

# Home Birth

## An Old Tradition, A Safe Choice

by  
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Women traditionally have attended other women in childbirth. For thousands of years women have delivered their babies, at home, in their own beds, supported by their friends and family, calling on the strength of the collective wisdom and experience of those who know birth. Women in childbirth have been encircled by and honored by their birth attendants; guided by women who have transmitted the knowledge of birth from generation to generation. They created their own rituals and shared powerful symbols of themselves as women. Although this tradition is not as widespread as it once was, it is still alive. I work to restore this ancient practice. I attend birthing women in this traditional way. For families who desire and choose this option, home is a safe and supportive place to give birth.

Nature has not perfected human reproduction, but it has endowed it with favorable chances of success. Good pre-natal care; healthy diet and exercise; a belief system that supports the safety of birth and the strength of the mother; competent attendants and appropriate use of technology during the pregnancy, labor and delivery, further improve the chances of a positive outcome.

"The safety of skilled midwife-attended, planned home birth in a low risk population has been well proven."

(Home Birth: A Guide to Birth Outside the Hospital by Stanley Sagov, M.D. Richard Feinbloom, M.D. Peggy Spindal, R.N. Aspen Publication 1984).

I come to my work with profound reverence for the process and a caring, watchful patience, as the woman unfolds, finds her way, her pace and defines her needs. I acknowledge the safety and sacredness of birth. My knowledge comes from my own birth experiences and 20 years of practice as a midwife. My role is positive, vital and reinforces awareness of the health and strength of the women I work with. I provide guidance, information, reassurance and take responsible measures to anticipate complications. The woman and her family are central in this process. Together we are a team.

### Reasons Women and Their Families Choose to Give Birth at Home

"To reclaim a position of power and authority"

In a home birth the attendant is an invited guest, equalizing the relationship between care provider and client.

Responsibility is shared and a woman's abilities are realized.

"To be supported by a tradition that trusts the natural process." Working with a midwife who is practiced in effective alternatives to intervention reduces the need for medical interference and increases the likelihood of a natural birth. It challenges cultural myths that have defined birth as a pathological, medical event. It reframes birth as a transformative, creative, feminine act.

"To freely make choices." Freedom to labor and deliver in any position and to eat and drink according to the mother's wishes. The mother decides who will be present. Family, friends and other children may be available during delivery to lend support and to be part of the experience. The mother and her needs direct the care.

"Home Birth can be safer." Unnecessary medical interventions, which can lead to complications, are avoided (restrictive, continuous, electronic fetal heart monitoring, routine I.V.'s, drugs, etc.). There's no handling of the infant by numerous hospital personnel. Exposure to hospital bacteria and viruses is avoided.

"To be in my own home." To labor and deliver in one's own environment fostering relaxation, through familiarity, rather than being in an unfamiliar and often frightening environment. To avoid impersonal and perhaps unsupportive hospital staff. To avoid the discomfort of travel while in labor and minimize disruption of family, particularly older siblings.

"To preserve the privacy and sacredness of birth." Making the choice to give birth at home calls one to engage consciously and actively in the process. It renews and revitalizes a woman's strength and confidence in herself and her body and affirms her relationship with the natural world.