

Natural Childbirth

Have you listened to many women talk about childbirth? Have you heard them say how horrible and difficult it was? It may give you the impression that no one is having [natural childbirth](#) anymore. And if they are, they have a screw loose...

Actually, quite the contrary, natural childbirth is becoming more and more popular as people realize the benefits to the woman, the family and the baby, and as they realize that there are risks to medication used frequently in birth.

Natural childbirth has different meanings to everyone. Some would describe it as a vaginal birth, others as no medications for pain, and yet others would say no intervention or pain relief medications. For the purposes of this article we will define natural childbirth as birth **without** pain relieving medications ([Demerol](#), [Nubain](#), [Stadol](#), [epidural](#), spinal, etc.).

Natural childbirth takes place with different practitioners (midwives, nurse midwives, obstetrician, family practitioners, perinatologists, etc.), and in different settings (hospital, birth center and home).

Although it is becoming harder to have a natural childbirth as they add more and more machines to the birth process. That is why many women who believe in natural childbirth will tell you to have a birth plan to help you clarify what you need and want with your practitioner.

"Read as much as you can about childbirth, preferably before you become pregnant. Take childbirth classes that teach natural birth, preferably independent classes, not in the hospital. Get a doula. Prepare a birth plan. Make sure that your health care provider knows your wishes before the birth," says one mother who has experienced the joys of natural birth.

Does this mean that natural childbirth and medical intervention are mutually exclusive? No. High risk pregnancies also benefit from have an unmedicated birth.

"Both of my daughters were born in the hospital," one mother explains. "I was at a very high risk of complications, but had no medications at all."

And another offers, "Be realistic that there are times when medical intervention is the right thing to do. Make sure your birth support not only understands your wants and needs, but that they respect and support your decisions."

Women who choose to have unmedicated births need to prepare themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. Not to mention have a great support system. Many women take special "natural childbirth" classes. If you are unsure ask the educator how many of her students go without medication. There are great books available to read about natural childbirth, both for women and their partners.

"You have to have a coach that knows what you want. It has to be someone who is going to be 100% there for you and no one else, including themselves. My husband never left my side at all," says one natural childbirth birth mom with two children.

Many women who have had a natural would say that a birth plan is a wonderful way to communicate your beliefs and desires to your practitioners, and possibly their partners.

"Prepare a birth plan. Make sure that your health care provider knows your wishes before the birth. Read as much as you can about childbirth, preferably before you become pregnant," explains one mother. "Take childbirth classes that teach natural birth, preferably independent classes, not in the hospital. Get a doula."

"Be clear with your doctors about your desires and ask and discuss with them along the way - do not let the doctor say that we will discuss your birth plans at the 36 week appointment. That's just too much to cover in the little amount of time that they schedule you for. I went in with a question or two at each appointment after my 5th month appointment," advises another mom.

The other thing that many people said was that using a doula, a professional labor support person was very helpful to them and their partners. Not only does a doula help the couple through the pregnancy, birth and postpartum period, but research shows that she can help you decrease the requests for medication and decrease the intervention rates.

One mom who had a doula and a midwife in a hospital remembers, "That childbirth is a very emotional experience that requires gentle guidance from a doula and midwife to make it as fulfilling as possible."

Advice from Other Mothers

So what advice do moms have for those who are considering a natural birth?

"No one supported my decision to have a natural birth. My friends told me to just wait. People at my husband's work told him the best thing he could do was scream for the anesthesiologist as soon as we got there. The negativity was amazing. My advice is to surround yourself with people who have faith in you, and to ignore the statements that don't support you and your plans."

"Be informed!!!! Find out the difference between "My malpractice insurance says so" and "You're well-being depends upon it"--no matter what words you hear. Read. Be inspired by others. "

"Have faith in yourself and your body!"

"Each woman knows, I think, what she can do for herself and her baby.

If you believe that you want what is naturally best for you and your child, please consider a midwife and birthing center."

"That no matter how well you think you have prepared, you still haven't prepared enough, and that even with the most well-written birth plan and the best preparation, things are still going to happen that are out of your control."

"I didn't plan for a natural birth, but because of complications, I couldn't have an epidural. When it was all over I couldn't believe I had done it! I was so happy! And my recovery was much easier than my first birth with the epidural."

"I learned that you can achieve a natural birth, even when it seems overwhelming."