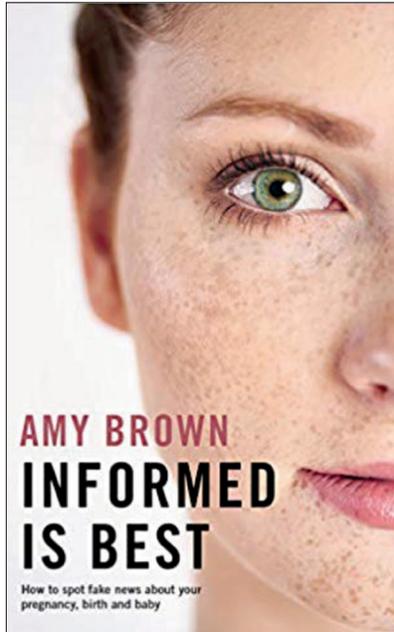


Informed Is Best

by Amy Brown



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‘**I**nformed Is Best: How To Spot Fake News About Your Pregnancy, Birth And Baby’ by Amy Brown is an engaging book that I struggled to put down.

After reading just a few pages, I was instantly hooked—which is surprising given that the main topic is about research!

Each of the 18 chapters are clear and easy to understand, and the use of real-life examples throughout removes the challenges of understanding complex research methods and terminology. Each chapter concludes with a short snappy summary of its content comprising a quick guide on staying informed. At the end of the book, there is a shortlist of reliable sources, such as websites and blogs, available for readers to refer to further trustworthy information, making it a valuable resource that readers can keep coming back to in the future.

Amy has written a book that is essential reading for all pregnant and new parents, and anyone providing care to women and their families, during pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period. In fact, I could even go as far as to say that it serves as a useful tool for anybody who uses the internet, reads newspapers or consumes other types of media.

In today’s social media climate where the majority people publish their opinions online, whether it is an expert one or not, many pregnant and new parents struggle to wade their way through the propaganda and decide what or who to believe as well as take advice from. This becomes particularly tricky when familiar celebrity faces or social media influencers are being paid to advertise and/or recommend baby care products—many of which they have never used or never intend to use. This is where this wonderful book comes in handy. It provides readers with the information needed to consider and critically evaluate the information they see and read online, in the newspapers and receive from family and friends.

This book aims to provide pregnant women and new parents with a clear guide to making decisions that are informed by

trustworthy information. Amy achieves this by expertly unpacking, step-by-step, the issues around determining what is reliable advice, and how to find and use it effectively in a way that is easy to understand. Amy also raises a number of interesting and vitally important points for consideration, many of which we either deliberately or inadvertently overlook every day, often due to either having a limited attention span, being limited for time or simply requiring a ‘quick answer’ to everything. We live in an era where we all too often turn to Dr Google for personal health advice, to make diagnoses, and even to seek information about the health of our babies.

This book clearly illustrates how despite much of the content available on the internet being generated by unreliable, bias or unscientific sources, many people place more trust in this than the opinions and advice of qualified healthcare practitioners and scientists, simply because the information is available at the touch of a (few) buttons—it’s convenient. I found this rather shocking yet fascinating and certainly in line with some of what I have seen and heard when working in clinical practice. I also particularly enjoyed the sections of the book that addressed the age-old phenomenon of confirmation bias—the desire to seek out and devour information that supports our pre-existing beliefs or behaviours.

Websites, such as Mumsnet, and social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, are common places that parents go to seek information and support—regardless of whether what they receive is scientifically sound or not. This book discusses how parents take comfort from others that are perceived to be relatable and facing the same challenges as themselves.

Despite being an academic and active researcher, I have learnt a great deal from this book and will certainly be approaching the information presented to me online and in the press with a far more critical eye. I will undoubtedly be recommending this book to pregnant women and new parents, and my healthcare professional and academic colleagues alike. **BJM**