

Natural birth is safe birth

A natural birth is one in which the mom and baby are unmedicated and the baby is born vaginally; where labor and birth unfold in their own way and in their own time.

Natural birth is safe for most women, according to the following research and statistics:

90-95% The World Health Organization (WHO) says a healthy woman and baby have a 90-95% chance of having a normal labor and birth.

94% That estimate was upheld in a massive study of homebirth (planned natural birth) outcomes for about 17,000 women between 2004-2009. 94% achieved a vaginal birth, and fewer than 5% required synthetic oxytocin or an epidural. 11% of women studied transferred to a hospital, and still largely achieved natural births. This study included women with risk factors such as previous cesareans, abnormal BMI (body mass index), and gestational diabetes.¹⁶

15% The WHO, the American Medical Association (AMA) and many medical study groups say we can't justify a cesarean rate of more than 10-15%.¹⁷

60% According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) the number of cesarean surgeries increased 60% between 1996-2009, with no improved outcome statistics. In fact, maternal complications and NICU admissions increased.¹⁸

0% With zero evidence of harm, women's freedom of movement shortens labor, decreases pain, improves blood flow to the baby, decreases the likelihood of cesarean, improves outcomes, and improves satisfaction with the birth.¹⁹

1/2 The myth of the due date: About half of first-time mothers give birth by 40 weeks and 5 days, and the other half give birth later than that. Similarly, about half of mothers who have had a baby before give birth by 40 weeks and 3 days, and the other half will give birth later than that.²⁰ Our current 40-week gestation period comes from a poorly-understood system from the 1800s called "Naegele's rule," and, believe it or not, is not based on evidence.



Interventions do save lives

When you take a childbirth education class, one of your jobs is to figure out what your goals are for your birth. Being open to changes when they are truly needed is a really good idea.

When interventions are used correctly, they save lives -- and we can all agree that interventions are vastly overused in our society. Having the information you need to make informed decisions about every aspect of your care means that if you do need or want interventions, you can feel good about your choices.

You always make the best decisions you can with the information you have at the time.*

**This also applies if your past birth experience(s) included interventions.*