

Why Homebirth?

by Pat Jones, CNM

Many people ask us why we are for homebirth. This is not an easy question to answer, nor do we take this decision lightly. Homebirth is not a step backward, it is a step away from hospital and physician control of a normal body function. It is a step toward personal growth by accepting the responsibility of giving birth and parenting. We do not expect the "pain relief which-is supposedly available when you are under the doctor's control. We accept the work of labor and deal with it as mature women giving birth as we were designed to do.

A midwife is NOT a doctor. She does not want to control your body or "save" you from childbirth. She wants to offer support, an experienced eye to pick up on anything out of the ordinary, a shoulder to lean on, knowledge that will assist you to make good decisions and give birth effectively and beautifully, and a friendly ear to listen as you share your feelings and wishes.

A midwife cannot handle some of the problems that may occur during pregnancy, labor and birth. There will be times when she will suggest you see a physician or seek hospital care. Between 5 to 10 women out of 100 (5%-10%) will need some sort of service which she cannot supply. You must know and be comfortable with her limitations, listen carefully to her advice and be willing to take the responsibility for making your own birthing and healthcare decisions.

We feel that homebirth can be safer, better -truly superior- for both mother and baby in most births. Only you can decide if this is true for you and your baby.

As a birthing couple, you discuss your innermost thoughts with each other and come to decisions which will affect your immediate as well as future lives together. This is a growth process and one in which no one can tell you what choices are best for you and your baby.

There are many reasons why a mature couple might want a homebirth. However, there is only one reason which should be the deciding factor. That is the ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT TO NATURAL BIRTH. YOU SHOULD TRULY FEEL THAT HOMEBIRTH IS THE SUPERIOR WAY TO GIVE BIRTH TO YOUR BABY. Other factors such as finances, a fear of hospitals and/or physicians, wanting to be like others who have done it, or doing it because your partner or other family member wants you to may be considered, but should not be the deciding factor in your choice to birth at home.

There are times when a couple has decided on a homebirth but may have deep, unspoken, conflicting emotions. Or there may be negative feelings and pressure from other family members about their decision. These emotions and responses must be resolved before the birth. Any negativism or uneasy feelings can slow down labor and interfere with the birth process.

The experience of birth stays in our subconscious mind for life. A few experts feel that some emotional disease may be the result of a traumatic birth. As parents we are responsible for the type of birth we give our child. At Women's Health and Birth

Care, we want your baby to have the best possible introduction to life that we and you can offer.