

How in the world did us “baby boomers” and beyond ever raise children? Were most of us just plain lucky that they survived?

A recent baby shower really had me gawking, as a number of items were so new to me. Take a trip down the “baby gadget aisle” and you will really be surprised. There are more gadgets than most people have room for.

When you talk to the “older generations” you learn that babies were born in the worst of conditions. During dust storms, blizzards, and illness, with the possibility of a doctor not even being present.

My Mom, who is 92, just regaled us of the winter my brother was born. It was mid-winter, snow had closed the roads, and she was due with a baby.

The time was nearing, and my Dad met the doctor on an open road with horse and buggy, had him come to the farmhouse and deliver the baby, and then stay overnight and take him back to the open road the next day.

Where was the fancy bed, the whirlpool bath, the shots for comfort? Guess there weren't any - just plain grit in the face of normal delivery.

When my daughter-in-law's children were born, it was fascinating to go into the birthing suite. It was set up with a corner table, a television, comfortable chairs, and a whirlpool nearby. She and my son were in there together throughout the entire process, and now have wonderful memories of the births of their two kids.

Back “in the day”, dads were allowed to sit or pace in the waiting room, imagining what was happening to their spouse. It seems better that Dads are now involved with the births of their little ones.

We came home with a couple of open kimonos, some soft blankets, and piles of white cloth diapers. Of course, we Moms also spent a good deal of time with our hands in diaper pails as we rinsed out all those soiled diapers. But there was a certain satisfaction in folding fresh laundered diapers for our little ones.

Everything has certainly changed. Car seats now actually protect the babies when traveling - while our first car seat strapped over the front seat and was very dangerous. Many toys have been taken off the market because of sharp corners, lead paint, or eyes that are removable. They are all designed for the safety of our children in mind.

You can pick up just about any kind of baby paraphernalia you can think of these days. Some items are very usable, and others may just take up space. But you do have choices.

It's good that Moms and babies are watched more closely, that there are centers for babies in crisis, and our healthcare systems are more aware of normal needs. When my Mom had the Doctor stay overnight, do