



Birthmatters, LLC  
294 Pleasant St,  
Stoughton, MA 02072

### Welcome to Birthmatters, LLC!

We are truly delighted that you've made the decision to have a homebirth and allow us to assist you as your midwives! It is such an honor to attend women and their families during this very special time and we do it with great joy. This Welcome Packet is filled with information you'll find useful during your pregnancy: information about the practice, our philosophies, a list of supplies to gather for your birth, and information about when to call your midwives. We're happy to answer questions, should you have any after reading this packet.

### Contact Us...

We encourage you to call promptly if you have a question you need answered or if you have concerns that need some attention. The best way to reach us is by calling our cell phones.

<b>Jessica:</b> 781.492.9005 <a href="mailto:Jessica@homebirthmatters.com">Jessica@homebirthmatters.com</a>	<b>Sarafina:</b> 781.492.9184 <a href="mailto:Sarafina@homebirthmatters.com">Sarafina@homebirthmatters.com</a>	<b>Emily:</b> 914.325.1715 <a href="mailto:Emily@homebirthmatters.com">Emily@homebirthmatters.com</a>
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### About this Practice...

Birthmatters, LLC is a homebirth practice in which there are three primary midwives: Jessica Petrone, Sarafina Kennedy, and Emily Bowler. Sometimes, an apprentice accompanies us. This is the accepted standard of care in the homebirth setting. There is much to do at a homebirth, and as a team, we're able to provide the best midwifery care for you and your baby. We all attend as many of your visits as we can in order to build comfortable relationships.

### Services Offered

- Home Birth
- VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean)
- Health History Review
- Postpartum care through week six
- Comprehensive prenatal care
- Pregnancy Lab Work
- Water birth
- Nutritional Counseling
- Newborn Screening Exam
- Natural Childbirth Classes
- Insurance Billing through Larsen Billing
- Breastfeeding Support

### Philosophy

Birth is a normal healthy experience and homebirth is an excellent option for women in good general health. As midwives, we offer woman-led care, supported by education, respect, and love. We believe that once they're provided with all the information, women are the best at deciding what's right for their bodies. Every woman has the right to safe, satisfying health care and every family has the right to participate in decisions regarding pregnancy and birth, and to share the experience of that birth in a family-centered environment. Every pregnancy and birth is as different as the women experiencing them. For this reason, our care is catered to each woman as an individual. As midwives, we trust in the birth process; knowing that a woman who is relaxed and comfortable with her surrounding will have a more positive birth experience. We believe birth to be ideal when it is unhindered and undisturbed. We also believe birth is sacred, intimate and spiritual in nature. Babies are meant to come through safely, gently and unharmed. We fully embrace that this is your birth and baby, not ours. We will not interfere with the mother-baby bonding after the birth.

Some may paint home birth midwives as dangerous radicals opposed to the medical establishment. We however, are not "anti-doctor" or "anti-hospital." Indeed, there's a tremendous calling for dedicated doctors and hospitals and

(781)492-9005 JESSICA PETRONE  
(781)492-9184 SARAFINA KENNEDY  
(914)325-1715 EMILY BOWLER

[JESSICA@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM](mailto:JESSICA@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM)  
[SARAFINA@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM](mailto:SARAFINA@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM)  
[EMILY@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM](mailto:EMILY@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM)

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we're thankful for their skills. Therefore, we won't hesitate to refer to a physician or to transport to a hospital if it becomes necessary to do so.

## **Apprentices**

We are ever so grateful to our mentors and the women they have served for allowing us to observe and participate in their births. Textbooks, study groups, workshops and the like have supplemented our learning along the way. But, the age-old apprenticeship style of learning is at the very heart of midwifery. It's essential and superior to any other method. We are committed to continuing the passing on of skills and knowledge and will have at least one apprentice in our practice. There is much to do at a homebirth and you will see just how essential apprentices are.

You'll get to know and trust the apprentice during your prenatal appointments and may request less or more involvement of the apprentice at any time. Apprentices use their clinical skills which include everything from taking vital signs to drawing for labs to catching babies depending on skill level, preceptor discretion and of course, client preference. Birthmatters, LLC subscribes to the home birth standard of care, which involves a skilled team of midwives. This provides you with the very best level of care and is the safest arrangement for your birth.

## **Compassionate Care**

### **Complete Prenatal Care**

Prenatal appointments are very relaxed, with most appointments lasting an hour to an hour-and-a-half. These visits take place at your home or at our office. We always start with any questions you may have and take as much time as is necessary to answer them. You can decide if you'd like to have private appointments or bring your family/friends. Children are always welcome and we encourage you to bring them. We talk about all things related to pregnancy, labor, birth, babies, joys, fears, etc! We go over the importance of nutrition, optional testing, trusting birth, breastfeeding, and other topics throughout the course of the pregnancy. We really get to know each other and look forward to each of the visits!

At each appointment we'll take your blood pressure, check your urine, go through our well-pregnancy checklist, listen to your baby's heartbeat, measure your fundus and feel what kind of position your baby is in at the moment.

Prenatal care begins with a comprehensive visit wherein we'll take your medical history, conduct a physical exam and do lab work. This initial appointment lasts an hour and a half and we begin to get to know one another. You can expect to have monthly appointments until 28 weeks, then every two weeks until week 36. Home visits begin at week 36, and these will include the whole birth team. This is a really exciting time for preparation and you can feel free to invite anyone else you would like. From that point on, you'll have weekly appointments until you have your baby.

If you require additional visit(s) beyond the routine schedule of visits, special care appointments can be made. There will be an additional fee for each of these.

### **Home birth Care**

When labor starts, the birth team will arrive and provide labor support throughout your labor, birth and for several hours afterwards. We will talk frequently when your labor starts and mutually decide when to arrive based on weather, traffic, geography, etc. Upon arrival, we quickly check the baby's heart rate, take maternal vital signs, chart the progress of labor and consult physician services if needed. If everything is going smoothly, you'll receive as much or as little labor support as you desire. Our goal is to foster an environment suitable for a comfortable, unhindered, undisturbed birth.

We will monitor both you and the baby throughout the labor including listening to the baby's heart rate at regular intervals and checking vitals. This will all be done unobtrusively.

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[SARAFINA@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM](mailto:SARAFINA@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM)  
[EMILY@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM](mailto:EMILY@HOMEBIRTHMATTERS.COM)

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We keep your house exceptionally clean. We are respectful and responsive to you, your family, and your baby. **Your baby will remain with you at all times.** There is no need for your baby to be taken away to be weighed, measured or “cleaned up”. We will not announce your baby’s gender; that’s your privilege not ours! The umbilical cord will not be cut until it has ceased pulsing. We will do a complete newborn exam right beside you. Most of our babies are pink, robust, healthy and perfect. If there is a question, we will consult the pediatrician that you have lined up for your baby. If everything is fine (as it almost always is) you can plan a visit with the pediatrician for 48-72 hours after the birth. You’ll be given a list of pediatricians that come to the home for the first visit. Of course, you are welcome to find a pediatrician not on our list. Do ask if they come to the home, you may be surprised to find out that they do!

The birth team will help prepare a meal (just remember we’re midwives, not chefs), start laundry, clean up the birth area and generally tidy up a bit. We will tuck you into bed with your newborn and get you started on breastfeeding. Naturally, you will have received complete postpartum instructions before we depart.

### **Complete Postpartum Care**

In the days immediately after your home birth, it’s ideal for you to stay around your house taking care of your baby and your personal hygiene. There will be two or three home visits during the first week after your baby is born. During these visits, both mom and baby are checked to ascertain their overall health and well-being. We answer breastfeeding questions, talk about baby care, go over what to expect in the days and weeks to come, etc. You’ll receive information on the Newborn Screen Exam (formerly known as the PKU Test) and decide if it’s a test you want done. If so, we conduct it in your home during the first week. You’ll also receive the proper paperwork to get your baby a social security card and birth certificate. Postpartum care continues along these lines with office visits at two and six weeks. By 36 weeks, please have selected a pediatrician for your baby.

### **Midwife-Client Confidentiality**

Professional confidentiality will be upheld. Your privacy is a matter of great importance to this practice. Details and events known to any member of the birth team will not be discussed with anybody without your permission, unless they are discussed anonymously.

### **Massachusetts General Law Concerning Home Birth**

In Massachusetts, a family’s right to birth where and with whom they choose was upheld in a 1985 Superior Court decision. At this time, RN’s (Registered Nurses) may not attend home births, because their own nursing association does not allow them to do so unless they have been certified as Nurse Midwives and are working with the backing of an obstetrician. Currently, there is no licensure for Certified Professional Midwives (CPM) in Massachusetts. The National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) certifies CPM’s. Direct Entry Midwives (DEM) have the option to certify as CPM under NARM.

### **Malpractice Insurance**

It is difficult and prohibitively expensive for home birth midwives to obtain malpractice insurance; making it highly unusual for one to carry it. Birthmatters, LLC is no exception. We do not carry malpractice insurance.

### **Continuing Education and Peer Review**

We take every opportunity to continue my education so we may give you the best and safest care possible. We attend regular continuing education events and peer review meetings in addition to midwifery and childbirth seminars and conferences each year. Moreover, we continually update our Neonatal Resuscitation certification, and subscribe to numerous midwifery and childbirth journals and newsletters.

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Above all, we welcome your comments about your birth experience. If you are unhappy about any aspect of our care or services, please let us know so we may improve. You may also write to the Massachusetts Midwives' Alliance. This organization offers a grievance process to the clients of midwives who are members of MMA. All letters must be signed by you and are kept confidential. By filing such a grievance, you are also agreeing to binding arbitration in your case through the MMA.

### **The Midwife's Right to Resign**

The midwives reserve the right to resign at any stage of the pregnancy if they become convinced it is necessary to so. If such a situation arises, we will discuss with you our reasons for this decision. Thereafter, it is incumbent upon you, the expectant parents, to procure other medical care for the remainder of your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum period. Please refer to the *Financial Agreement* for information on refunds in this instance.

### **Payment Information**

Midwifery care is vitally important; not just to us, but to the women we serve, the partners who love them and the babies they bear. Because it is important to us, we wholly invest our time and energy into making our services available and to serving those who desire them to the best of our abilities. As such, fair and timely compensation is only right. This is our calling and our passion. We love what we do. But, it is also the source of income that provides for our families and allows us to continue this work without compromising our philosophies.

Needless to say, we also don't want a woman's desire to experience a home birth to become a financial hardship to her and her family. We understand that while our fees are within the market price, that this is a fairly large out-of-pocket expense. For that reason, we offer a sliding fee scale for those who qualify. We're also open to working out other, suitable compensation plans. Such arrangements must be written up, agreed to and signed by both parties as a condition of Birthmatters, LLC taking you on as a client.

Whatever the fees and terms, payments must be made in accordance with the agreed upon financial sheet and/or addendum. This means making full payments in the appropriate time frame.

### **Ways You Can Pay For Your Home Birth**

**Insurance** - It's always worth trying this first, especially if you have a PPO. Some will pay readily, others can take some convincing, but persistence often pays off. More information about this at the end of the letter.

**Pre-Tax Medical Savings Accounts** - Many employers offer reimbursement accounts that allow you to enjoy pre-tax savings on medical costs that are not covered by insurance. Ask your employer.

**Loans** - Explore low interest loans, interest free credit card advances, or loans from family.

**Tax Returns** - If you get one, this can help to ensure that your little one has a gentle entrance.

**Baby Shower Gifts** - Some of our moms have asked for contributions toward a peaceful home birth rather than traditional baby shower gifts. Some moms have paid for their entire birth this way.



## **Birthmatters, LLC Home Birth Supplies List:**

Please let us know if you are having difficulty finding any of these items. No worries, this should be fun! Enjoy and indulge your nesting instincts!

- Please have a car seat installed for your baby
- 7-8 washed receiving blankets for the baby
- 4-5 large clean bath towels
- 2 large leak-proof garbage bags
- 2 brown paper bags (grocery size) 1 for soiled linen, the other for trash
- 2 medium bowls (plastic, glass or metal)
- 3 plastic grocery bags for placenta bowl
- 1 small unopened bottle of olive oil or coconut oil
- 6 quarts of any electrolyte drink (Recharge is recommended)
- 1 bright flashlight, in working order
- 2 packages of under pads- super large- available at CVS, Walgreen's, etc.
- 1 fitted plastic sheet to protect your bed from fluids - or plastic shower liner
- 6 washcloths - preferably white, you can rip an old clean towel
- 2 sets of clean sheets (1 for labor, 1 for afterwards)
- A good supply of ice- crushed or cubes is fine
- Sanitary napkins- maternity size or as large as you can find
- Diapers, shirts, gowns, for baby- washed and ready to wear
- Baby wipes- warmer is optional
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- Gas in your car
- T-shirts or nursing shirt for afterwards (2-3)
- Telephone number to nearest maternity hospital and your pediatrician
- Food for the laboring family (and attendees). Food can be prepared in advance that is nourishing and easy to digest (such as chicken soup) and is a good meal that will be ready to eat after the birth, regardless of the time. Healthy snacks such as fruit, eggs, cheeses, whole grain breads, tea, honey, peanut butter, raisins, nuts, etc. Depending on the time of day and the length of the labor, the laboring family and midwives may need something more substantial - meals with protein such as sliced turkey, etc. Ordering out is an option as well.
  - Digital oral thermometer
  - Hydrogen peroxide
  - Heating pad or rice sock
- Optional:* Tarp for your floor (only with birth tub), relaxation CD, music, chap stick, cameras, chamomile tea, red raspberry tea, witch hazel, a commode or portable toilet if your bathroom is on a different floor, candles, etc. Herbs, homeopathics, etc., although we bring a large supply.

## **During labor, the bed is made as follows:**

1. Clean fitted sheet and clean flat (top) sheet;
2. Plastic mattress cover or shower curtain liner;
3. Clean fitted sheet and top sheet. After delivery, the top sheets are removed and the clean sheets below are ready.

## **Postpartum herbal bath:**

Thoroughly scrub tub and rinse. To make herbal tea, boil water, add herbs and let steep. Pour through sieve into tub filled with 5 inches of hot water. Don't use soap to wash for the first week after birth. Bath can be taken as often as desired. Use any of these herbs: comfrey leaves or root, witch hazel root, yarrow blossoms, calendula blossoms, rose petals, fresh ginger root, 1 cup sea salt, 1 cup cider vinegar, 1 T goldenseal. A pre-made sitz bath is included in the online birth kit.

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### **Signs of Labor:**

Please note that these are only signs that labor might *begin*... it still may be a while before labor actually sets in or becomes established. Some women have almost all of the signs and some women have either a few of them or none at all. Each labor is different; if nothing else, birth is unpredictable!

- Loss of Mucous plug (blood tinged or brownish mucous)
- Loose stools or even a touch of diarrhea
- Cramping, almost as if your period is about to begin
- Contractions (or a pre-menstrual feeling in the lower part of your belly) that are noticeable, but usually irregular, and usually do not last for very long. Uterine activity is intermittent and the surges vary in intensity, whereas in true, active labor the uterus settles into a regular, rhythmic pattern of activity that continues and intensifies. Taking a warm, relaxing bath (candles and soft music add a nice touch!) and/or changing position will often times “wipe out” prelabor, but if it is truly getting to be “baby-having time”, the surges will continue and become stronger regardless of what you do.
- An increase in the amount of vaginal discharge
- Bag of water begins to leak or breaks. (Some women think this is happening, but may be leaking urine!)

### **Call immediately if you are experiencing the following at any time:**

- Bleeding from the vagina
- A sudden gush of fluid from the vagina or you think that the bag of waters is leaking or has released
- Meconium - stained fluid (brown, green, or black) is leaking from the vagina
- Blurred vision, dizziness, or feeling disoriented
- Extreme nausea or vomiting
- Chills and fever over 100° Fahrenheit, not accompanied by a common cold
- Baby’s hand, foot or cord appearing from the vagina
- Dizziness, blurred vision, or severe headaches
- Painful urination and/or burning when urinating
- Increased swelling or puffiness in the hands, feet or ankles (especially if sudden)
- Sharp pain in uterus; severe abdominal pain (does not let up)
- An extremely hot, cold, or “clammy” feeling
- Absence of fetal movements for 12 hours, from the time that significant, daily movement is apparent
- Increased, unusual thirst with reduced amounts of urine (or if you do not urinate for more than half a day despite normal fluid intake)
- Regular contractions and think this might be labor

Calls are returned promptly, please text if you have not received a return call within 15 minutes, in addition try calling the other midwife or apprentice. **Do not email us with an emergency!** If you’re not sure, call.



## PEDIATRICIAN LIST

### Southern Massachusetts

**Dr. Heidi Brownlie**

Family Medicine Associates of S. Attleboro  
230 Washington St. S. Attleboro, MA 02703  
508-761-5650

**Wood, Nicole & Smith, Carol**

Harbor Medical Associates  
Pembroke- 781-826-8065  
Scituate- 781-5457243  
Weymouth- 781-952-1650 or 781-340-1702

**Dr. Arlene Dijamco**

223 Chief Justice Cushing Hwy, Suite 201  
Cohasset, MA 02025  
781-383-8380

**Dr. Cassandra Walcott, Dr. Laura Robertson, Deb Summers (NP) -**

830 Oak St Ste 200w  
Brockton, MA  
<http://www.pediatrichealthcarebrockton.com>  
508-586-7334

**Dr. Mark Vonnegut- Pediatrician**

21 Totman Street , Quincy, MA 02169  
617- 745-0050  
<http://www.gotomvpeds.com>

**Dr. Sarah Shreter**

Grand Army of the Republic Highway,  
Swansea, MA 02777  
508 -379-0012

### Northern Massachusetts

**Dr. Mark Su, Family Practice**

65 Newburyport Tpke.  
Newbury, MA 01951  
978-465-9770  
<http://holisticfamilypractice.com>

**Dr. Carol Rainville, Naturopathic Doctor**

162 Main Street  
Wenham, MA 01984  
978-468-4294

**Dr. Darlene Ertha, Naturopathic**

174 High Street, Suite 14  
Ipswich, MA 01938-1220  
978-356-5095  
<http://www.eightriversnaturalmedicine.com>

### Boston Area

**Dr James Bath, Dr Eva Zasloff, and Dr Leanne Lee**

Hallmark Health Medical Associates

645 Broadway  
Somerville, MA 02145  
617- 625-0006

**Dr. James Bastian, Dr. Robert Oldshue**

Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center (affiliated with  
Brigham and Women's Hospital)  
640 Centre St  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**Dr. Deborah Bershel, Family Practice**

Davis Square Family Practice  
260 Elm Street suite 105  
Somerville, MA  
617-666-9577  
<http://davissquareinfo.com/>

**Cathleen London, MD - Family Medicine**

209 Harvard Street, Suite 200  
Brookline, MA 02446  
617-232-0616  
<http://www.drchaya.com/>

**Dr. Frederick Mandell, MD - Pediatrician**

285 Clinton Road  
Brookline, MA 02445

**Dr. Richard Moskowitz, MD, Homeopath**

173 Mt. Auburn Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
617-923-4604

**Beverly Wedda, MD - Primary Care**

372 Washington St # 1  
Wellesley Hills, MA 02481  
781-235-5200  
<http://www.marinocenter.org/>

**Dr. Betty Wood, MD, Homeopath**

24 Minot Avenue  
Acton, MA 01720  
978-635-0605  
781-849-1000

**Dr. Laura Zucker, MD - Family Practice**

22 Mill Street, Suite 204  
Arlington, MA 02476  
781-648-9700

**Dr. Ann Becker, MD - Pediatrician**

332 Washington Street - Suite 275  
Wellesley Hills, MA 02481  
781-235-7730

**Dr. Jeffrey Wacks****Patriot Direct Family Medicine**

117 west Central Street  
Natick, Ma 01760  
508-318-6941

(781)492-9005 JESSICA PETRONE  
(781)492-9184 SARAFINA KENNEDY  
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## Basic Nutrition Information

Good nutrition is vital during pregnancy. You never know what body system or body part you could be growing that day and you may as well give your baby the absolute best materials to build with. A pregnant diet should include about 500 calories over your normal diet and these calories should be added in the form of healthy nutritious food as described below.

### Water

Consuming water is one of the most important elements of your diet during pregnancy. You need to keep hydrated and maintain your hydration throughout the day. In particular on days when you know it will be particularly hot and you may be prone to swelling. Recommended amount: 6-8 glasses of water a day

### Protein

Protein is the building block of muscles and is essential during pregnancy. Sources of protein include Beef, pork, lamb, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese, cottage cheese, tofu, peanut butter, dried beans or peas, nuts, seeds. Recommended amount: 6 Servings

### Vitamins and Minerals (in the form of Fruits and Vegetables)

Fruits and vegetables are great sources of vitamins, minerals. In particular vitamin C and vitamin A. Some fruits and vegetables that are great sources of vitamins and minerals include, mango, oranges, apples, beets, kale and any other. Fruits and vegetables should be consumed raw as well as cooked to experience the full health benefits.

Recommended amount: 7 servings

### Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the fuel that our bodies run on. They should be eaten in the form of whole wheat, grain and cereal. Foods that are carbohydrate based can also be right in B vitamins, iron and fiber. C. Sources include oatmeal, whole wheat bread, tortillas.

Recommended amount: 6-11 servings

### Fats

Fats are necessary in the diet, as long as they are healthy fats. They provide vitamin A and essential fatty acids. Good healthy sources of fats include nuts, olives, avocados.

Recommended amount: used in moderation.

### Salt

Sodium intake is needed during pregnancy to support the large prenatal expansion of tissues and fluids. Recommended amount: Salt to taste

### Iron

Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anemia in pregnancy. Iron needs markedly increase in pregnancy. Women taking iron supplements of more than 30 mg per day may have supplements of 2 mg copper and 15 mg zinc per day recommended. Do not take iron supplements unless prescribed by your midwife or health care provider. Eat foods high in iron such as beef, pork, lamb and organ meats; iron fortified cereals, dried beans, peas, or lentils; dark green leafy vegetables; peanut butter and molasses. Combine foods high in Vitamin C with iron-rich foods. Use cast-iron cookware, if possible.

### Folic Acid

Folic acid is necessary for the synthesis of DNA and adequate Folic Acid prevents neural tube defects. The recommended daily amount is 400 micrograms a day in pregnancy. Folic acid can be found in liver, legumes, leafy green vegetables & brewers yeast.

### Calcium

Calcium is necessary to build bones and teeth as well as form muscle. The recommended daily amount is 1200 mg. Calcium can be found in dairy products, beet greens, kale, tofu, and spinach.



### **Insurance Billing**

In an attempt to help our clients receive maximum reimbursement for midwifery services, we have contracted with a biller that allows us to verify your benefits and submit claims on your behalf. If you're interested in this service, you can register with Larsen and pay a one-time registration fee of \$20. Larsen will review your insurance to see if you are eligible for any reimbursement and send you a Verification of Benefits (VOB) summary form.

If you are interested in us submitting a claim after you receive your VOB, please contact our Office Manager, Marika Michelangelo at [birthmatters.office@gmail.com](mailto:birthmatters.office@gmail.com). We will submit your claims information to Larsen once you have completed all of your postpartum appointments.

Please note that due to reasons beyond our control, we can not ever bill to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. If you would like to submit a claim to BCBS yourself, we can discuss how to do this.

### **Contract**

Please review the contract and let us know if you have any questions or concerns. We are excited to get to know you and support you during this beautiful time in your life.

**Warm Regards,**

**Jessica, Sarafina & Emily**

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