

BY DEBBIE LAVDAS

Another baby after 40?

Take pleasure in the many joys of having a baby later in life.

Forty is the new 30 in Hollywood, with "40 and fabulous" women having more children later in life. Jennifer Connelly, 40, just had her third child this year (her other kids are 7 and 13.) Uma Thurman, 41, is now pregnant with her third child (her others are 10 and 13). And Kelly Preston was 48 when she had her baby boy and was raising daughter Ella, 10.

While Hollywood is only an hour north of Orange County, the mindset here, and throughout the U.S., remains less celebrated – and more often questioned – when it comes to having a baby over 40.

I'll never forget what a gal said to me last year when I told her I was pregnant. After she gasped and threw her hands over her mouth in shock, she asked, "How old are you?" Then, she followed up with, "Are you going to keep it?" (Like it was a puppy or an overpriced shirt.) I said, "42" and "Of course."

I was thrilled with the news. Yes, I was stunned, and a bit worried, but I felt lucky with a capital "L." My perfectly healthy little guy, now 9 months old, is among my best blessings ever. Starting all over again (with my husband and children, 7 and 8) is sweet, fun and often hilarious.

So to lift the veil a bit over the general uncertainty of having a baby over 40, here are a few key details and insight for the close-minded.

Did you know women in their early 40s are getting pregnant more often? Pregnancy after decade No. 4 is on the rise, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And the New York Times recently ran a blog about this very topic. According to the Times, pregnancy rates among women in their early 20s fell nearly 18 percent from 1990 to 2008. However, pregnancies among older women rose far more dramatically: Rates for women ages 40 to 44 went up nearly 65 percent. While women in their 20s



are delaying pregnancy, those in their 40s are picking up the slack. It all makes sense these days, when women are putting their careers first and starting families later.

While having a baby after 40 can be empowering, did you know that it keeps you young? Women over 40 who have babies without help from fertility drugs or other assisted reproductive technologies tend to live longer than those who don't. One theory is that estrogen, which is still produced in abundance in fertile women, has life-lengthening effects on the bones, as well as the heart and other organs.

Women with more education tend to live in more stable environments: They have children later in life and more likely marry before having kids. In addition, working women who have children when they're older are more able to develop flexible schedules in order to spend more time with their families; they've more likely proven themselves in the workplace and as a result have gained clout.

The cliché "starting all over again" is often noted with dread. But the truth is that the pregnancy weight gain, the toy clutter and the breastfeeding are all proverbial drops in the bucket. The larger picture includes a beautiful new life in the world, the little toes, the first giggle, the snuggles and the fun of

watching another baby in your life grow up.

Seeing siblings share in the joys of a new baby in the home is priceless. Watching them reading to the baby, giving them their favorite toys and blankets, and seeing them play together is beyond words. In addition, the help from older siblings is immeasurable and helps bring sanity this time around.

There are so many fabulous things about having a baby later in life. So if you find out that you're pregnant and over 40, live it up! You should be so lucky. **OCF**

Stroll in style this time around

Having a baby after age 40 is quite mind-blowing with all the amazing baby goods out there, like the orbitbaby Stroller G2 with color pack. It comes in bright, chic colors, the stroller seat fully rotates 360 degrees, and it can be folded with one hand.

The available color pack comes in nine fabulous shades, and it will have everyone around you saying, "I wish they'd had that when I had kids."

orbitbaby.com

PHOTO BY HEATHER HART