

THE RECLAIMED VILLAGE

6 WAYS TO REDUCE *birth trauma*

According to the National Institutes of Health, up to 45% of people report experiencing birth trauma. Birth is not a health-neutral event, and some trauma is absolutely unpreventable. However, we have a problem in our country with preventable, unnecessary trauma. Our goal at The Reclaimed Village is to help you avoid the unnecessary trauma whenever possible.

1. SPONTANEOUS LABOR

Whenever medically safe to do so, let labor begin on its own. Normal pregnancy can last up to 42 weeks, and the average first timer goes past their 40 week “due date”. Induction can make contractions harder, lead to longer labor, and stress the baby.

2. MOVE DURING LABOR

Despite what the movies show, you DON'T have to labor only in bed. Upright movement uses gravity to help baby descend. Moving in labor helps you feel in control, less afraid, and helps your baby navigate the pelvis in a good position.

3. CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

Your labor nurse will only be in your room ~30% of the time. Invite a loved one or doula into your birth for emotional support, physical support, and advocacy. Continuous support decreases your risk of c-section by 25% (39% with a doula).

4. AVOID UNNECESSARY MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS

Many routine practices can actually make birth more difficult and less safe. Make a birth plan and discuss it with your provider at a prenatal appt., to see if they regularly use anything you disagree with

5. WAIT FOR URGE TO PUSH

Just because you're 10cm dilated, doesn't mean your baby is low enough. Wait for an urge to push (unmedicated) or a constant pelvic pressure (epidural) before starting pushing. Use upright or side-lying positions, using gravity to your advantage.

6. KEEP BABY WITH YOU

Prioritize skin-to-skin for as long as you want it after birth (ideally 1+ hours). This can be done in the OR after a c-section, and many routine procedures can be done while holding baby. Rooming in with baby doesn't prevent you from sleeping.

The 6 things in this handout are evidence-based ways to keep your birth safer, healthier, and stack the deck in your favor against trauma. However, the care many people receive in birth doesn't always match the research. To learn more, sign up for our childbirth education class, or talk to one of our doulas today!