kindbody

Black Maternal Health Week



WITH CHRISTINA WILDS

Christina Wilds (Hammond) is a children's author, aspiring humanitarian, public speaker, and multipreneur in the entertainment and event industry. She moved to New York City where she most recently became a mother to her baby girl, who inspired her to start a children's book club, Tristyn's Book Club. As a full-time mom and full-time freelance creative, Christina has become an inspiration to millennial mothers all over!

This past month, Christina sat down with Kindbody to talk about all things fertility, pregnancy, and what it means to be a Black mom. Christina prefaced the conversation by saying, "This year, I'm starting to focus more on being transparent with my journey that ultimately led to motherhood. I've noticed that there are a lot of topics that aren't talked about when it comes to the pregnancy journey." She continues, "On social media, we see these perfect journeys...but you don't see the women that struggle with fertility, miscarriages, or simply pregnancy as a whole. It's one of the most amazing journeys, but also scary when you don't know the facts." Christina believes that by opening up about her journey, women won't feel so alone in theirs. And that is undoubtedly a belief we can get behind.

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Christina's Pregnancy Journey

Before the pregnancy that led Christina to her baby girl, she had learned that she has a bicornuate uterus (a heart-shaped uterus) which usually means raised risks of second-trimester miscarriages or even the possibility of preterm labor. Christina shared with us that when she heard of the barriers around her pregnancy, she felt constant thoughts that hung over her every day. When pregnant with her daughter Tristyn, she often found herself asking her physician, "Does she have enough room?" Ultimately Christina was able to go full-term with her daughter with no complications. Still, this journey inspired her passion in helping millennial Black mothers everywhere. In honor of Black Maternal Health Week and Christina's fertility journey, we'll be sharing steps we can all take to enable equitable access to fertility care before, during, and after pregnancy.

1. Provide Patient-Centered Care that is Responsive to the Needs of Black Women.

In today's America, minority and Black patients still have markedly poorer maternal health outcomes than their white counterparts. Compared to white patients, Black women are three to four times more likely to experience a pregnancy-related death than white women. By providing patient-centered care that is responsive to the needs of Black women, the medical institution would be creating a foundation to rectify this unacceptable health disparity. With a patient-centered approach, providers and physicians would maintain a greater understanding of diverse belief systems and values. And with more diversity in thought comes more personalization and individualized care.



2. Take Active Steps to Learn About Your Body.

Studies have shown that Black and minority women tend to feel less comfortable talking about fertility journeys due to societal norms, including pregnancy barriers and infertility. For Christina, it was after dealing with the loss of an ovary from a ruptured ovarian cyst and an initial miscarriage that made her realize that it's essential to do your annual-check ups and to not ignore health issues until they flare. She advises, "As a Black woman, I want to emphasize the importance of knowing what's going on with our bodies; this will empower us to make the best decision possible when trying to navigate our own journeys."

3. Provide a Safe Space for Black Women to Feel Empowered With the Information They Need.

One of the most important things we can do as providers, physicians, and patients in narrowing the gap in health disparities is to provide a safe space and access to education and information. A prominent reason as to why this gap exists is because of the implicit bias providers may have when delivering care to their Black patients. By increasing public awareness of the challenges of infertility and reproductive health care specific to Black women, we can broaden the conversation and continue to invest in the vital resources Black and minority women need.