



# GUNS & BABIES

After the Pregnancy

Women's Outdoor News

The Well Armed Woman

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## **Guns and Babies: Part 3 – After the Pregnancy**

*Part 3 of the series, "Guns and Babies."*

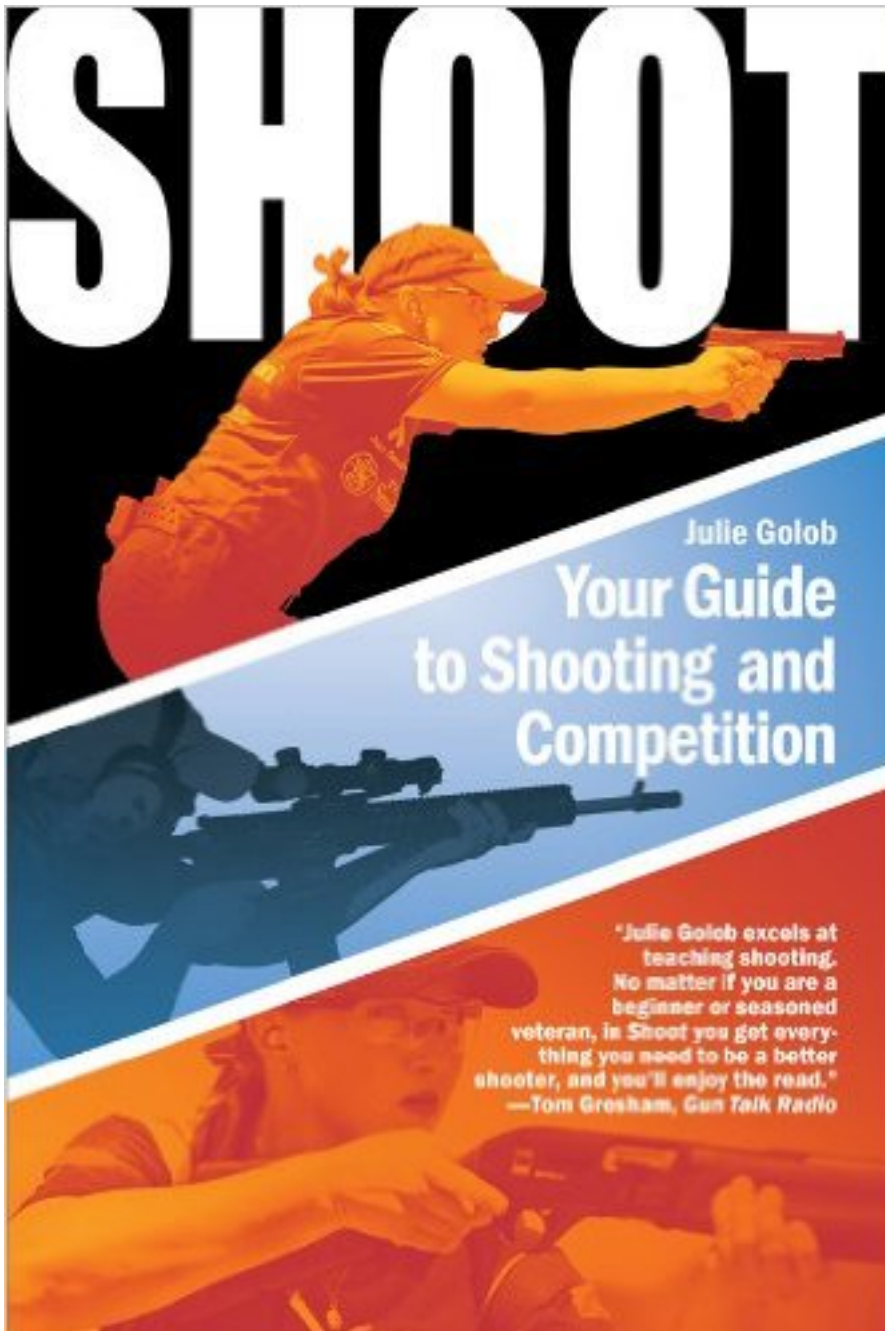
Congratulations on the arrival of your new baby! At this point your days and nights are probably all running together, sleep is minimal, and life revolves around this new little person. Feeding schedules and diaper changes are part of your new routine, but if you're a gun enthusiast, there are a few other adjustments that should be made as well.

### **After the Pregnancy**

#### **Breastfeeding**

Following pregnancy, your lead levels can show up in your breast milk. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued the first guidelines regarding the screening and management of pregnant and lactating women who have been exposed to lead. [1] The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines reinforce that breast milk is the most complete and ideal infant nourishment and advise breastfeeding as long as the mother's BLL is less than 40 mcg/dL in countries without high infant mortality. [2]

As Dr. Czarnecki—medical director of Public Safety Medicine of the Northwestern Memorial Physicians Group, chairman of the Police Physicians Section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and vice-chair of the Public Safety Section of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine—says in Julie Golob's book, [Shoot](#), “Lead is transmitted from the mother to the fetus, and is excreted in breast milk. For women who are breastfeeding, it is best to avoid unprotected firearms training. Wearing an appropriate respirator and careful hand hygiene should allow most breastfeeding women to safely train with firearms, especially if using lead-free ammunition.”



If you shoot regularly, have your lead levels check by a physician to verify that it's safe to breastfeed.

## Holding Baby While Carrying a Gun

As a mom, my top priority is protecting my kids. Whether it's making sure they don't drown in the bathtub when they're little, keeping them from getting into chemicals that can be poisonous, or protecting them from bad guys, it's up to me to be their first line of defense.

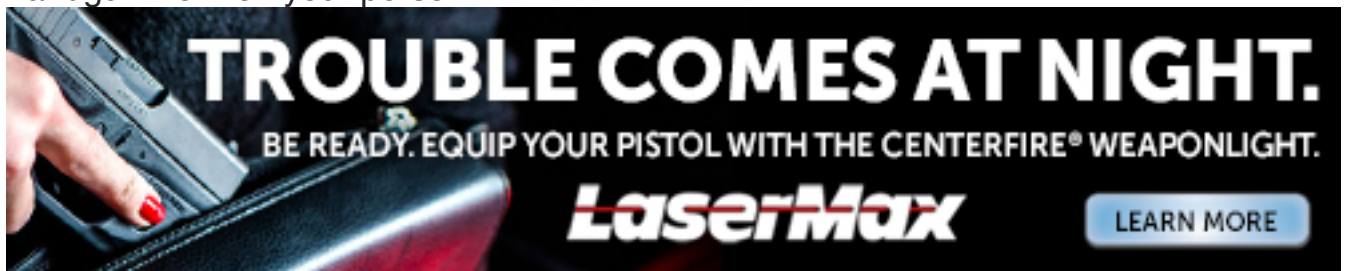
Holding a newborn or toddler can seem like a juggling act, especially when you're also trying to carry a diaper bag, purse, car seat and other baby necessities. Add carrying a gun to the mix and it can feel nearly impossible. Melody Lauer, whom I mentioned in my previous pregnancy article, 'Guns and Babies: Part 2 - the Pregnancy' is a gun instructor in Iowa and has made this short [video](#) about her preferred method of carrying a firearm and why it works well while holding a child.

The selection of your holster is key. The most important detail is that the trigger guard is completely covered. This will prevent little fingers from getting to the trigger. Another "must have" for your holster is good retention. As you're nursing or snuggling with baby, your firearm should be secure and not able to fall out, or be easily accessed by the child. Holsters can be classified as a certain level, depending on the amount of retention, either 1, 2, or 3. A level 1 holster generally doesn't have any type of strap, snap, or device that holds the gun in place. A level 2 would be one that has a release mechanism or strap that keeps the gun secure in the holster. A level 3 would be a holster that incorporates some type of retention like the level 2, while adding an additional step such as pushing, or turning the gun a certain way before the holster releases. The level 3 is mostly used by police officers or those more likely to be in an altercation with an assailant and become disarmed. For parents with small children, I'd suggest looking at a level 2 which would provide more than just gravity to keep the gun in place.

Practice learning how to draw your firearm one-handed, ahead of time, in the event you're forced to use it in self-defense while holding a child. This should be done with an unloaded firearm, and with ammo in a separate location. Moms are very proficient at doing things one-handed; this is just another area that we should work on.

One last thing to consider is if you plan to breastfeed in public while carrying a gun on your person. If so, consider the clothing you're wearing to see if the gun is exposed while nursing. Cover garments are another option that will help you be discreet while keeping the firearm hidden as well. Nursing covers are available at stores such as [Target](#) and [Toys R Us](#). With a little extra thought in how you drape them, they can also conceal a

handgun worn on your person.



## Safety on the Range for Children

When the time comes to get back on the shooting range and your child is in tow, they must have eye and ear protection as well. It can be difficult to find ear muffs and protective glasses that fit children. Verify that the muffs completely seal around their ears, specifically while wearing the safety glasses. Infant glasses and ear muffs can be purchased at [Bed Bath & Beyond](#) and [Sears](#).

Additionally, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), lead is particularly dangerous to children because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults do and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. The susceptibility of children is further amplified because up to 50 percent of lead is absorbed by a child's GI tract, compared to less than 20 percent in adults. [3] Babies and young children can also be more highly exposed to lead because they often put their hands and other objects that can have lead from dust or soil on them into their mouths. [4]

Washing children's hands and faces can help prevent the majority of lead exposure. Lead wipes, such as [these from The Well Armed Woman](#), are easy to stick in your purse, pocket, or diaper bag to quickly wipe hands, face, or other surfaces.

Also remember to remove your and your child's clothing and wash it separately as soon as you get home.

## **Good Gun Safes**

You should already have a way to properly store guns in your home, even before you have children. Nevertheless, if you haven't done so, do it now! Do your research to decide on the best way of securing your firearm(s) before your child reaches the age where he or she becomes mobile and starts getting into everything.

Several gun safe options are available that either require a key, a combination, or even a fingerprint. The type of safe you're looking for—a quick-access safe, or one that will simply protect your guns from theft—will determine what kind to buy. Keep in mind that you'll also want to mount the safe in a way that children cannot pull it over or onto themselves. Even a small bedside safe can injure little ones if it falls on top of them. And remember, this safe doesn't just need to protect your own child (however responsible you may teach him to be), but also any friends or cousins that come to visit him as he gets older.

It's up each parent to look out for the safety of their children, at home, in public and on the range. As former U.S. surgeon general C. Everett Koop said, "Life affords no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than the raising of the next generation."



An alternative to a big gun safe is the line of shelves for concealment from Everything Covert, a company that offers lockable, gun storage shelf and provides a durable hidden storage area for your firearm – available in a variety of sizes to fit almost any firearm needing to be safe and hidden.

## RESOURCES:

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for the identification and management of lead exposure in pregnant and lactating women. Atlanta (GA): CDC; 2010. Available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/leadandpregnancy2010.pdf>.

[2] Ettinger, AS, Gurthrie Wengrovitz, A (Eds). Guidelines for the identification and management of lead exposure in pregnant and lactating women. National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, 2010 available at

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/LeadandPregnancy2010.pdf>.

[3] U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Controlled Substance Analogues. Available at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/abuse/1-csa.htm>. Accessed August 4, 2007

[4] United States Environmental Protection Agency - "Learn About Lead." Updated October 15, 2015. <https://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead>

If you missed [part 1](#) or [part 2](#) of our series, 'Guns and Babies' be sure to read them also.