



Boy or Girl?

Lots of mums-to-be have secret preferences as to the sex of their unborn baby, and it's perfectly normal, says Sarah Ludwig Rausch.

Pregnant with my third baby after having twin girls three years earlier, I was consumed with finding out the gender. I already had an ultrasound scan early in my pregnancy, so my doctor wouldn't schedule another one. I'm not a patient person under the best of circumstances, but being half-crazed with hormones on top of my inclination to impatience, I defiantly called the obstetrician and scheduled my own ultrasound. Where I live, setting up your own ultrasound is pretty much

unheard of. It's no wonder everyone from the receptionist to the ultrasound technician looked at me with funny expressions.

Yet that's what a baby's unknown gender can do to us. We attempt to guess what sex our babies will be, even resorting to silly tests and signs in order to find clues. Sometimes we have a secret preference (I yearned for a boy like a junior high crush after I had my girls), and sometimes we get a big surprise when the baby is born. Then there's the whole 'do-we-find-out-or-don't-

we' decision that must be made before you have an ultrasound. All in all, trying to pinpoint your little one's gender can be one of the most amusing and interesting aspects of pregnancy.

Little Ones are in the Loop

There are people who swear that little kids just know an unborn baby's gender. My Nana says that asking a child under the age

of three will get you the gender every time. She says they're tapped in to things like that," says Diane Selkirk of Vancouver, British Columbia. "It worked for me – everyone said I was having a boy except for a friend's little daughter who said, 'Hi, baby girl,' every time she saw my tummy." Laura Melius, agrees. "My son, Landen, would only refer to our baby as 'she' and 'her' and would only discuss girl names. He was right – we just had a baby girl."

"I was lying on the couch when my two-year-old son, Michael, put his head on my stomach and told me he was hugging the baby brother in my tummy," says Angela Todd of St. Louis, Missouri. When she told him she wasn't having a baby, he became upset and insisted that she was. "A week later, Michael told the whole family that I was having a baby. I had to tell everyone that it wasn't true. A few more weeks went by and I realised that I'd been really tired, so I bought a pregnancy test and it was positive!" When Todd saw her doctor for the first time and told him about her conversation with Michael, they figured out that she had been four days pregnant at the time.

Mother Knows Best – Maybe

Some mums say they instinctively knew what their baby's gender would be. "I just knew without a doubt that I was having a boy both times," says Denise Schipani. "I had several of those woman-on-the-street chats with women who told me I was having a boy, thanks to that old wives' tale about how I was carrying, all in front like a basketball." Apryl Chapman Thomas was positive she was having a girl. "We had the girl's name chosen, but not the boy's. When we were going to the hospital, my husband said we should decide on a boy's name, but I told him there was no reason to. Our daughter was born the next afternoon." Jen Scott Curwood's maternal instincts about her unborn baby weren't quite on the mark,

however. "There was no doubt in my mind that I was having a girl," Curwood says. "That is, until the ultrasound tech said, 'Oh look! There's the scrotum!' I said, 'But I'm having a girl!' She looked at me with pity. 'I'm sorry, hon, but this is a boy.'" Curwood was in shock for the next couple weeks. "I kept thinking, 'I have a penis growing inside of me! I know nothing about raising boys! What have I gotten myself into? My son is eight now and the irony is that he looks exactly like me. If he was a girl, I think he'd be my clone.'

Secret – or Not-So-Secret – Family Desires

Sometimes there are family members who figure they know what sex the baby will be. Carla Mowry, says that her husband was positive that their third baby would be a girl (they already had two boys.) "He'd only discuss girls' names and wouldn't even let me mention a boy's name. He told everyone that I was having a girl," Mowry says. "Any mention of the possibility of a boy was met with a stern look and a comment such as, 'I KNOW this is a girl. I can tell

these things!'"

Mowry's husband was shocked when she gave birth to another boy. "His mother gave us a baby quilt, done in blue and yellow. My husband asked her how she knew the baby was going to be a boy. She looked him in the eye and said, 'You don't have anything BUT boys!' and walked away, shaking her head." It took the Mowrys a week to name their new addition.

"When I was pregnant, my mum made no secret of her desire for a granddaughter," says Elizabeth Lunday. "When I had my sonogram and it was very obvious that I was having a boy, we called my parents to tell them the news. My mum's response to the announcement it was a boy? 'What am I supposed to do with the doll house?'"

Whoops! Guessing Gone Wrong

Jennifer Applin was told at not just one, but also two, different ultrasound appointments that she was having a girl. "Before the

Do the games. Check the Chinese Conception Chart. Try the p and thread test. * It's fun to guess, but matter what gender your baby ends up b he or she is sure to fill your heart with more than you ever thought was possible to hav one pe

* Using a regular pencil, poke a sewing ne into the eraser and thread the needle with a six inches of thread. Dangle the pencil tip ove inside of your wrist. If the pencil swings from to right, it's a boy. If it swings toward your and back to your fingers, it's a girl. It's said you can tell how many children, and in order, you will have as well. Just wa the pencil to stop and start up i When it stops moving compl the test is

ultrasounds, I really felt I was having a boy. I believed the tech though because I already had a daughter, I'm one of three girls, and my husband just has a sister. Girls were the definite theme in both families." The Applins had quite a shock in the delivery room when the baby girl they thought was coming ended up being a boy. "I've heard of a few people who were told the wrong sex at an ultrasound, but never anyone who was told the wrong sex at two! He was definitely keeping things hidden."

In Elizabeth Johnson's husband's family, he, his brother, father, uncles and grandfather were all born bald. "When my husband saw our first child's head crowning and it was covered with lots of dark hair, he was certain that meant it was a girl." Honey, I see lots of dark hair. We're having a girl!" Johnson, of Lansing, Michigan, says. "When I gave that one final push and the baby slid all the way out, my husband gaped in amazement and said, 'That's not a girl!' The doctor and nurses cracked up. Someone said, 'Very good, Mr. Johnson. You pass Anatomy 101!'"

Old Wives' Tales

There's plenty of folklore surrounding the gender issue, and we have to admit, it's all just plain fun. Here are a few old wives' tales that will have you wondering exactly what that little person you're carrying will be:

- **The Eyes Have it** – Stare into a mirror for at least a minute, but

- no longer than three minutes. If your pupils dilate, it's a boy. If not, it's a girl.
- **Tales of the Heart** – If your baby's heart rate is 139 or less, it's a boy. If it's 140 or more, you'll have a girl.
- **Foot Temperature** – Are your feet cold? If so, start buying blue baby clothes. If they're

- warm, better head over to the pink section.
- **Breathe, Baby, Breathe** – Difficulty catching your breath now that you're pregnant? It's a boy for you.
- **Food Cravings** – If you're craving sweet foods, it's a girl. If sour foods tempt your palate, get ready for a boy.