What Does Good Maternity Care Look Like?

The Midwives Model of Care

The Midwives Model of Care is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes.

The Midwives Model of Care includes:

- Monitoring the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle
- Providing the mother with individualized education, counseling, and prenatal care, continuous hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support
- Minimizing technological interventions
- Identifying and referring women who require obstetrical attention

The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma, and cesarean section.

The Ten Steps of Mother-Friendly Care*

A mother-friendly hospital, birth center, or home birth service:

1. Offers all birthing mothers unrestricted access to birth companions, labor support, professional midwifery care.
2. Provides accurate descriptive, statistical information about birth care practices.
3. Provides culturally competent care.
4. Provides the birthing woman with freedom of movement to walk, move, and assume positions of her choice.
5. Has clearly defined policies, procedures for collaboration, consultation, links to community resources.
6. Does not routinely employ practices, procedures unsupported by scientific evidence.
7. Educates staff in non-drug methods of pain relief and does not promote use of analgesic, anesthetic drugs.
8. Encourages all mothers, families, to touch, hold, breastfeed, care for their babies.
9. Discourages nonreligious circumcision of the newborn.
10. Strives to achieve the WHO/UNICEF Ten Steps of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative to promote successful breastfeeding.

Six Care Practices that Support Normal Birth*

These evidence-based practices, adapted from the World Health Organization, promote, support and protect normal birth:

- Labor begins on its own
- Freedom of movement throughout labor
- Continuous labor support
- No routine interventions
- Spontaneous pushing in upright or gravity-neutral positions
- No separation of mother and baby after birth, with unlimited opportunities for breastfeeding

* as listed in The Evidence Basis for the Ten Steps of Mother Friendly Care (Journal of Perinatal Education, Vol. 16, Supplement 1, Winter 2007)

Supporting evidence-based care, and promoting healthy mothers and babies!