.

Most people know what Rescue Remedy is. The famous Bach essences. And Rescue Remedy is a blend of flowers. And Bach, of course, had—and still—they still offer them, of course. Lots of single flower remedies. So you can sort of research what flower you might need specifically. Maybe you're dealing with a specific fear. Maybe you've just had a really big life event like moving or giving birth.

There are specific flowers that deal with these specific things. And, again, some are single and some are blends. Now you can make your own blends if you'd like to go buy the single flowers. And a few drops of each in a tincture bottle, some distilled water, and you're pretty much good to go. And that's kind of fun to do your own. One of my favorite places to get essences is my friend, Michelle. And her website is bluedeeressences.com. So the animal. Blue deer. And then essences. [Bluedeeressences.com](http://bluedeeressences.com). She has a very personal touch to the essences she makes. And if you aren't sure what you need, most people aren't. Most people aren't going to say what flower they need. They're simply going to say how they're feeling or what the situation is. And then it's her job as the healer to pick the correct flowers for you and to combine them in such a way that it works for you.

So it's a very individual art, and I would suggest looking into that especially in pregnancy when all kinds of things might come up just on a day-to-day basis. Or, again, maybe we have a deep seated issue, and it could be fear. It could be any kind of thing. Maybe we're just not feeling very excited about our life. Or it's not always a negative thing. Perhaps we have so much energy and vitality that we can't ever find sort of peace or a moment to settle down.

Flower essences are wonderful at just subtly helping us balance this. And I can't describe it any more than that because I think there is a good deal of just mystery there. A lot like birth. Kind of too much discussion doesn't get you anywhere. But I would really recommend them because they're just very gentle, and there is no way—there is no way to take the wrong one or to hurt yourself or to overdose on it. It's just not possibly. And it can be just a really, really wonderful experience. Very healing and balancing.

So pregnancy is the time to try these kinds of things when we're feeling even more sensitive and more raw and open to the world. And that is a time when I really do appreciate flower essences. Now Michelle at Blue Deer Essences also makes some wonderful essences for birth. And I keep them myself in my birth bag and have used them many, many times for different women. If they feel that it's something they want to try, just a couple drops in water or right into the mouth. And, again, there is no taste. There is no smell. They're perfect for women in labor. And just very subtle. Very subtle

in helping a woman cope with labor, or sometimes there is just really no words why you would want to try it.

But the shift—the energetic shift can be just amazing. So couldn't say enough about those. I think those are definitely one of my favorite alternative ways of finding balance when I'm pregnant. And the last is probably my favorite. So I've saved my favorite for last. And that is essential oils. So, again, we're still talking about plant matter here. And here we are back to plant and flowers and leaves and that kind of thing. But aromatherapy, which is the study of essential oils, describes it best as the essential oil being the blood, if you can imagine—the blood of a plant or flower. So it's sort of the life force.

And whereas flower essences don't have a smell or a taste, and they are very gentle and distilled in water or whatever. Essential oils can be quite fragrant and powerful. And they can look different from oil to oil. Some are really thick. And some are really thin. And they differ in color. And, obviously, they differ in smell. So they're very different from flower essences, but, again, using the plant world, which is so valuable. And the more I learn the more I want to learn.

So I've been studying aromatherapy for quite a few years now. And, again, it's just my thing. It's not the best thing for everybody. But, for me, it's just an area of just continued exploration and knowledge and application to my life whether I'm pregnant or not. For my children, for my pets. Yeah.

After flower essences, this is definitely the most personal thing for me. So if you don't know anything, there is just tons of resources out there. And everybody has heard of an essential oil. So any health food store is going to have a lavender and a eucalyptus, and sort of the basics. However, just disclaimer, I'm not really talking, honestly, about the variety that you'll find in a health food store, even a good health food store. A Whole Foods or whatever you've got in your town. I'm really not talking about those. The truth is the quality cannot be assured of those at all. And I'm not recommending those at all because I'm talking about medicinal use of essential oils which is quite different than just using them as perfume.

And because you can use pure—the highest grade organic essential oils internally, again, I just want to say that you do not want to use the ones at a health food store because 99 percent of the time, they're diluted or mixed with something else. And it can truly be dangerous. So I don't say that kind of thing too often, but I'm not talking about those. And I don't want anybody to be confused and think they can go take that kind of

stuff internally or, heck, even use externally. It could really cause discomfort and trauma.

So I personally use two different places. And one is in a tiny little town in Arizona where I lived for awhile. And they are fabulous. And they are called Wisdom of the Earth. And I'm pretty sure, just wisdomoftheearth.com. And it's a family run business. I couldn't say enough about their quality, but that's something I've spent a lot of time investigating. And they don't have tons of information as far as specific essences or oils on the site. But you can go there and just a feel for them because sometimes it's just choosing the place that feels right to you once you've investigated the quality.

So that's one of my most favorite places. And the other is Young Living, and I have been using them for a little bit now and am still learning very much about what they have to offer. However, I am quite convinced of their quality at this point. So those would be two that I could, for sure, recommend for medicinal use. And I don't have experience many other companies, so I would not recommend anything else purely for that reason.

But back to essential oils, they are just amazing because they work on every level just like most of these things we've been talking about today. I just feel like I've had really great results emotionally, physically, spiritually even using these oils. They are deeply healing and balancing and, again, they're medicinal. So perhaps it's like the constant application or consistent application of a specific oil to help heal and balance or bring up an issue or help you feel better. That's often not a onetime application although it can be. An essential oil has the possibility of balancing all systems through your body, which I think is amazing especially in pregnancy.

Again, when we're trying to avoid over-the-counter drugs or anything invasive or too medical or toxic, it can balance hormones. They can balance hormones, if you have the right combination. Adrenals, thyroid, liver support. They are amazingly consistent at helping with those kinds of things, if you pick the right oils. So it can be as deep as that, balancing entire systems of the body, to surface problems. Maybe you've got a burn. Put some lavender on that burn. Same with a bump or a bruise. You can try lavender for that too.

Deep emotional issues. Birth trauma is definitely one that essential oils can be really effective. Any kind of emotional trauma or fear or not being able to speak your mind or needing more courage. And it's not a quick fix. You don't want a person to get the idea that their emotional trauma is going to go away with putting a little bit of whatever it is on themselves. But that being consistent and knowing where to apply them and how to do it and being open then to the changes in your life because that's your job. The oils can't

do everything. They just help you bring to the surface what you may need to look at. Then they're really, really effective.

So in pregnancy, I've used essential oils for almost everything you can think of for myself and in recommending them to others. So something like morning sickness, insomnia, that's a really big one for me that I've been able to deal with with essential oils. Heartburn. Varicosities, which include hemorrhoids. So varicosities on your legs, hemorrhoids, digestion issues, constipation, just sort of upset stomach. And then when you're pregnant and you run into getting some kind of bug or virus, respiratory allergies even, helping with general immunity, general immune support.

So the use of plants in this way, in the essential oil form, is similar to the ones we've talked about. Herbs and flower essences. In that it will balance. But that there's also similar to herbs ways you can use to just maintain your general wellbeing. So there doesn't always have to be a problem or an issue that you're trying to solve. Sometimes some oils are used just for immune support. And I've noticed with my children in the winter that applying certain oils to their feet every night keeps them healthy. And I know that that's a fact because they can be around sick kids and not contract it, and we can forget the oils for a couple days. I feel more susceptible.

So, again, these can be used on kids and pets as well, if you know how to apply them and where and how. And, again, you're sure the quality. But they are just an amazing tool. So when you get to birth time with essential oils, I don't think they are any more necessary for a easy smooth birth than anything else. We don't have to have them. But if we choose to, we can ask the oil. And I do. Ask the oil to assist me on my journey. Clary sage is a great one as you get close to birth, if you feel like that's a good idea for you. And, again, for me, it's asking the oil to—asking the plant really to assist me.

They need to be asked. So that's one example of using essential oils as birth prep. But, again, not completely necessary. Just if you would feel that or be called to do that. And there are many options. Clary sage would just be one.

Finally, just a little bit after birth, they're wonderful as well for the baby. They're really great for kids especially if you're using on the bottoms of kids' feet. Sometimes they can be and will be too much for a baby or a child anywhere else on the body, so you want to be careful about that. But on the soles of the feet, most essences for most people will cause no skin harm at all. They won't burn or anything like that, so it can support a baby after birth with spiritual integration for one. Plan old immune support. Digestive issues. Sometimes new babies have that going on.

Most babies are a little bit jaundiced, if that becomes something that needs to be addressed, although jaundice is really, really normal. Then there are oils for that as well. So having an arsenal or really a medicine cabinet of essential oils will serve you in pregnancy and with your children more than you can ever imagine. It doesn't take that much to get up and running—to get up and be running with it. It doesn't take that much to learn what to use when and how to use them. The biggest thing is just building up your medicine cabinet slowly sometimes because they're definitely more expensive than vial of homeopathic remedies, for example.

But, again, in our family, this is our medicine chest. This is what we go to for pretty much everything. People and pets. So couldn't say enough about that, but that's where I'll stop today. Look for our free eBook eventually. Probably in the next couple weeks on essential oils and pregnancy and birth. Looking forward to putting together that for you, so that you can learn some specifics about how to use and when to use and what to use. And if you're interested, I will do or we will, at Indie Birth, do a free consult for anybody that is looking into choosing an oil or wanting more information on how to use it and just email me. And we can work out a time for at least a couple minutes, probably more, to see what essential oils could help you with in your pregnancy.

So thanks for listening today. Hopefully, you enjoy learning about some alternative care options in pregnancy. And remember, always look to the inside first whether it's to just gain insight as to which way to go or which modality or which person to consult. You can always ask for help and look to the outside but ask yourself first. That's the best place to start, and I think the marker of a true healthy and self cared for pregnancy.

Thanks, again, for listening today. And we'll see you soon.

(closing music)