

Ten Things To Think About For Birth



Bumps & Births
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Welcome



My name is Fi. I am a mum of two and had two very different births. The first could have been a lot better but that just made me extra sure that the second would be a much more positive experience...and it was!

As a result of that I am now self employed offering Lazy Daisy antenatal classes and I am also a qualified hypnotherapist. I specialise in helping people with fertility, conception, birth and beyond.

I have written this guide for women just like you who are soon to give birth. I hope that by drawing on my experience, training and passion for helping women to have a positive birth that I might be able to help guide your thinking and research to achieve the best birth you can.

This free guide is intended to give you some food for thought and is not intended to replace medical advice. It is designed to help you think about your birthing journey and point you towards wider information.

If you have any questions about anything to do with what is mentioned in this free guide I would be very happy to hear from you. I offer a free chat to anyone who wants it. I don't do any hard sells, it really isn't my style. I offer information to help you to make an informed and educated choice about what you want to do with your body when you give birth.

If that means you end up coming to a Positive Birth Meeting, one of my Lazy Daisy classes, a couples workshop or you'd like to talk about hypnotherapy then great but if you don't I am still more than happy to help you in whatever way I can.

My email address is fi@bumpsandbirths.co.uk – drop me a line

Number 1: Preparation



You can never start too early! Think about it, whether you planned your pregnancy or were surprised when you got your positive result you still have 9 months (give or take!) to get ready for the birth.

This is a huge life changing event which has the power to be incredible! You are doing yourself a disservice if you don't put some time and effort into preparing your mind and body for labour.

If you go into labour expecting one thing and get something quite different there is a risk you could end up traumatised, read about birth trauma causes on midwifethinking.com If you have been telling yourself up to this point that you are happy to 'go with the flow' have a read of this [blog](#) post which rather succinctly sums up the problem with this attitude.

You put a lot of preparation into other aspects of your life, for example if you have taken a driving test, have sat exams or been interviewed for a job, don't let this day get looked over. You have a responsibility to prepare.

Read about my [births](#) and how the first whilst not terrible informed my research for the second.

Number 2: Classes

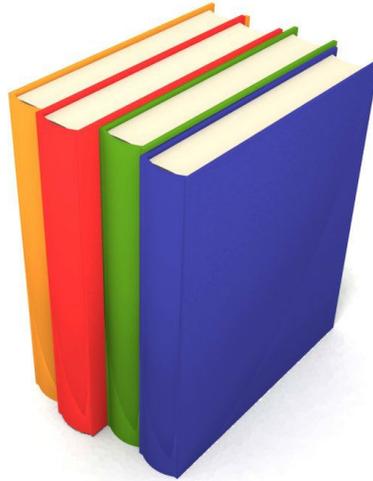


You can choose to take an antenatal class to help you prepare. So how do you choose between the many offerings including [Lazy Daisy?](#) [Hypnobirthing?](#) [Parentcraft?](#) or [NCT?](#) You have to decide what you want from your antenatal classes and find someone who provides what you are looking for in your area.

There are 3 key areas to think about, Relaxation, Movement and Education. All 3 aspects will help you prepare and different courses offer different levels of each. For example a Lazy Daisy course will cover all 3 aspects in one 6 week term.

Equally Yoga for pregnancy and an NCT course together may provide you with what you need. Don't be afraid to ask providers your questions to get more information.

Number 3: Learn about Birth!



The more you can understand the physiology of birth, the muscles used, how the baby gets out, the amazing interplay of hormones and how wonderfully adapted you are to give birth the better!

You don't have to take a biology degree to get this understanding either. There are books in the library such as '*Birth Reborn*' by Michel Odent (a brilliant book) there are resources online such as midwifethinking.com and online groups where you can ask your questions and learn about the birth process.

Demystify the process and you can begin to unpick any fear or anxiety you may have about it because you start to believe it is simply second nature for you to birth your baby.

Number 4: Get Positive!



Author Grantly Dick Read writes about the *Fear-Tension-Pain* cycle which as the name suggests can make labour hurt a lot. If you are afraid, you tense your muscles and when those muscles try to go to work to birth your baby they can't do it very easily so they hurt.

It seems to be a favourite past time for people when confronted with a newly pregnant Mum to regale her with horror stories of their own or others births. The more times you are told it will hurt and be terrible the more this will feed into the fear and the beginning of that cycle. **So break it!**

Surround yourself with positivity. Join the local branch of the [Positive Birth Movement](#) which is a free not for profit organisation aimed at helping women access positive information, stories and help in birth decisions. There are wonderful blogs such a [birthwithoutfearblog.com](#) and [tellmeagoodbirthstory.co.uk](#) where you can read until your hearts content about empowering birth stories.

Its important to point out that these are not just about vaginal home births with no medication, they celebrate every birth however they happen to come about.

Number 5: Doula



[Image courtesy of www.examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com)

A doula is a non medical birth attendant who is there during the birth primarily to 'mother the mother.' It can be invaluable for a labouring women to have support of another woman, especially one who has given birth before to tell her that she can do it. Having a doula around can also help your partner.

Having someone else on hand so your partner can have a break, eat or use the bathroom without feeling like they've left you is important. The continuity of care offered by a doula can help provide some stability to the labour process especially if transfers are needed or if things don't go quite to plan.

Doula's can be quite expensive but there is the possibility of hiring a Doula in training who will be free or charge less and there is also the charity doula.org.uk who can provide a doula for free in some cases.

Number 6: Informed Consent



Making decisions during pregnancy and about your birth are your responsibility. Read this guide on how to make informed consent [here](#). Don't assume that information you are given is unbiased and don't assume that you will be able to decide during labour. You need to be able to weigh up the risks and benefits of ANY decision as the consequences can be far reaching.

Remember the acronym **BRAIN** – **B**enefits involved, **R**isk involved, **A**lternatives to consider, **I**ntuition and **N**othing, just waiting and seeing.

When in labour you will naturally suspend use of your 'thinking' brain to let your 'animal' brain take over, the last thing you need during labour is to be asked to consider the finer points of whether you want another examination or not. Any decision you make needs to be based on good quality research. The Doctor may tell you there is a 'risk' involved but you need to ascertain what that risk is and whether this is acceptable to you or not.

You can NEVER be *made* to do anything during your pregnancy and labour. If you do not give your informed consent to a procedure or examination in light of your research and it is still carried out this is an assault.

Remember: Your Body, Your Baby, Your Birth

Midwives should have guidelines in place for them to record if you are making a decision that goes against medical advice and they can not pressure you into doing something you don't want just because they feel uncomfortable with it.

Number 7: Intervention



Birth is a natural physiological process which means usually the best way to ensure a smooth birth is to leave well alone and let the mother follow her instincts. Any time something is done to a woman in labour it is called an intervention.

They can range from taking blood pressure, having a vaginal exam, foetal monitoring, administering drugs, breaking your waters to using forceps, a ventouse or having a c'section. Each intervention has its own set of benefits and risks and you must consider what you are happy with before you are in labour.

Having one intervention can lead to a cascade of interventions happening before you know it as the birth process is disturbed. So please go into your birth with your eyes wide open about what intervention means to you and what you are happy to have or not have. Great blog from The Mule [here](#) on medical interventions in birth.

Number 8: Induction



This is another intervention but I feel needs special consideration outside of number 6. Induction is the artificial jump starting of labour. When considering the end of pregnancy there are a million old wives tales about starting labour which you will be bombarded with by everyone else so I won't do that here.

Medical induction involves either a sweep, breaking your waters (ARM) or administering synthetic oxytocin which is the hormone to get contractions started. This can also be administered to 'speed' up 'stalled' labour. Induction is often discussed when pregnancy starts to approach term or just after. The first thing you might want to consider is that normal pregnancy can vary by up to 5 weeks.

The World Health Organisation recognises that pregnancy reaches term between 37 and 42 weeks. Some woman carry their baby's even longer. So you have to be happy that if you are going to be induced for being post dates that the risks and benefits have been fully disclosed as discussed in Informed Consent.

Secondly there is a need for more research on the long term affects of using synthetic oxytocin. There is some research which indicates it could be linked to some of the Autism Spectrum Disorders. Finally a post from my favourite blog midwifethinking.com on [inductions](#).

It is important to make it clear that this refers to inductions offered as the pregnant woman nears the end of the pregnancy, there is no good reason to jump start labour where the pregnancy is continuing as normal. There are however some medical conditions where an induction might become preferable to leaving things to the natural course. Again this is down to you being happy with the advice you are being given and more importantly WHY.

Number 9: The First Hour



The first hour after the birth of your baby should be a special and intimate time. You might want to consider things like delayed cord clamping, letting your baby's cord stop pulsing before being cut which enables all the blood to transfer from the placenta giving your baby the best start in life.

Also having skin to skin contact, undisturbed eye contact and a quiet gentle atmosphere. Obviously this can't always happen, if for example an emergency does occur, however even with an emergency c'section you can still have these things taken into consideration.

Number 10: Marketing



Finally just as the medical world will offer you many choices and decisions so too will the marketing world. You and your bump will attract many offers, promotions, deals and 'must have' accessories. You hold the ultimate say about what your baby needs.

Exercise some caution. If you want to spend on the newest and latest gadget then go for it, there is no problem with this. But don't feel like you have to get new everything. Second hand sales, nearly new and charity shops can help provide you and your baby with everything you need. Mattresses are really the only thing which need to be brand new for your baby.

Freecycle could kit you out for absolutely nothing. Remember what your baby actually needs is your time and love.

One Last Thing...

I hope that this document has given you some ideas about things you could do to ensure your birth is what YOU want it to be. There are obviously many more factors to consider but I felt these were the top ones.

If you would like to discuss any of these points or anything else to do with fertility, birth and beyond I would be more than happy to hear from you.



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