

# THE HEALING HANDS THAT GIVE

## A WELLNESS DELIVERY

One of the most exciting times in a woman's life is when she finds out that she is expecting a baby. She's so excited about the prospect of being a mom but there's really only one thing on her mind: she wants the baby delivered safely and healthy.

Suddenly she's not just making decisions for herself, but also for the still-developing person inside of her. Yet, the reality is that the decisions she makes during her pregnancy will probably not actually be hers.

### OB/GYN or Midwife?

This is a decision that the mom-to-be must be allowed to make for herself based upon the most accurate information available to her. The truth is, many women don't realize how available and accessible midwives are becoming and so they tend to immediately begin researching Obstetrician/Gynecologists (OB/GYN's).

Once the news gets out that they're expecting, most women find themselves being encouraged or even pressured by friends and family to use a specific OB/GYN that once delivered the baby of someone in their circle of influence. While that practitioner may be more than capable, he or she might not be the best choice knowing all the wellness options available.

When studying negligence in the gynecological and obstetrical profession, despite the fact that obstetricians make up only 3% of all medical doctors, OB/GYN's account for almost a third of all reports of negligence.

On the other hand, Suzanne Arms, an advocate for pregnant women and midwives, states that science has proven that "midwives are the specialists in normal birth and most women don't need a doctor [for delivery]."

### Home or Hospital?

An idea that was once thought archaic is becoming the recommended option for delivering a baby naturally. A landmark study by the British Medical Journal in 2005 shows that homebirth is as safe as hospital birth for low risk women, while carrying a much lower rate of medical interventions, including cesarean section. In 2000, Canadian researchers Kenneth Johnson and Betty-Anne Daviss studied over 5,400 low-risk pregnancies in the United States and Canada where the decision had been made to deliver at home, and compared their results with the outcomes of 3,360,868 low-risk hospital births. The results were telling:

- Planned home birth carried a rate of 1.7 infant deaths per 1000 live births, a rate "consistent with most North American studies of intended births out of hospital and low risk hospital births"
- There were no maternal deaths
- Medical intervention rates were dramatically lower when compared to those in hospital births
- Episiotomy rate of 2.1% compared to 33% in hospitals
- C-section rate of 3.7% compared with 19%
- Electronic fetal monitoring rate of 9.6% compared with 84.3% in hospitals
- 97% of over 500 participants who were randomly contacted to validate birth outcomes reported that they were extremely or very satisfied with the care they received during their home birth

There was a time when home birthing was considered old-fashioned, but women armed with the facts are choosing to have their babies at home, recognizing that it's best for both them and their unborn child.

### Surgical or Natural Birth?

Despite the advancements in technology and the reported improvements in medical care, c-sections have risen to 1 in 3 deliveries for women in North America. About 1.3 million women gave birth via cesarean section in 2005, which is a 38% increase in just 10 years, the Agency for Healthcare Research and quality reported in 2008.

This increase is not surprising considering vaginal deliveries decreased by 3% during the same time span, with the sharpest decline being among women who had previously delivered via c-section. It was determined that vaginal deliveries among these women dropped by an astonishing 60% between 1995 and 2005.

The decision to have a vaginal delivery after a c-section is being taken out of the hands of the mother by hospitals requiring that the OB/GYN remain in the hospital for the entire labor. Since these practitioners refuse to do so, the decision is taken away from the mother and she is forced to have another c-section.

The truth is that vaginal deliveries are no more dangerous after a c-section than prior to one, and the fact that the decision is ultimately the mother's are two pieces of information that hospitals don't want pregnant women to know.

### Induce or Wait for Nature?

This may not seem like it's a choice that the mother can make, but it is, and the right choice is always to wait. Due dates have proven to be notoriously inaccurate and, according to Dr. Katz, et al, they should be eliminated entirely.

Dr. Vern Katz and her colleagues from the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Eugene, Oregon reported that the calculations used to set a woman's "due date" based upon her menstrual periods is "flawed". The use of an estimated gestational period to determine the best care for the patient is causing confusion and the patient does not treat this date as an estimate. She, and her entire family, considers that date a very specific point in time that they are looking forward to quite anxiously.

As the "due date" approaches, if there have been no signs of labor, the mother begins to grow anxious and distressed. This typically leads to a recommendation by her OB/GYN to induce delivery, usually leading to further interventions in birth. The problem with this is that intervention in the delivery process frequently leads to trauma for both the mother and the baby.

Dr. Kats and her colleagues conclude that doctors should expand the concept of a due date to a "due week" and, in this way, "allow biology [or nature] to take it's course a bit more".

### The Chiropractic Factor

Whether or not to see a Chiropractor during pregnancy is one of the most important decisions an expectant mother will make. Pregnancy is an important time for nerve impulses to flow uninterrupted from the brain to all the parts of the body.

A slightly misplaced vertebra (Vertebral Subluxation) can create nerve irritation, which can and will interfere with the body's nervous system. By using special or modified techniques, your Family Wellness Chiropractor can restore the function of your nervous system and improve your overall wellness. This can help ensure a more quality labor and delivery.

In fact, research has proven that:

- 84% of pregnant women treated by Chiropractic care received profound relief from low back pain
- Women who received Chiropractic care had nearly a 25% reduction in the average labor time verses the "accepted average labor time"
- With women who had given birth in the past, that number rose to 33%
- Postpartum pain was relieved in 75% of moms