

Why Natural Childbirth?

Contributed by Holly Richardson

- A woman's body is designed to give birth! When a woman births without drugs, anesthesia or medical intervention, she learns that she is strong and powerful. She gains self-confidence and learns to trust herself, even when confronted by powerful authority figures.
- When a woman realizes just how strong and powerful she is, it forever changes her attitude about pain, loss, disease, fatigue and difficult situations.
- When a woman births naturally, she approaches mothering in a different way. She realizes that it took hard work to bring this child into the world and will take hard work to raise this child to adulthood, but she can do it!
- Through all of this, she will grow as a person, becoming more confident in her abilities to handle any situation that she might face and more responsible for her own destiny.
- Natural birth allows the mother a larger range of options in terms of caregiver, places of birth, positions for birth, and how the birth is conducted.
- The woman has an internal locus of control (she makes decisions and accepts the challenge of labor as her challenge) rather than an external locus of control (caregiver and/or hospital makes decisions and takes over the challenge of labor).
- Natural birth is medically safer for mother and baby. Anesthesia and other interventions present risks to their health and may include, but are not limited to:
 - Drop in maternal blood pressure
 - Drop in fetal heart tones
 - Decrease in uterine contractility
 - Increased incidence of labor dystocia
 - Increased use of Pitocin for augmentation
 - Rise in maternal temperature
 - Difficulty urinating for the mother
 - Impairment of mother's pushing ability
 - Increased use of forceps or vacuum extractors
 - Increased use of episiotomy and greater perineal trauma
 - Increase in Cesarean section rate
 - Increase in infant hypoglycemia
 - Increase in sepsis workups for babies, including spinal taps, IV's, prophylactic antibiotics, and a 3-7 day nursery stay
 - More maternal/infant separation
 - More breastfeeding problems
 - Greater incidence of maternal anesthesia headaches
 - Greater incidence of postpartum maternal back pain
 - Increased chance of nerve palsy or paralysis for mother, and neurological problems for baby

If mother and/or baby are not healthy, or progress of labor is clearly not normal, the use of drugs, anesthesia and other interventions may be justified. ~Adapted by Holly Richardson, from the book "Special Women"