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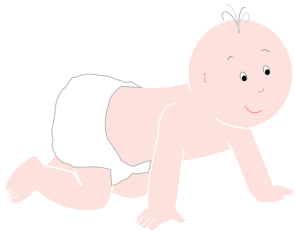
## Pink or Blue? Seven Myths About Predicting the Sex of Your Baby

by Ann Douglas

Curious about the sex of the tiny tenant who's been subletting your uterus for the past nine months? You're not alone. Since the beginning of time, expectant parents have tried to guess whether the baby they are carrying is a boy or a girl. Here's the scoop on seven of the most prevalent myths about predicting the sex of your baby.

1. **"A heartrate of less than 140 beats per minute means that you're having a boy while a heartrate of over 140 beats per minute means that you're having a girl."** Although this particular myth has been kicking around for decades, there's only one study on the books that supports it: a 1993 study at the University of Kentucky that concluded that the fetal heartbeat could be used to correctly predict the sex of 91% of male fetuses and 74% of female fetuses. Every other study conducted before or since has reached the exact opposite conclusion – that the fetal heartrate can't be used to predict the sex of your baby.
2. **"If you're carrying your baby high, it's a girl. If you're carrying your baby low, it's a boy."** If you've managed to get through nine months of pregnancy without having someone predict the sex of your baby based on the shape of your belly, count your blessings! Many people still lend credence to a rather sexist bit of English folk wisdom that states that boys are carried down low and out front because they need greater independence while girls are carried up high and across their mother's body because they need greater protection – the origin of this particular sex prediction myth.
3. **"If you are experiencing severe morning sickness, you're having a girl."** Theories such as this one have been tossed around for years, but a recent study added more fuel to the fire. Swedish researchers discovered that 56% of women hospitalized with severe morning sickness ended up giving birth to baby girls. Even if there is something to this study – something that's led to more than a few heated arguments among obstetricians – the findings aren't exactly definitive. At best, you can conclude that you may have a slightly higher-than-average chance of having a baby girl if you're feeling exceptionally crummy. It's up to you whether you want to paint the nursery pink on that basis!

4. **“If the baby is very active, you’re having a boy.”** Here’s yet another theory based on some rather sexist assumptions: males are boisterous while females are placid. What this theory fails to take into account, however, is the fact that the amount of fetal activity that the mother feels is largely a matter of perception. If she’s running around at breakneck speed all day, she may fail to pick up on the movements of all but the most energetic of fetal kickboxers!
5. **“If you’re craving sweets, you’re having a girl. If you’re craving salt, you’re having a boy.”** While it would be convenient if you could rely on your craving for chocolate as proof positive that there’s a baby girl on the way, there’s no hard evidence that cravings are linked to the sex of your baby. In fact, the jury’s still out on whether cravings exist at all! So don’t count on your cravings – real or imagined – to tell you whether to buy pink or blue.
6. **“If a wedding ring or needle suspended over your belly moves in a strong circular motion, you’re having a girl. If it moves to and fro like a pendulum, you’re having a boy.”** This particular method of predicting the sex of your baby works much like a ouija board. Micro-muscle tremors over which you have no control cause the ring to move in a particular direction – a sensation that can be spooky to say the least, but that doesn’t tell you a thing about the sex of your baby.
7. **“The Chinese conception chart can tell you if you’re having a boy or a girl.”** The Chinese conception chart – the brainchild of a 13<sup>th</sup> century scientist – claims to be able to help you to predict the sex of the baby by linking your age and the month of conception to the sex of the baby. While it has a reputation for being highly accurate in China, it simply hasn’t been able to stand up to the same scrutiny here in North America.



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So if these myths are consistently off the mark, why do we keep turning to them again and again? According to the experts, there are two factors at work: the fact that you’ve got a 50/50 chance of being right each time you predict your baby’s sex and the fact that you’re more likely to remember your successes than your failures! Their advice? If one of these “tests” convinces you to load up on pink frilly dresses, be sure to keep the receipt!