

SO, I AM REALLY PREGNANT!

What should I do?

Can I do anything at all?

Whom can I ask?

Should I read something?

Where am I going to give birth?

And will I ever manage to give birth?

Where can I get more information?

Do you know what a birth plan (or birth wishes) is?

Do you know how to create a birth plan and who can help you with it?

Do you know your right to make an informed decision?

Do you know what are the pain relief options when giving birth and how to get through the childbirth well?

- What is good for you as a pregnant woman and a woman giving birth is good for your baby as well.
- You as parents are responsible for your child and for everything that happens to your baby from the very first moment. You can ask the medical staff about anything you would like to know and let them know your wishes. You have a right to obtain full, qualified responses.
- There is a solution for every situation.

Where to get more information

Leaflet:

10 Steps to Optimal Maternity Care by IMBCO 2008

Books:

Active Birth by Janet Balaskas • *Orgasmic Birth* by Elizabeth Davis and Debra Pascali-Bonaro • *The Attachment Parenting Book* by William Sears and Martha Sears • *The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth* by Henci Goer

Organisations dealing with childbirth care that collaborate under the umbrella organization the Czech Women's Lobby (www.czlobby.cz):
APERIO Healthy Parenting Association www.aperio.cz
Czech Doula Association www.duly.cz
Czech Chamber of Midwives www.ckpa.cz
Active Motherhood Movement www.iham.cz
League of Human Rights www.llp.cz
U Čápa Birth House www.pdcap.cz
Union of Midwives www.unipa.cz

International websites:

www.internationalchildbirth.com • www.imbco.org
www.breastfeedinginc.ca • www.lli.org

Other professional resources:

Care in Normal Birth: A Practical Guide (WHO 1999)
10 Steps to Optimal Maternity Care (IMBCO 2008)
The International Childbirth Initiative: 12 Steps to Safe and Respectful MotherBaby-Family Maternity Care (ICI 2019)

The leaflet was compiled by Vlasta Jirásková (Czech Doula Association), Petra Sovová (Active Motherhood Movement), Jitka Charvátová (U Čápa Birth House) and Eliška Kodyšová (APERIO).

The "Defend the Rights of Women in Czech Republic" project was supported by the Open Society Fund Prague from the "Let's Give (Wo)men a Chance" programme (funded from the Norway Grants and the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic) and realized with the financial support of the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government Council for Equal Opportunities.

© Czech Women's Lobby, 2016, English edition 2019



SDRUŽENÍ
PRO INTEGRACI
A MIGRACI

Úřad vlády České republiky



evz FOUNDATION
REMEMBRANCE
RESPONSIBILITY
FUTURE

Pregnancy

When you find out you are pregnant, you will most probably go to see your gynaecologist with whom you will later have your regular check-ups. Who can also help you besides your doctor?

A **midwife** is a professional with a university degree trained to support the health of mothers, babies and whole families. She provides health care for newborns and mothers during their pregnancies (by counselling), childbirth and postpartum periods.

A **doula** is a trained person to support mothers through pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period. She provides individual childbirth education, help and support for women and their partners.

Organisations, brochures and websites listed on the reverse side of this leaflet bring further information on pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and parenting.

- Take care of your diet and overall wellbeing. Eat healthy food, be physically active, and have enough rest.
- Tune in to yourself and to your baby. Your baby can feel what is going on around you even during your pregnancy.
- Surround yourself with positive people whom you can trust, including providers who take care of you.
- Set aside time to spend with your partner regularly.
- Get inspired by beautiful birth stories from books, films or women around you.
- Realize what your body is capable of and what you are doing well.
- Although you are being provided health care during your pregnancy, it does not mean you are ill. Getting pregnant and having a normal pregnancy are signs of good health after all.
- Try to solve your personal problems or problems with your partner if you have any. If needed, seek for professional help.
- Take interest in your pregnancy tests: What exactly can they detect? What are their side effects? Which of them are really necessary? Will they help you to make a decision?
- **Timely information on giving birth and breastfeeding can make your childbirth and parenting easier.**

Childbirth

Do you know that:

- a childbirth is a natural physiological process and any intervention into it should be carried out only for well-founded reasons?
- in order for her birth hormones to work well a woman needs to feel safe and warm, dim light and loving support? Giving birth is a part of a woman's sexual life and should be treated as such.
- a midwife is a professional in normal physiological childbirth and an obstetrician is an expert in solving complications? According to studies, healthy women have the best childbirth results when the childbirth care is provided by a midwife trained in normal childbirth support (i.e. less interventions, complications, or Caesarean sections, better health conditions of mothers and babies).
- a Caesarean section can be life-saving but it is also a serious abdominal operation demanding both for the mother and the baby and should be carried out only in necessary cases?
- medication given to the mother goes also to the child and has a negative impact on breastfeeding and on the health conditions of both of them?
- the presence of a doula during the childbirth reduces the chances of a Caesarean section, the application of oxytocin, or other interventions and increases the mother's satisfaction with the birth?
- **the childbirth can be a reinforcing joyful experience for you?**

Do you know what **the father's/your partner's** role at the childbirth can be? Many parents wish to experience the unique moment of their child's arrival together. Do you want your partner to actively help you or you just wish his calm presence? Some women prefer a female support and agree with their partner that he comes as soon as the child is born. It is good if the partner takes interest in the birth and if you tell each other what your expectations are. There is not just one solution.

Is it clear to you **where** you want to give birth and **who** will support you? Will your privacy be respected? Will you have a separate shower and a toilette room? Will you stay in one room without moving to another during the childbirth?

In case you have health problems, does the hospital of your choice provide sufficient care for both the mother and the baby?

Child Care

- The baby is a **sensitive human being** and should be approached as such.
- The mother and the baby should be taken care of as **an inseparable unit** (MotherBaby).
- A newborn child's place is **on its mother's chest and skin**. That is where its thermal comfort, breathing and heartbeat regulation and transfer of mother's friendly bacteria are ensured.
- If we let the umbilical cord pulse out (delayed cord clamping), the child receives the extra blood due including necessary nutrients. Therefore, the transition to pulmonary breathing is smooth.
- **A long-lasting uninterrupted physical contact** of the mother and child helps to positively develop her abilities as a mother, to start her breastfeeding, and to create a strong bound between the two.
- If the mother is sleeping after a Caesarean section, the baby can be cuddled on its father's or other close person's chest. It is harmful to separate the child from its parents.
- The baby's self attachment to its mother breast is an ideal start to breastfeeding. To achieve that, the baby needs to be given sufficient time.
- The assessment of the newborn's state of health can be carried out on its mother's body.
- Breastfeeding is beneficial both physically and psychically for both the child and the mother.
- Breast milk is both food and medicine. It is a living substance and cannot be fully replaced.
- Full breastfeeding can be re-established even after stopping or partial bottle-feeding.
- Also an ill child needs its mother.
- You will early learn to read your child's signals. Let yourself be led by its needs in your care.
- You cannot spoil your baby by satisfying its needs lovingly and without delay.
- **The support you get from your partner** and your surroundings is enormously important for successful breastfeeding. With the exception of breastfeeding, the father can take care of the child as well as the mother.