



The American College of Nurse-Midwives

# Healthy Birth INITIATIVE™

## Resources & tools to help women, families & health care professionals achieve healthy childbirth.

FOR WOMEN: *Normal, Healthy Childbirth for Women & Families: What You Need to Know* is a free handout that explains what parents and their babies can expect from a normal, healthy birth and what they can do to maximize their chances of having a healthy, physiologic birth while minimizing their chances of experiencing unnecessary medical interventions during childbirth. Available in both ENGLISH and SPANISH language versions as free PDF downloads from [midwife.org](http://midwife.org), or as professionally printed copies for purchase from [ShopACNM.com](http://ShopACNM.com).

FOR HOSPITAL POLICYMAKERS, PAYERS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS: *Birth Matters* is a handout for quality administrators that explains how implementing an evidence-based strategy focused on physiologic birth increases the well-being of families and prevents rare, adverse outcomes for hospital systems. Available as a free PDF download from [midwife.org](http://midwife.org), or as professionally printed copies for purchase from [ShopACNM.com](http://ShopACNM.com).

FOR MATERNITY CARE PROVIDERS: [BirthTOOLS.org](http://BirthTOOLS.org), which stands for Tools for Optimizing the Outcomes of Labor Safely, is an interactive online toolkit that presents the evidence and offers targeted resources, protocols, and other materials to assist clinicians and health care systems in implementing best practices that promote physiologic birth. A PDF handout that can be shared with others to introduce them to the [BirthTOOLS.org](http://BirthTOOLS.org) website and its resources can be downloaded for free.

#YesToHealthyBirth

Learn more at [www.midwife.org/ACNM-Healthy-Birth-Initiative](http://www.midwife.org/ACNM-Healthy-Birth-Initiative)



### Normal, Healthy Childbirth for Women & Families: What You Need to Know

#### CHILDBIRTH TODAY

Since 1998, the World Health Organization has called for eliminating unnecessary intervention in childbirth. Yet in the US, birth interventions have reached epidemic proportions. Sadly, there is a lack of resources available to women to help them achieve their goals of a normal, safe, and healthy birth.

The norm for birth in the US today includes the use of technology and interventions that are not proven to benefit healthy women and babies during childbirth.

A woman's guide to understanding normal, healthy birth and how to maximize the health of the health care system. Critical to help women make informed decisions about unnecessary medical interventions, including cesarean s...

## Birth Matters

Understanding how physiologic, healthy birth benefits hospitals and organizations

With nearly 4 million infants born in the United States each year, childbirth has become a major focus in our health care system. However, for decades the US perinatal care system has been inconsistent in meeting the needs of childbearing families in several important areas. These include communication about appropriate use of interventions in labor, accountability for shared decision making, respect for the woman's autonomy, and compliance with evidence-based standards of care.<sup>1</sup> Excessive routine use of technology and procedures, including ultrasound, induction of labor, cesarean, continuous fetal monitoring, and routine formula supplementation, along with under-utilization of effective interventions, including prenatal education, centering prenatal care, doula care, continuous labor support, hydrotherapy, intermittent auscultation, skin-to-skin contact, and uninterrupted breastfeeding in the first few hours of life, negatively affect health outcomes and quality, increase cost, and reduce authentic choice for women.<sup>2,3,4</sup>



Adopting a physiologic birth framework within obstetric quality improvement programs meets national quality outcome measurement requirements, broadens the scope of traditional perinatal quality improvement activities, and promotes systems-level change towards a health improvement model.

Traditional measures for evaluating obstetric care have focused on the prevention of relatively rare events rather than on promoting physiologic labor and birth. These adverse events are unusual in healthy women, and a disproportionate amount of time and money are targeted towards their prevention. "Physiologic labor and birth are powered by the innate human capacity of the woman and fetus,"<sup>5</sup> and supporting these processes, rather than disrupting them with non-evidence-based interventions, has the potential to enhance best outcomes for mother and infant.<sup>2,3,7,8</sup>

Instead of focusing exclusively on reducing harm or injury, a comprehensive quality improvement program should focus on optimizing the overall quality

- Hospital discharges for maternal and newborn care far outnumber those for any other major category of care.<sup>9</sup>
- Increasingly, hospital quality measures include perinatal outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

## BirthTOOLS.ORG

TOOLS FOR OPTIMIZING THE OUTCOMES OF LABOR SAFELY

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- Unit Culture



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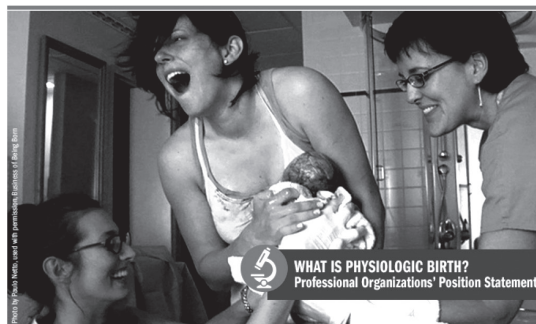
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