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MIND OVER MATTER-NITY

By DR. ROCK POSITANO

March 6, 2007 -- YOU are getting sleepy ... sleepy ... you're pregnant!

OK, maybe it doesn't work quite like that, but **hypnosis** is increasingly being used to treat infertility and to ease pregnancy and childbirth.

While the practice has long been used as an anesthetic during childbirth, it's now playing a role throughout pregnancy and delivery, and even into the postpartum period. Judith Kurzer is a hypnotherapist who specializes in medical applications of hypnosis: "**Hypnotherapy is ideally suited for use during pregnancy and childbirth because it utilizes the power of the mind in order to induce relaxation and reduce pain without the use of drugs.**"

For the pregnant woman, hypnotic techniques are used along with conventional therapies such as bed rest and medication to treat pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH), which results in fewer hospitalizations, studies have shown.

In cases in which premature labor poses a threat, hypnosis may be employed to prolong the pregnancy. Premature labor is more common among women under greater psychosocial stress, and hypnosis can help to better manage and relieve this stress. And **during delivery itself, studies show that hypnosis can reduce the need for anesthesia and medication, and even shorten labor.** "We teach the pregnant woman to utilize hypnotic techniques in order to reduce pain and anxiety," says Kurzer. "The spouse or partner can also learn how to help the pregnant woman relax during labor."

It can even treat morning sickness. "Treatment involves learning to regain control of one's digestive tract through relaxation," Kurzer explains.

And that's more amazing than even the Amazing Kreskin.

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