

6 Simple Steps for a Healthy & Safe Birth



There is **A LOT** of medical research that tells you and your care provider what kind of care will most likely keep your baby's birth **SAFE** and **HEALTHY**.

BUT, the care pregnant women receive **DOESN'T ALWAYS MATCH THE RESEARCH**.

Despite risks and limited benefits, a survey¹ of new moms showed:

93%

had continuous electronic fetal monitoring (EFM)

87%

had restrictions on eating

66%

had restrictions on drinking

55%

had artificially ruptured membranes

35%

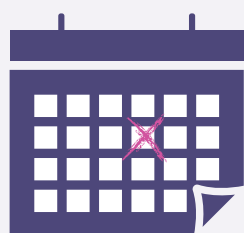
had an episiotomy

Even though they are **"ROUTINE"** practices, some can actually make childbirth **MORE DIFFICULT** and **LESS SAFE**.

KEEP CHILDBIRTH SIMPLE!

Lamaze has summed up years of research in **6 Healthy Birth Practices**, proven to promote the safest, healthiest birth possible for mother and baby.

1



LET LABOR BEGIN ON ITS OWN

- Normal pregnancy lasts 38-42 weeks!
- Natural labor means your body and your baby are ready for birth
- Induction can make contractions harder and stress the baby

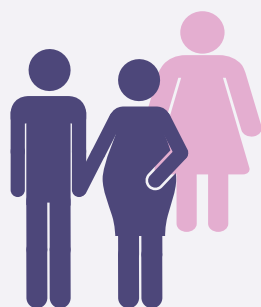
2



WALK, MOVE AROUND AND CHANGE POSITIONS THROUGHOUT LABOR

- Help your uterus work more efficiently
- Use upright positions and gravity to help pull baby down
- Actively responding to labor may help you feel more confident, less afraid

3



BRING A LOVED ONE, FRIEND OR DOULA FOR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

- Praise, reassurance and encouragement decrease stress
- Physical support can help decrease pain
- Informational support can increase confidence

4



AVOID INTERVENTIONS² THAT ARE NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY –

INDUCTION, ARTIFICIALLY RUPTURED MEMBRANES, RESTRICTED FOOD & DRINK, IV FLUIDS, CONTINUOUS EFM, EPISIOTOMY, EPIDURAL AND CESAREAN

- Many of these disrupt the birthing process, making it more difficult
- Choose a birth setting with a low rate of interventions
- Ask if your care provider routinely uses any interventions
- During labor, ask if there is another alternative

5



AVOID GIVING BIRTH ON YOUR BACK AND FOLLOW YOUR BODY'S URGE TO PUSH

- Use gravity to your advantage to shorten the pushing stage
- Push when your body tells you
- Use upright or side-lying positions
- Use adjustable hospital beds to support different pushing positions

6



KEEP YOUR BABY WITH YOU – IT'S BEST FOR YOU, YOUR BABY AND BREASTFEEDING

- Skin to skin during the first hour helps baby transition
- Weighing and other routine procedures can wait
- Ask which procedures can be done while holding baby
- Rooming with baby doesn't prevent you from sleeping

To learn more about these healthy birth practices, visit www.lamaze.org/HealthyBirthPractices and consider taking a Lamaze Childbirth Education Class.

PUSH FOR THE SAFEST, HEALTHIEST BIRTH POSSIBLE.
VISIT WWW.LAMAZE.ORG/PUSHFORYOURBABY TO LEARN MORE.



1 Declercq, E.R., Sakala, C., Cory, M.P., & Applebaum, S. (2006, October). *Listening to mothers II: Report of the second national U.S. survey of women's childbearing experiences*. New York: Childbirth Connection. Retrieved from http://www.childbirthconnection.org/pdfs/LTMI_report.pdf

2 Lothian, J., DeVries, C. (2005). *The official Lamaze guide: Giving birth with confidence*. Minneapolis, MN: Meadowbrook Press.