

Preparing for Birth and Emergency Readiness

Barbara Hanrahan
Department of Nursing
Education



EVIDENCE : Systematic Review

- **WHO Positive Pregnancy Experience**
 - ❖ *Maintaining physical and sociocultural normality,*
 - ❖ *Maintaining a healthy pregnancy for mother and baby,*
 - ❖ *Having an effective transition to positive labour and birth*
 - ❖ *Achieving positive motherhood – a woman's self esteem, competence and autonomy.*

Self Preparedness

Pregnancy is a time for preparing for childbirth
(Howarth et al. 2017)

Women who take personal responsibility for managing their own pregnancy and birth have a sense of personal control (Howarth et al. 2011)

Labour and birth preparation should assist the development of childbirth skills

Childbirth Skills

Working through childbirth skills is essential for a woman to feel in control of the pain in her labour and reduces the fear of childbirth. (Howarth et al 2017)

When women in labour are shown how to use self help techniques in early labour, they have a more positive birthing experience. (and feel supported by the midwives)

Know What to Expect

WHAT HAPPENS DURING LABOUR ?

In Safe Hands pamphlet

Show, Waters break (clear) Stages of labour : nb : coping with transition

Contractions : longer, stronger and closer together. PROGRESS !!

Oxytocin. Endorphins

Cervix shorter, thinner and dilating

Pushing styles

Skills that will help a woman through labour and birth

- **Know what to expect**
- **Set out mentally to have a positive birth experience**
- **Have a birth companion**
- **Respect the midwife and she will in turn render respectful maternity care.**
- **Pack a labour and baby bag. Small comforts go a long way**

SKILLS : Practice every day

Ritual, Rhythm, Relaxation

- **Focus on breathing through contractions**
- **Relaxation between contractions**
- **Upright and mobile**
- **Open pelvis positions**
- **Rhythm to breathing and swaying**
- **Using the labour ball**
- **Comfort measures**
- **Fluid and energy snacks**
- **Empty your bladder**
- **Support and touch**

Labour and baby bag

MOM : LABOUR AND AFTER BIRTH	BABY
Maternity record / antenatal card	
Loose clothes to wear in labour	Nappy, cotton wool, wet wipes, buttock cream, baby wash
Disposable stretch panties with maternity pads, linen savers	3 x Vest, baby grow, socks, beanie
Bottle of water and energy drink Energy nibbles e.g. jelly baby sweets	Light weight wrapping blanket Warmer over blanket (if necessary)
Face cloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, towel	ID book / passport, marriage certificate, proof of residence (to register baby)
Clothes to go home in	

Working with the midwife

EVIDENCE

Research shows that women who are prepared for labour and use self help in labour reduce work related stress for Midwives

LEAVE THE NEGATIVE STORIES YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE MIDWIVES, AT HOME

Working with the midwife

- Greet and introduce yourself – engage the midwife
- Give her your records and tell her about your labour
- Be patient with the midwife
- Ask directly for help during labour
- Use the information the midwife is giving, follow her instructions

When a woman goes to the clinic or hospital in labour, introducing herself politely and in a friendly manner will really help set the tone for the relationship she will have with the midwife.

Ask her name and call her by her name.

If you have waited for a long time gently remind the midwife that you are waiting for her.

Try to focus on breathing with the pain, drinking water and moving about during contractions.

Emergency Readiness

Know the **danger signs** in pregnancy.

Put aside **transport** money.

Organise a way to **call your neighbour** if you are in labour alone at home – specially prepare for getting help at night. Have the number to call an **ambulance** in an emergency.

Take your **Maternity Record** and Antenatal Card.

Have you birth and baby **bag** ready.

Take a **large towel** that you can wrap around yourself if your waters break on the road to the clinic.

Emergency Actions

Keep your **maternity record with you** all the time.

Call for help / tell your work supervisor

Arrange transport to **HOSPITAL** (not clinic)

Sit down, take deep breaths

Let a family member know – arrange for someone to bring birth and baby bag.

Note the time e.g. when you started bleeding/ contracting.

Go straight to maternity admissions at the HOSPITAL.

A last word

Encourage women to be **pro active** about their pregnancy, labour and birth – i.e. be **actively involved** in care

Encourage women to **prepare** for labour and birth.

Encourage women to **prepare** for possible emergencies

Encourage women to work with the midwife.