

New landmark study shows that **Planned Home Births Are Safe**

The largest study of home births attended by Certified Professional Midwives, as published in the *British Medical Journal*, has found that home birth is safe for low risk women and involves far fewer interventions than similar births in hospitals.

Safe & Healthy Outcomes

- Results are consistent with most studies of planned home births and low risk hospital births
- Zero maternal deaths
- Intrapartum and neonatal mortality: 2.0 per 1000 intended home births (only 1.7 per 1000 intended home births when planned breech and twin births are excluded)
- Immediate neonatal concerns resulted in just 2.4% of newborns being placed in neonatal intensive care
- At six weeks well over 90% of mothers were still breastfeeding their babies

Low Rates of Medical Intervention

- Much lower rates of interventions for intended home births compared to low risk hospital births:

| | Planned home birth | Hospital birth |
|---|--------------------|----------------|
| Induction of labor (only with oxytocin or prostaglandins) | 2.1% * | 21.0% |
| Stimulation of labor (only with oxytocin) | 2.7% * | 18.9% |
| Electronic fetal monitoring | 9.6% | 84.3% |
| Episiotomy | 2.1% | 33.0% |
| Vacuum Extraction | 0.6% | 5.5% |
| Cesarean Section | 3.7% | 19.0% |

* These numbers differ from the BMJ article where data for CPMs included forms of induction and stimulation only used by midwives and not comparable to hospital births.

Satisfied Mothers

- Only 1.7% of the mothers said they would choose a different type of caregiver for a future pregnancy

Few Transfers to Hospital Care

- Only 12.1% transferred to hospital intrapartum or postpartum
- Five out of six transfers were before delivery, most for failure to progress, pain relief or exhaustion
- Midwife considered transfer urgent in only 3.4% of intended home births

High Credibility

- Included all home births involving Certified Professional Midwives in the year 2000
- 5,418 women in U.S. and Canada who intended to give birth at home as of the start of labor
- Prospective – every planned home birth was registered in the study prior to labor and delivery

“Outcomes of planned home births with certified professional midwives: large prospective study in North America.” Kenneth C Johnson and Betty-Anne Daviss. *BMJ* 2005;330:1416 (18 June). This article and related letters to the editor are available online, free, at <http://www.bmj.com>. (Use the search feature and type Daviss for the author.)