

MOMMY BLOGGER BOO-BOO DIARY



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What's the latest gadget poking out of mom's handbag? No, it's not a new BlackBerry. It's the HealthPod Baby, a portable medical record, in a handy carrying case, of every shot or sniffle, every

earache and antibiotic your child has ever experienced (www.healthpod.ca).

The brainchild of three Calgary parents who realized they were having trouble keeping their kids' health records in their heads, the HealthPod, a kind of Filofax for medical information, takes the worry out of visits to the doctor or walk-in clinic.

"You'd be surprised how many mothers we've talked with who write down what doctors say on the back of receipts," says HealthPod co-founder, Marci Andrews.

The idea was born after one of the founder's sons had constant ear infections, and was prescribed antibiotic after antibiotic. She would have trouble remembering what medications he had taken and when the infections occurred.

"It's a product whose time has come," Andrews says. "No longer do you have one doctor from the time you were born until adulthood. In many provinces, there are huge waiting lists to get pediatri-

cians. There's a whole breed of parents now that only go to walk-in clinics and you always get a new doctor."

There's a fine line, of course, between an empowered parent and the overly neurotic one. "We produced it purposely in a way that wouldn't make parents feel anxious," Andrews says.

The HealthPod Baby is a sturdy zip-up binder with pages for jotting down questions to ask the doctors, for recording dates of visits, stages of development and family health history. It includes plastic cases for prescriptions, business cards and immunization records.

So far, they have sold nearly 1,000 HealthPods. And doctors are endorsing them because of the time saved during checkups.

"We worked with more than 20 health-care professionals to find out what are the most important questions a parent can ask," Andrews says. "Doctors really like it. They have such limited time and are under so much pressure to

come up with diagnosis and treatment."

For the new mother, the HealthPod Baby includes charts for baby's feeding, sleeping and eliminating schedules. It also includes age and weight chart percentiles. (All new mothers also want to know what "percentile" their child falls into — essential for "bragging rights.")

Another advantage of the HealthPod Baby is that it's great for fathers, who often aren't as familiar with their children's medical histories. (Remember that *Everybody Loves Raymond* episode when Ray takes the wrong twin to the doctor?)

"Dads now come into doctors' offices with it and they can look to see what's written down. It makes them feel equipped," Andrews says.

The product is one of hundreds featured at the Today's Parent Baby and Toronto Show this weekend at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (www.thebabyandtoddler-show.com).

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