ADVANTAGES OF HOMEBIRTH

SAFETY - Hundreds of studies undertaken over the last 40 years have demonstrated the safety of healthy women giving birth at home when a skilled attendant is present. THERE IS NO COMPROMISE IN SAFETY. HOME! Neonatal mortality is the same in both settings. There has never been any research that indicates that the safest place for all birth is a hospital. In fact, birth at home can be seen as healthier than hospital, because there are fewer interventions: fewer disturbances of the personal rhythm of birth; fewer surgeries, infections, instrument deliveries, birth injuries, hemorrhages, episiotomies; fewer separations of mother and baby (leading to higher rates of breastfeeding).

COMFORT - Most of us feel that our homes are our sanctuaries, our havens. We tend to feel most comfortable, uninhibited, protected and secure in our own territories, surrounded by our loved ones. Hospitals are alien environments for most people, reminiscent of illness and death. When you are stressed, preoccupied, and in need of paying the closest possible attention to yourself in order to accomplish a highly important task, would you feel better and more focused when you walk in the door of a hospital, or of your own home?

CONTROL - when preparing for birth at home, you know that the people who will support you are your guests - familiar loved ones and invited professional attendants who have been working with you throughout your pregnancy. You can direct the environment where you envision greeting your new baby. In your home, each woman can control the sights, sounds, smells, textures, touch and tastes that will buoy her as she moves through labor. She will play a fully informed part in all aspects of her care, which will be individualized and mother/baby-centered.

FAMILY CONTINUITY - The inherent intimacy and sacredness of this miraculous event are respected as private, integral parts of family life. When birth is at home, in the same setting in which the day-to-day rituals of life inform and renew us as closest kin, family is unified and strengthened. When children are present they are gently held by their familiar people, structures and routines, producing security and confidence instead of fear, thus normalizing the arrival of their sibling. Many observers believe that there is less postpartum depression following homebirth.

COST - The cost of birth at home is considerably less than birth in hospital. Many insurance companies will reimburse for homebirth. Unfortunately, however, some insurance companies and plans will not pay for homebirth, making the out-of-pocket costs for homebirth families more expensive. It is time for consumers to demand this cost-effective option from their insurance providers. By one estimate, if 75% of births were in the hands of midwives, the US health care bill would decrease $8.5 billion per year! It would decrease even more if homebirth were encouraged.

Karen Ehrlich, CPM, LM - Midwife
831/425-3326
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