

# Welcome Your Baby: Pagan Traditions

[Index: Conception, Middle Pregnancy, Labor and Delivery, and Early Infancy](#)

## Conception

Create a birth altar with photographs, herbs, jewelry, Mother-Goddess statuary, or other objects that are important to you and your family. This can begin before conception and updated throughout the stages of your pregnancy. If there are objects from your and/or your partner's infancy--baby booties or a special rattle, for example--these might be included on the altar. Once you learn that you are pregnant, the altar may also be used in a ritual of thanksgiving.

Consult "Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Traditions" by Starhawk, Diane Baker, and Anne Hill for birthing rituals and tools for a meaningful pregnancy and childbirth. "Pagan Rites of Passage" by Pauline and Daniel Campanelli is another helpful resource book.

The [Pagan Parenting Page](#) has a list of herbs that are thought to help encourage a pregnancy, including red clover flowers, nettle leaves, red raspberry leaves, dong quai root, false unicorn root, and primrose. Some of these might be ingested, or they might be hung over or put under your bed, placed in a pillow or pillowcase, or placed between your mattress and box spring. (Before ingesting any herbs, be sure to consult your doctor!)

- Each of you should wear a cord of a favorite color somewhere on the body for a month, beginning at the woman's most fertile time. It can be worn on the wrist, around the neck, or around the ankle. At the end of the month, tie the two cords together, symbolizing two beings creating a third. Place the knotted cords somewhere in the bedroom, preferably under the bed.
- If you used a broom at your handfasting (wedding) ceremony, this is thought to be a symbol of fertility. The broom, or one that you purchase specifically for conception, can be placed under your bed or somewhere in your home. Also, a silver charm in the shape of a broom can be worn by one or both partners.

### **Middle Pregnancy**

- Continue to add to your birth altar, or start one if you haven't already. Consider adding eggs, seeds, or a growing plant to symbolize the new life carried by you or your partner. Candles, pictures of ancestors, or items representing your child's zodiac sign can also be used.
- Make a pregnancy tea using nettle or red raspberry leaf, and let it steep on your altar overnight before drinking. Be sure to consult your health care provider about the safety of using herbs during pregnancy.
- Have a Blessing Way on the full moon before your due date. During this ritual, friends of the pregnant woman brush her hair and wash her feet with herbs: calendula for a strong heart, rosemary for remembrance, lavender for endurance. Each woman in the circle then comes forward to present her with a prayer or spiritual gift, such as a candle to burn during labor or a special tea. Afterward, a meal featuring symbolic foods such as eggs, roots, seeds, and honey is eaten.

### **Labor and Delivery**

- When you go into labor, keep a candle lit to light your way until you give birth. Put the word out to those in your circle (your spiritual group) so that they can light candles for you as well.
- Follow the European pagan custom of burying your placenta under a tree--a fruit tree for a girl, a nut tree for a boy. Trees are sacred to pagans, and the thought behind this custom is that the "tree" your baby grew from will go on to nourish another tree.

### **Early Infancy** [Back to index](#)

- Choose a date a month or two after your baby is born--perhaps the next full or new moon, or the next holiday--and hold a naming ceremony. Invite family, friends, and members of your circle. You will have an opportunity to tell your birth story, and your child will be welcomed into the community. Consider the name of a god or goddess for your child. Some pagan children are given two names--one they will use in their day-to-day lives, and a special name used only in the circle.

Ask a knowledgeable friend to cast your child's astrological chart to serve as a roadmap for parenting.