

Serenity Birthing – Your Birth and Beyond, The Way that Resonates With You



Module 3 – Where to Give Birth and Why



Module 3 – Where to give birth and why

- ♥ Evidence based birth and why this is important
- ♥ What does good care mean to you?
- ♥ That you can choose to birth where and however you want it
- ♥ Be aware that how statistics are presented to you can make a huge difference as to how they influence your decisions **and** how you feel about those decisions



The birthplace study

💖 Study based on 64,000 low risk births in England in different settings.

💖 Giving birth is generally very safe – 99.57%

💖 This means you have a 0.43% risk of any kind of harm to you or your baby – a much lower risk than that of a car accident



Presenting Statistics

How statistics are presented can really influence how you feel. The word risk sounds scary and can influence your decisions. Always try to see the numbers from both sides:

Safety rate of Home birth 99.07% vs Obstetric unit 99.47%

An increased risk equates to a difference of 9.3 compared to 5.3 per 1000 births (0.93% and 0.53%) (home birth risk to Obstetric)

1 in 200 OR 0.5% risk OR **99.5% safe...**



Where can you give birth?

“Every woman is able to choose the most appropriate place and professional to attend her during childbirth based on her wishes and cultural preferences and any medical and obstetric needs she or her baby may have. Women's reactions to their birth experiences can influence their emotional well-being, their relationship with their baby and their future parenting relationships.” Department of Health

Wherever you like with whomever you like!



Home Birth



Anyone can book a home birth



They are usually booked around week 37 when you are considered to be full term



Usually 2 midwives will attend your birth



Pain medication is available – gas and air (some opiates)



Home Birth Statistics

Women are **more** likely to have a normal birth at home

Transfer rate during or after birth for first time mothers was 46% in home births (HB), 36% for Free standing Midwifery Units (FMUs) and 40% for Alongside obstetric Midwifery Units (AMUs)

Transfer rate for second or subsequent births was around 10%

12% HBs, 9% FMUs, 13% AMUs



Birth Centre – FMUs or AMUs

- ♥ Birth centres can be free standing or alongside obstetric units. Most in the UK are AMUs
- ♥ You usually book in around week 37 when you are considered full term
- ♥ They are staffed by midwives
- ♥ Pain medication available – gas and air, opiates



Birth Centre – Statistics

- ♥ Statistically as safe as birthing in a obstetric unit (0.31% vs 0.32%)
- ♥ Significantly **more** likely to have a ‘normal birth’ without medical interventions
- ♥ **Less** likely to have their baby delivered by caesarean section, forceps or ventouse. For example, over 75% of all women in the planned home and midwifery unit groups had a ‘normal birth’ without medical interventions, compared with 58% of women in the obstetric unit group.



Obstetric unit – The Labour Ward

- ♥ Midwives and obstetricians present
- ♥ More suitable for women with complex needs
- ♥ All types of pharmaceutical pain management available – gas and air, opiates, epidural



Obstetric unit – Statistics

- ♥ Costs £1631 on average compared to £1067 for HB, £1461 AMUs and £1435 FMU
- ♥ Safe outcomes were statistically equal in obstetric units, AMUs and FMUs for first time births
- ♥ However, the chances of intervention such as instrumental delivery and caesarian birth were **MUCH** higher in obstetric units



Summary of the Birth Place Study



Birth is statistically **very safe** for both mother and baby



More women had a 'normal birth' with low levels of intervention if they planned to have their baby **away** from the hospital labour ward:

58% for planned births in an obstetric unit

76% for planned births at a birth centre attached to hospital

83% for planned births at a free-standing birth centre

88% for planned births at home



Common Birthplace worries

- 💖 Am I allowed to have a birthplace of my choice?
- 💖 What if I can't cope and need pain management?
- 💖 How will my family/partner feel about my choice?
- 💖 What if I need to transfer for any reason?



Am I allowed to have the birthplace of my choice?



YES - Human Rights Law protects your right to decide where you give birth even if you are "high risk"



Healthcare professionals **must** present information about birth choices in an unbiased and objective way so that you can make an informed decision about your birth



There are organisations to help if you are being denied the birthplace of your choice.

AIMS (Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services)

Birthrights (Human rights in childbirth)



What if I can't cope?



Change that thinking! You were MADE to do this. Your body was MADE to do this!



Be informed about what to expect in labour. If you know about the bumps in the road, you won't worry so much when you encounter them



Choose a good support team who will champion you on your amazing journey



Pain threshold is not relevant, this is not an injury, it is a natural, physiological event. Keeping that Oxytocin flowing is the important thing!



Remember you can ALWAYS change your mind and transfer if you would feel safer doing so

The choice is yours!



What if I need pain management?

- ♥ You can have pain management at home – birth pool, tens, massage, breathing techniques, gas and air and some opiates are available
- ♥ You can have pain management at a birth centre – birth pool, gas and air and some opiates are available
- ♥ If you feel you need an epidural you can always transfer to the obstetric unit

You will be more relaxed at home and FAR less likely to need pain medication



My family/partner feel unsure about my choice

- ♥ Remember it is your body and your choice. You are the one that needs to feel safe for your hormones to work how they should and labour to progress
- ♥ Birth education is good for everyone involved so teach them what you've learned. Show off your understanding of birth
- ♥ Take the time to talk through worries that your partner/family have so that they feel heard and understood



What if I need to transfer?

- ♥ Remember the chances of needing intervention are **Extremely** small
- ♥ Your midwife will tell you if they feel transfer is appropriate and should give you time to consider your options
- ♥ Remember you can ALWAYS change your mind. If you decide you would feel safer in the obstetric unit, you can go there
- ♥ It is harder to leave hospital once in labour than to go there...



Private Maternity Care

Private maternity care is available (usually within an NHS setting)

You pay for ALL of your care

Usually in an emergency you will be transferred to the NHS

It is worth finding out:

Their views and philosophy on childbirth – Does this tie in with your own feelings?

Their caesarian vs natural birth rates – Is this important to you?

What are the priorities of the women they cater to? - e.g feeling no pain, preventative care



What matters to you and makes you feel safe?

- ♥ Comforting support of your birth team
- ♥ Being listened to with empathy
- ♥ Having someone who believes in you and your body even if you are struggling to
- ♥ Someone who wants to fulfil your wishes and support your decisions
- ♥ Someone who explains and includes you



What matters to you and makes you feel safe?

- 💖 Preventative care – doing things just in case e.g episiotomy in case you tear
- 💖 Using the latest technology
- 💖 Rigid procedures and protocols with strict time limits
- 💖 Removing or managing painful sensations
- 💖 Trusting experts rather than yourself



What is important is for you to feel safe

Use the combination of things that makes

you feel most comfortable and reassured



Just a thought...

You can always change your mind and go to hospital...

It is harder to be in hospital and decide to go home...

Midwives will tell you to stay at home as long as possible because they know that your labour will likely progress better there because you feel more safe and comfortable in your own nest.



Practical Exercise

- ♥ Take some time to think of what makes you feel safe and comfortable
- ♥ Have a think about which setting resonates best with you according to what you feel will make you comfortable and safe during labour
- ♥ Allow yourself to think about this without judgement. There is no one right way to give birth. Each one is different. The important thing is that it is right for you, that you feel fully informed to make your choice
- ♥ Write your thoughts and feelings down in a diary – this is an amazing journey you are on, so do continue to document your adventure, thoughts and feelings

