



Prairie Love Midwifery

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Encouraging Confidence and Enlightenment in Your Birth Experience

Waterbirth

By Marlene Bergman

Waterbirth can be a wonderful relaxing way to have your baby. We begin our lives in water and when we have our baby's water can be the most relaxing and gentle experience. Being supported in water is one of the most helpful things that can be offered to a woman in labor. The water helps to soothe and creates a peaceful and relaxed atmosphere. Many women say they actually enjoyed their labors and found that the water allowed them complete freedom of movement and the atmosphere to be able to achieve deep concentration.

When a woman gets into a tub of warm deep water she can relax easier. The water creates an environment where she is weightless, her sensory stimulation is reduced and her body is less apt to create stress related hormones. This allows her body to make endorphins. Noradrenaline and catecholamines, are the hormones that are released during stress. These hormones actually raise the blood pressure and can slow a labor down. A laboring woman who can physically relax, is also able to mentally relax as well. Many women, midwives, and doctors acknowledge the analgesic effect of water. Sometimes a woman gets into the birth pool thinking that she will have the baby in a different place, and has the baby in the pool before she can get out.

Women can attain an amazing comfort level in water that helps to greatly decrease their levels of fear and stress. When a woman is calm her labor can become easier. She can focus on each contraction and let them come one at a time. The water can help some women completely let go and their labors become easier, their fears go away and they totally relax, and their babies are born smoothly.

Another benefit of laboring in the water is that the water has an effect on the way the tissues of the perineum can stretch. It reduces that chance of tears and the severity of them if they do happen. Compresses on the perineum are not needed in the water unless the mother chooses to have them.

The mother and baby are so connected during the birth experience. Waterbirth can make this connection easy, smooth and peaceful. If a mother is having a hard birth and fear and stress are keeping her from relaxing, the baby isn't relaxed either. The baby can feel what is going on with his/her mother. If mom gets into the tub and relaxes, feels safe, and can let the birth just happen. The baby spends less time in the birth canal, and can safely be in his/her mother's arms before the mother exhausts.

Waterbirth can be a wonderful experience for a mother and baby. Research has shown that Waterbirth has been around as early as the 1700's. It seems that humans find the comforts of water for healing and birth all over the world.

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