



### Where and how to access correct information

There is just so much information out there that it can be difficult to find the good (latest researched evidence) information. Some good websites to read are

- www.expectantmothersguide.co.za
- www.sarahbuckley.com
- www.evidencebasedbirth.com
- www.lamaze.org
- www.thefamilyway.com
- www.pennysimkin.com
- www.pregnancyeducation.co.za

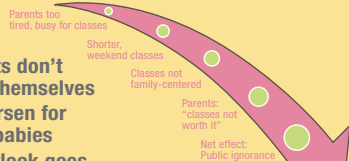
### Tools to have an empowered birthing experience

- Caregivers who are knowledgeable and confident but give me a place in their team
- Relaxed, calm, peaceful environment for labour
- Let me listen to my body
- Labour support – doula / birth companion
- Knowledge of what is best for me and my baby
- A team that practices evidence based medicine

### The price of ignorance

#### Ignorance and fear go hand in hand

- Fearful parents don't advocate for themselves
- Outcomes worsen for mothers and babies
- Providers' outlook goes unchecked



Maternity care is more surgically and technologically based than ever before, yet outcomes are declining

### Where is maternity care today?

- One of every 3-4 women now describes her birth as traumatic
- One in 5-10 meets criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder
- One of every 3-4 woman has a postpartum mood disorder
- Caesarean rate on the rise

### Childbirth education is of high quality if it covers

- Normal physiology, variations in labour and postpartum, and how interventions alter the process
- Provides information on options, different attitudes and services of care providers and hospitals
- Respects parents' decision-making role and the importance of becoming informed
- Offers ample rehearsal of techniques to improve comfort and labour progress
- Includes realistic discussion of emotional aspects and challenges of birth and labour progress
- Prepares parents for care and feeding of a newborn baby
- Teaches about birth companions
- Teaches about natural birth and the importance of the microbiome to a newborn
- Teaches skin to skin and the 9 instinctive stages of the newborn and the importance of long term skin to skin

Ensure you attend Childbirth Education classes. Find your childbirth educator today and learn more about classes so you can truly make informed decisions about your pregnancy, birth and parenting experiences.



www.expectantmothersguide.co.za  
www.pregnancyeducation.co.za

# Empowered Birthing

## What does it mean to have "an empowered birthing experience?"



An empowering birth can change a woman's experience of giving birth from an overwhelming, negative or frightening event to a fulfilling, positive, and satisfying birth. Empowered births are ones in which women make choices without coercion and with supportive caregivers. Sometimes that means choosing to have a home birth with a midwife, and sometimes it means choosing to have a caesarean. For each birth, empowerment looks and sounds different and each story is unique. Not all home births are empowering. Not all caesareans are either. But when women are educated and supported in informed decision making, any type of birth can be empowering!

### Childbirth education makes a difference

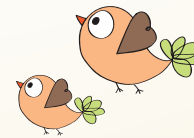
Many expectant parents believe they are too busy to attend a proper good course of childbirth education which has led to less knowledge. Ignorance has led to fear and decisions being left to the doctor and hospital. Attend childbirth education classes because understanding the miraculous process of pregnancy and birth empowers parents to make informed decisions. A pregnant mom and dad need to be educated about pregnancy and all possible procedures and treatments to which she may be exposed. Without the knowledge, they can't make informed decisions. Knowledge is power! An empowered birthing experience will leave you with feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment.



- 1. Knowledge** – you learn about all the childbirth options available to you, and the pros and cons of each.
- 2. Expertise** – educators are experienced nursing sisters and midwives who have chosen to specialise in childbirth education because they passionately believe in it.
- 3. Tools** – you will be given practical tips and techniques such as breathing, relaxation, positions, massage and visualisation – that can help you cope with birth, postpartum and stress.
- 4. Confidence** – you and your partner will feel more confident knowing what to expect and how to manage it.
- 5. Be prepared** – you will be taught about all aspects of pregnancy and birth, from stretch marks to caring for your newborn.
- 6. Connections** – you will meet other expectant parents from your area. Lifelong friendships can be formed.

### Changing the birth mind set

- Your body is created to give birth
- Your body is capable of giving birth
- You can trust your body to give birth
- Your body was made to do this
- You are strong
- You are confident, calm and in control
- You are excited to give birth to your baby



### Childbirth education Q & A

#### Q. Are all Childbirth education classes the same?

A. No they are not all equal at all. Look for classes that are run by qualified perinatal/childbirth educators. The educator should be a nursing

sister and midwife as well as being a parent themselves so they have the knowledge as well as the practical experience.

#### Q. Do they all teach with the philosophy of informed choice through the knowledge of alternatives?

A. When looking for the right class, ask questions about which options they teach. All possible options should be taught in classes.

#### Q. I don't know anything about pregnancy and birth – where do I start?

A. Attend childbirth education classes. Also do some reading from reputable websites as listed on the next page.

#### Q. I am just sooo busy, are classes really important?

A. Your pregnancy and birth should be a top priority in your busy life schedule. You will be giving your baby the best start for a healthy life if you are informed. These decisions and events have long term consequences.

#### Q. There is just sooo much info on the internet, won't reading there suffice?

A. Just reading isn't sufficient. Have good in-depth discussions with educated healthcare professionals. It will make a difference.

