



Midwives Model of Care

Personal,

Practical and

Professional



Congratulations!

*You are about to experience
the birth of your baby!*

Women in the United States are learning that pregnancy and childbirth are normal, healthy processes, not diseases. They are finding out that they and their families can benefit from the care of a midwife.

The Midwives Model of Care includes prenatal visits and "hands-on" care throughout labor, birth and right after. It results in less chance of complications, fewer interventions, and a healthier birth for you and for your baby.

Women are discovering that the hospital is not the only option for safe birth. Women are most likely to labor best in a place where they feel free, safe and private, with attendants whom they know and trust.

Many women find that they feel most comfortable at home or in a birth center, with the ongoing attention and nurturing care of a midwife or doctor trained in gentle, natural, safe childbirth – someone who is an expert in normal birth and provides the Midwives Model of Care.



Pregnancy and childbirth involve every part of you. Feelings, hopes, fears, physical and practical needs, and spiritual or religious beliefs can all affect your pregnancy and birth. A midwife providing the Midwives Model of Care addresses all of these aspects to help you give birth naturally, safely and confidently. In addition, women who experience this type of care report feelings of great satisfaction and empowerment!

Compared to standard medical management, the Midwives Model of Care is a fundamentally different approach to pregnancy and childbirth.

This pamphlet explains what to expect with the Midwives Model of Care, and how this kind of care can help make your childbirth experience a joyous life event.



Midwives Model of Care



What to Expect from a caregiver who provides the Midwives Model of Care:

Respectful Treatment

- Gentle, nurturing care that respects you, your family and your beliefs.
- Respect for your informed decisions about medical tests, recommendations and interventions.
- Willingness to support your birth plan, including any family members and friends you may want present at the birth.
- Freedom to move, eat, bathe – to do what helps you during labor and birth; your midwife doesn't "prohibit" or "allow," but patiently supports and guides you as needed.
- Respect for the birth process as it unfolds uniquely each time. Although amazing, being pregnant and giving birth are actually normal life processes for which a woman's body is well-designed. Each woman's experience is unique.
- Respectful care regardless of setting, although at present this kind of care is most readily found in homes and birth centers.

Personal Attention

- Prenatal visits that allow plenty of time for questions and answers – 30 to 60 minutes for each prenatal appointment is common.
- Meaningful discussions to explore and help resolve fears and concerns you or your family may have.
- Caring attention to develop a trusting and nurturing relationship with you and your family that can help you to labor and give birth naturally and safely.

Plenty of Information

- Plenty of information about pregnancy, birth and the newborn, and about breastfeeding and newborn care.
- Suggestions about ways you can take good care of yourself and your baby.
- Encouragement and practical suggestions for you to have good nutrition and make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Full information about any recommended tests, procedures or treatments so you can make informed choices about your care.



Appropriate Monitoring

- Regular and thorough check-ups for you and your baby throughout your pregnancy, during labor, and after the birth, to make sure both of you are healthy and doing well.
- Recommendations for diagnostic technology when appropriate.
- Planning with you for the unexpected and for the rare emergency.
- Referrals to other health care specialists or to a different birth setting if needed.
- Expertise in normal, natural childbirth. Because they are experts in normal pregnancy and birth, midwives are experienced in the variations of normal birth and recognize the early signs of conditions that are not "normal," including medical conditions or complications that may occasionally arise during pregnancy or the birth process.

Confidence in Your Body

- Help with discovering your own body's ability to give birth, in its own way and in its own time.
- No routine treatments or arbitrary timetables that can interfere with your body's healthy process of laboring and giving birth.
- Truly individualized care, privacy and natural childbirth.
- Support for doing the work of giving birth. Rather than someone else "delivering" the baby, you are empowered to give birth to your own baby yourself!

Natural Techniques for Comfort

- Help you cope with the discomfort of labor. Midwives have found that encouragement, massage, relaxation, laboring in water, changing positions, and other approaches are often very effective.
- Encourage the progress of labor and help you give birth to your baby gently and lovingly.
- Help you avoid risks (to yourself and to your baby) that are associated with many standard medical techniques and hospital protocols.

A Care Provider Who Stays With You

- Attentive, sensitive care and emotional support in tune with your needs throughout labor. Research has shown that having a "sympathetic female companion" with you all through labor and delivery reduces the chance of complications and the likelihood of an unnecessary cesarean section. The Midwives Model of Care means that your midwife stays with you and "mothers the mother."
- Post-partum care and help with breastfeeding. After your baby is born, the midwife will stay with you until breastfeeding is established and both you and your baby are resting comfortably. She will arrange a visit after the birth to check you and your baby and to answer any questions.

Will you receive the Midwives Model of Care from your midwife or doctor? Use this information to ask detailed questions when choosing your caregiver and deciding where you want to give birth. It's also a good idea to question others who have used the caregiver. At present, this degree of individualized and supportive care is most typically provided by midwives in homes and birth centers. Someday, this kind of care will be available in all settings.





Midwives Model of Care™

The Midwives Model of Care is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes.

The Midwives Model of Care includes:

- monitoring the physical, psychological and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle;
- providing the mother with individualized education, counseling, and prenatal care, continuous hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support;
- minimizing technological interventions; and
- identifying and referring women who require obstetrical attention.

The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma and cesarean section.

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Citizens for Midwifery

Learn, Connect and Take Action

The goal of **Citizens for Midwifery** is to see that the Midwives Model of Care is available to all childbearing women and universally recognized as the best kind of care for pregnancy and birth. **Citizens for Midwifery** also endorses the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative.™

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