

(introductory music)

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**MARYN:** Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi. I'm Maryn with over 130, I think, podcasts. And trying to keep them different mostly because there's just so much all of the time to explore and share. And so even though I've been pregnant many times, I don't think I've done a podcast specifically on this period in pregnancy. And by this period, I mean what most people would call the first trimester. So honestly, I thought that's what I would call this, and I was thinking about what I wanted to talk about in my head and writing down some notes. And it became quickly apparent to me that even though we all use this term trimester and we refer to it to talk about where someone is in their pregnancy, it's a way easier term to apply to someone else.

And I'm just as guilty of that if guilt is a thing in this regard. But working with women and thinking, "Oh, she's in the first trimester," or even saying out loud, "Well, things will shift once you get into the second trimester," or whatever the case may be. But it's such a nonpersonal classification of this experience. So I went in my own head from wanting to call this thoughts about the first trimester or whatever and quickly realizing then when it's me and I'm talking about what I feel and what I'm experiencing that that's too broad of a term. It's too rigid. It's too male. It really breaks pregnancy up only into three parts, which is so insane once you're the one in it because literally every minute can feel different. Every day can feel different. Every week feels different. And so I just want to bring attention to that. I'm not against the word trimester. I'll probably still continue to use it, if for no other reason than people know what you are talking about. And when you're talking about, let's say, more clinical kind of information then it can make sense to talk about it in that way the same way it makes sense to talk about week 28 in pregnancy or whatever it is. There are specific things that sort of go along with what we think of as milestones in pregnancy.

So I probably will still continue to use it, but honestly not in myself. Not in conversations with myself because I am almost at the end of this mythical first trimester. And it's been great, but it's been a whirlwind of ups and downs and every feeling in the world. And, again, just to think that that gets put in the box of first trimester experience is kind of ridiculous when you're a woman that is actually living it. There's something about that trimester description that, again, is so rigid, and it doesn't really account for any of the feelings and any of the nuances that pregnancy brings, again, sometimes every single minute. Things feel different. Things change. And so in this first group of 12 weeks, which is typically what the first trimester is or sometimes it's 13 weeks, there are so

many phases and colors and things I've been through and things I'm thinking that it just made more sense to talk about it like that.

And so I was thinking really the moon cycle does still come into play. As women, that's how our bodies operate when we're not pregnant and still in our fertile years. And so there's not a lot of difference between those cycles and some of the cycles of pregnancy. So within a month. So I thought I would like to call this the first few moons of pregnancy. Of course, that not being something I made up. The moons of pregnancy is something that has been a part of ancient teachings for—since forever. That there are ten moons to pregnancy, and that we even talk about the moons after birth. And so, again, that's the fourth trimester, which makes sense to everybody. But that's another great example of just this block of time that the world sees as something that is really static. But we as women know that it's so varied, and it's so different and so colorful.

So that's my little mini soap box about the word trimester today. I didn't even necessarily expect to talk about that. But it just became more front and center from my own experience. Again, I've had many pregnancies, and I haven't ever really thought in these specific terms. So I figure there's a first time for everything, and it's taken me a long time. Maybe you've had these thoughts a lot sooner. But, again, I think the cool thing is the thought didn't really originate in my brain. We could sort of talk about terminology in a separate podcast. And that would be fun. All the words that do carry a lot of meaning that we use routinely in birth like deliver, for example. That's sort of the personal peeve favorite of words in the birth world. But certainly trimester is one of them. So how many words can we reinvent in a positive, powerful way? And what do they really mean to us? So is it our brain just reinventing them because we don't want to agree. Sometimes. But then again sometimes like this they have really a personal meaning and a personal connotation. And so I just couldn't bear to call it the first trimester any longer because it's just been too much to do that.

So I am nearing the end of the second moon almost 12 weeks. So I think I have that right moon wise. So a period was due, and you're 4 weeks at that point. And so maybe that moon counts. I don't know. But then the next moon or really the first moon after confirming pregnancy you'd already be about 8 weeks. And then here I am again at the next moon. Whatever number you want to give that is fine. Maybe I'm not doing the math correctly. But in any case, a couple moons have passed. And I'm moving on and through. And things have already changed so much and morphed so much that I'm not even sure I can remember. And that's one of the beauties, I think, of this phase or any of the moon phases in pregnancy is that we move through them for better or for worse most of the time assuming the pregnancy continues. And we can't always remember which is why something like these podcasts can be fun to listen to later for myself or even for you because you might have some reflections that are similar. And maybe

something I say kind of jars your memory because if you don't write these things down or talk about them in some kind of way we just forget.

And it makes me think we're supposed to in a lot of ways. But then life is busy. And I think there is something to be said for really feeling each moment and not trying to hold on to it but being conscious that it's happened because they're all such important moments. I was thinking today that at about 12 weeks of course the fetus is fully developed as a human, which is really exciting. And so these monumental things have happened in this moon phases. This littler person has gone from cells to many, many cells and, hopefully, many perfectly functioning or developed rather parts that are starting to function. And so that's amazing. Who can even wrap their brain around that? That while I was just sleeping and eating and recording podcasts, this littler person was growing perfectly. Again, it's another way that really honoring the cycles feels important. This little person has gone from being an embryo to a fetus, which is really exciting.

So let's see. I was going to try and look back a little bit even though I'm not there anymore. And I can only remember what I can remember. In that moon cycle, weeks 4 through 8, lots of disbelief I think but lots of knowing. And I did record a podcast. In fact, it was the one before this on early, early, early pregnancy. Am I pregnant? Those moments when you think you know, but you might be wrong. And kind of it could go either way and just what it feels like to sit in that place. So obviously, that place has passed. And I think there's acceptance even in the early weeks of pregnancy at least for me. And of course, there are so many rapid changes in the body and really on every level that confirm it for me. So I've shared that I'm not a pregnancy test person. And I have a whole podcast on that too, if you are interested in why I've chosen that and how that's worked out.

But I do tend to pay a lot of attention to my body especially since I don't look for any outside confirmation. So nipple soreness is one thing for me that's even still persistent. And I don't know about you, but certainly some of these symptoms although not super pleasant are comforting. They let us know that our bodies are hormonally intact, working well, and things are probably fine. And that's what many of us, myself included, are always hoping and looking for, I think, in the early weeks and even beyond that of pregnancy. So is this pregnancy healthy? Are there signs that tell me whether it's intuitively or maybe intellectually that everything is okay? Because when we're not looking to the outside, then we have to do that. And truly, even when people are looking to the outside, maybe it's a pregnancy test, maybe it's an ultrasound, those things don't, of course, confirm anything more than that moment. So not to be the bearer of bad news, but that's how I've moved in my own journey through not needing that outside confirmation because really to me it doesn't mean all that much.

So nipple soreness. Nausea for sure. Definitely have moved through some pretty serious phases of nausea. And fatigue. Oh my god, the fatigue. I do want to talk about that. And I actually thought, “Well, maybe that’s worthy of its own podcast.” But truly, I don’t think I have that much to say. What I can say is fatigue. I don’t remember being that tired during my early pregnancies. But I only had one or two children at that point and was a lot younger and not as busy. So it’s hard to compare this. You may be just hold memories of not being tired. Maybe I was. But being tired, I think, is one of the least fun parts of early pregnancy when you just totally have to succumb to the need of your body to rest. And so that’s kind of where I wanted to land with that anyway.

That fatigue is normal. Even severe fatigue is normal in early pregnancy. And my own lesson in that really was meaningful because I think I started to feel like maybe it wasn’t normal. Maybe I was missing something. Maybe my thyroid was off. Maybe this. Maybe that. And it took some sitting alone and just breathing and meditating and connecting with my body to realize that, for me right now, nothing is wrong with that. It’s not pleasant but also trying to push through fatigue in pregnancy isn’t smart. And so I think that’s probably helpful to more people than me. I kind of wish someone had said that to me. I wouldn’t have had to figure it out myself. But your body is doing a lot. Again, your body is growing this person. It’s still trying to take care of you. Is digesting food and doing all kinds of things to support two beings.

And so it’s really unreasonable that we would expect to feel so energetic and great. Now of course, some women do in the first trimester or through their whole pregnancies. And that’s great. I would love to know if there is a secret. But I don’t think there is actually. I think when you’re a busy person and you have other children you’re going to probably be tired. And you have to focus in on why that might be for you other than normal. But assuming it’s normal, then it comes back to basics. Eating really well as much as you can with nausea which is kind of a subtopic. Making sure you’re hydrated. Making sure you’re getting enough nutrients especially if you’re not able to eat a whole lot. And then just resting. It’s not rocket science. And it really makes me think of the postpartum time. It’s as if we come totally full circle it feels with this birth thing from early pregnancy to the moment when we’re sitting in bed with this new baby. We’ve come full circle. Our bodies are working hard in different ways. And really what’s required is respect and rest.

And I’m saying this as much for myself as anyone else because we can forget. So I think people are getting more familiar with the postpartum stage and resting and honoring the time. But early pregnancy, I don’t feel necessarily has that honor because people don’t even know you’re pregnant. You may not even know you’re pregnant. It doesn’t feel yet like anything should be different. And so for people that are on the go all the time—and I’m one of them—it’s hard to just say, “Hey, I need to rest.” I know it doesn’t look like it. I know it doesn’t look like I’m any different, but I’m really tired. And

I don't have a good answer other than I'm pregnant. Yeah. I slept all night last night. And I'm still tired. So something that I have instituted or did at least in the really early weeks of pregnancy was a morning nap, which sounds kind of funny. But that was the time for me when I was just the most tired.

I would get up. I'd force myself to eat. I'd force myself to take at least a short hike. The hiking definitely suffered during the first month at least. And I would literally come home, eat something again, and go back to bed. And my husband was very supportive of this. And the reason was (a) I was just so tired. I didn't feel rested for whatever reason when I woke up. And (b) if I napped too late in the day, and this is kind of always the way I am, then I won't sleep at night. So I didn't want to put off the nap until afternoon time. So if I took a nap early—so get up at 6:00 or 7:00 and I was laying back down by 9:00 or 10:00 at the latest and just resting for half an hour or trying to meditate which has been a challenge with being so tired. I'd often fall asleep. But I've had to be gentle with myself. Whatever. Fall asleep then you must need it. And not hold this impossibly high standard to check all the boxes. The hiking. The meditating. The this. The that. When obviously, you just need to rest.

So that has been my very simple solution to fatigue and pregnancy. Please rest. Yes. There are things supplement wise we can always check out or tweak, or we can eat better. Or like I said, in some cases, people have low iron levels or thyroid. But you can only check in with yourself and/or if you feel led to draw some lab values, then you can look at that information. I didn't feel led to do that this time or really I haven't in a while. I would if I felt like I didn't know. But once I started to rest, I felt better. So it didn't feel confusing. It felt confusing when I was spiraling into this, "Something is wrong with me. Why am I so tired?" And making a problem without really focusing in and then listening and making a solution for myself. Making a problem solving thing, which I think we're very capable of. And if it's your first pregnancy, for example, that's harder because you might not know what the options are. So I think it's great to have support, to have information, to be able to reach out to other people to help with those kind of things too.

Iodine definitely did help me though. I won't lie. When I was thinking of thyroid, I thought, "Well, I was taking a prenatal that had iodine in it." And so I felt covered. And then I realized I had slacked off with that just because nausea, et cetera, I stopped taking the prenatal. And so I realized, "Hey, Maryn, that wouldn't be a bad thing to add back in." Pregnant women are typically deficient in iodine, and the recommendation for pregnancy is higher than it is when you're not pregnant. And here I am not taking anything. So potassium iodide, a couple drops in water has really helped, or it's a really great placebo if it hasn't helped. But that's always something to check out too.

So, again, this first month. I always say the same thing every pregnancy, which I guess is good. But I feel so stuck in my physical body. Like any effort to be made to get me outside of that, again, whether it's meditation or spiritual connection or just journaling or maybe even talking to a friend or I hate to say even supporting other women in their pregnancies, which I love, there is this period in my life when I'm early pregnancy that all of it feels really hard. And I just feel stuck. I feel like I can't see outside of myself, and I can't connect with much else outside of what's happening in my body. And, again, I think that's normal. I think that's physiological. There's so much going on in the physical body. And with the nausea, sometimes it's all you can do to just breathe and not want to throw up. I don't actually throw up. But I think nausea can be worse a lot of the time. So just breathing in and out trying to not feel horrible at certain moments. Not wanting to smell certain things. All kinds of things I've discovered can make one nauseous even sounds or kids doing certain things.

And that's a humbling part of pregnancy to become just totally self absorbed in a way where you are just thinking about yourself 100% all the time. What's next to eat? Do I feel sick? What can I do about it? Do I need to lay down? Oh no, I can't eat that. Oh, it's too late. Whatever. It's just a totally self-absorbed part of pregnancy. And maybe all of pregnancy is and should be. But this is just a part where it's really hard for me to get out of this body.

So the uterus at this point is, of course, starting to grow. I mean things start to grow immediately, but most people don't feel their uterus for quite awhile. So if that's you, it's your first pregnancy or heck—even your third pregnancy, I would expect to feel a uterus at 4 week or probably even 7 or 8 weeks unless you've had a bunch of babies before and know what to feel for. But of course, I have. And so that's been something that's been really reassuring is that I could literally feel my teeny, tiny, little person in a teeny, tiny, little uterus growing from about week 6. It's a very subtle feeling. But, again, I have been through it many times, and it's easy to feel on my body. So call it crazy, but definitely can. And literally, every day have felt it growing which is so reassuring. And I would encourage everyone—not that early necessarily—but by 9, 10 weeks you should be able to feel something in most bodies. Not everybody. But no reason to not play around with that and when you wake up in the morning, palpate. Feel your own body. Feel your own belly. Start above your pubic bone. What do you notice? Do you feel firm spots? Do you feel not firm spots? Eventually, as it's growing, you will figure it out. Oh, that's what that was.

And so that's a really easy thing. And we have lots of resources at Indie Birth. I believe we have a palpation video that Margo and I made many years ago. And just generally, I think it's a really fun thing to talk about. In fact, that should be a different podcast because that's one of the most reassuring things that a woman can be aware of and do on her own and not have to rely on someone else. And unfortunately, the classic case

of people not doing that is sometimes loss. So women think they're whatever—12 weeks along—and they're not because their pregnancy wasn't viable. And they don't know because they've not felt their own bodies. If they did, then they would feel and think, "Huh. This isn't growing," or, "Huh. This doesn't really feel like what 12 weeks might feel like," or, "I just don't feel anything," or, "I don't feel a difference." So, again, unfortunately, that can teach us those things.

But in more promising situations, it's just a matter of feeling every day and getting used to that once you figure out what you're feeling, and, again, feeling growth is really reassuring. So that's what I tell myself every day, by the way. I could hear with a Doppler at this point. It's too early for a fetoscope. But I don't even want to. I don't want to put a Doppler on this tiny baby. I have to trust. And, again, the growth is reassuring. So feeling that allows me to just sink into that space where I trust my body. I know that my body knows how to do this. And if my body was having a problem doing this or if it wasn't right, then I would know at some point. So so much trust in this early phase and these couple moons.

I think pregnancy does require trust all along, of course, but there is something just so humbling about this place where every day you're just kind of waiting for things to grow and bloom and blossom and trusting all the way. So those are some positive signs. And I like thinking about those, of course, myself having had a loss in the early second trimester. So I won't lie. I'm anxious to get passed that point just even mentally even though things feel totally different than they did that pregnancy.

So on to the next moon phase, weeks 8 through 12, and seriously, I think I started to feel different at that point. And I almost felt like it was too early. Like the nausea is better. Is everything okay? But it makes sense. 8 weeks is about when the placenta takes over. And so it makes sense if you're feeling really nauseous due to hormones that things could start to shift. So still fatigue during this moon phase but not really taking a nap every day. So sometimes you have to look down on yourself. And yes, you're tired. And yes, you're still nauseous. But oh look, you haven't taken a nap in many days. And that's been true for me. I just haven't need to lay down. In fact, this morning I did the crazy thing of taking all my kids out to the store which is unprecedented in the last couple of months. In fact, they were all wondering what on earth was wrong with me. But I'm feeling so much better at this point. And afternoons are hard. But in the morning, generally, I'm feeling better, and that's my time to feel like I have energy and can get stuff done.

So starting to come out of the fog, the haze of the first moon phase, is feeling good and welcome. And I'm still really sensitive to things in general. So the nausea is still a possibility. In fact, I was very humbled yesterday because I was going to record this podcast yesterday. But I just couldn't. I felt horrible. It was a terrible day nausea wise.

It was probably one of the worst. I couldn't eat even though I did. And I just felt horrible. So it turned in today where I feel good, and I feel great. And I can eat. So how knows? I don't understand anymore than anyone else why one day in pregnancy can be so bad, and the next can be so good. So humbling thing to go through. So yeah. Just couldn't do this yesterday. Had to wait until today. But still sensitive to so many things. Not just that. Is it the right food? My husband will make something, and I've said I wanted it. And I just can't eat it. I really can't do caffeine of any kind even though it sounds like a good idea epically when I'm tired. It just keeps me up at night, and I feel hypersensitive to it.

So even more of a routine person than I normally am. And I'm a pretty big routine person but kind of doing the right things at the right time. Eating at the right times and hiking in the morning because I really don't have the energy at night and things like that. Food wise it has been, I guess, no different than any other pregnancy. I have left behind the gluten, which is just a personal thing, but it doesn't agree with me and really doesn't in pregnancy. And I was just feeling so horrible early on, and I think that was a part of it. So it's definitely a thing I crave especially with nausea. And so it was this vicious cycle of ingesting gluten and then feeling my stomach hurting and feeling like I couldn't digest it and not sleeping well and all these things. So it was finally my chiropractor, who is a friend, but also a chiropractor. And she does network chiropractic, which is so worth looking up if you don't know what that is. There might be a network chiropractor near you. And if there is, I would highly recommend it because really that's the only outside care that I do. I, of course, don't do any of the other stuff. And I go to see her twice a week and get adjusted and that has made the hugest difference.

So I did slack off a little in early pregnancy mostly just because I didn't feel good, which is kind of counter intuitive but not. And once I got back on track with seeing her and eating things that were better for me, then I felt great. And things like headaches have really kind of dissipated. Of course, I think at least for me—and I know there are other women like this—headaches in the first trimester—whoops, said it—can be really common. And I definitely have experience that this pregnancy. By now, they're kind of fading. And I don't really know. Is it the moving on into a different phase? Is it hormone shifting? Is it the chiropractic? I don't really know.

So that's where I'm at now. Any other interesting points? Oh, I think sex in pregnancy is kind of a cool thing to include. I really should do another podcast on that. And I really want my husband to do it with me. I think that would be a really fun podcast, and we would probably laugh a lot too and talk about things that we don't normally talk about all for people to listen. But in the meantime, I was just going to add that I think sex in pregnancy especially in the early phases is either, for me, like a total blessing or a total curse. And I don't think I'm alone in that. So I wanted to make sure that I talked about



that a little. I think the nausea and the fatigue are the biggest factors at least with being tired at night, getting into bed at night, and literally do not touch me because I might barf on you. That's how I've been feeling. I have to lay really still at night because the nausea, for me, is ten times worse at night. And it's better now, but, again, this is a month or so ago. So my husband knows that and has remembered that. It's never a super fun thing, I guess, for any of us. But that's the way it is. I'm tired. I feel disgusting. If I move, it's going to be bad and definitely can't move a lot.

So that really puts a damper on sex life in general especially if you have a lot of children and not a lot of time or space for that. So we have moved into mornings, which has been kind of fun in a lot of ways. And that's not 100% either, of course. I mean what is especially in pregnancy when there is so many changes and shifts going on. Morning is definitely better at least for me. Like I said, that's the time that I feel good. I can feel energetic, and so that can be a really great suggestion, I think, for people. And it might be the opposite for you, of course. Morning sickness. Maybe more women feel nauseous in the morning. I don't really know. I've never taken a poll on that. But for me, it's the night. So flipping that and finding intimate time in the morning when all the kids are sleeping is also a challenge. It means getting up really early and then maybe going back to sleep myself or whatever. But it has been worth it.

And I find that sex drive in pregnancy is also so variable. And I've had many periods in pregnancies where sex is really not fun and doesn't feel desirable at all. And then other times—and I think early pregnancy can be one where sex is really awesome. And it's really fun. And it feels really good kind of for all the opposite reasons. So that's been fun. I feel like that's always different. Each pregnancy is different in all of these ways. And certainly, sex and intimacy is different with all of them. And I do wonder if it's also the little being that resides in there. Kind of like what their energy is and just what they're adding to the mix because I think they certainly do.

So on that note, wrapping up the first couple moons of pregnancy, and hoping to, of course, move on and share other kinds of things with you as time goes on. Really looking forward to feeling this little baby move at some point soon in the next month or month and a half. And, again, just trying to be in the space of a lot of wonder and appreciation and gratitude for how far we've come and yet how far it is to go. So thanks for listening. Have a great day.

(closing music)