

# 6 Simple Steps for a Healthy & Safe Birth



There is **A LOT** of medical research that tells you and your care provider what kind of care will most likely keep your baby's birth **SAFE** and **HEALTHY**.

**BUT**, the care pregnant women receive doesn't always **MATCH THE RESEARCH**.

Despite **risks** and **limited benefits**, a survey<sup>1</sup> of new moms showed:

**93%**

had continuous electronic fetal monitoring (EFM)

**87%**

had restrictions on eating

**66%**

had restrictions on drinking

**55%**

had artificially ruptured membranes

**35%**

had an episiotomy

Even though they are **"ROUTINE"** practices, some can actually make childbirth **MORE DIFFICULT** and **LESS SAFE**.

## KEEP CHILDBIRTH SIMPLE!

Lamaze has summed up years of research into **6 Healthy Birth Practices**, proven to promote the safest, healthiest birth possible for mother and baby.

### 1 LET LABOR BEGIN ON ITS OWN

- Normal pregnancy lasts 38-42 weeks!
- Natural start of labor usually means your body and your baby are ready for birth
- Induction can make contractions harder and stress the baby



### 4 AVOID INTERVENTIONS<sup>2</sup> THAT ARE NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY—

INDUCTION, ARTIFICIALLY RUPTURED MEMBRANES, RESTRICTED FOOD & DRINK, IV FLUIDS, CONTINUOUS EFM, EPISIOTOMY, EPIDURAL AND CESAREAN

- Many of these disrupt the birthing process, making it more difficult
- Choose a birth setting with a low rate of interventions
- Ask if your care provider routinely uses any interventions
- During labor, ask if there is another alternative



### 2 WALK, MOVE AROUND AND CHANGE POSITIONS THROUGHOUT LABOR

- Help your uterus work more efficiently
- Use upright positions and gravity to help pull baby down
- Actively responding to labor may help you feel more confident, less afraid



### 5 AVOID GIVING BIRTH ON YOUR BACK AND FOLLOW YOUR BODY'S URGE TO PUSH

- Use gravity to your advantage to shorten the pushing stage
- Push when your body tells you
- Use upright or side-lying positions
- Use adjustable hospital beds to support different pushing positions



### 3 BRING A LOVED ONE, FRIEND OR DOULA FOR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

- Praise, reassurance and encouragement decrease stress
- Physical support can help decrease pain
- Informational support can increase confidence



### 6 KEEP YOUR BABY WITH YOU – IT'S BEST FOR YOU, YOUR BABY AND BREASTFEEDING

- Skin-to-skin during the first hour helps baby transition
- Weighing and other routine procedures can wait
- Ask which procedures can be done while holding baby
- Rooming with baby doesn't prevent you from sleeping



PUSH FOR THE SAFEST, HEALTHIEST BIRTH POSSIBLE. VISIT [WWW.LAMAZE.ORG/PUSHFORYOURBABY](http://WWW.LAMAZE.ORG/PUSHFORYOURBABY) TO LEARN MORE.



1 Declercq, E.R., Sakala, C., Cory, M.P., & Applebaum, S. (2006, October). *Listening to mothers II: Report of the second national U.S. survey of women's childbearing experiences*. New York: Childbirth Connection. Retrieved from [http://www.childbirthconnection.org/pdfs/LTML\\_report.pdf](http://www.childbirthconnection.org/pdfs/LTML_report.pdf)

2 Lothian, J., DeVries, C. (2005). *The official Lamaze guide: Giving birth with confidence*. Minneapolis, MN: Meadowbrook Press.