

# Is Natural Birth for Me?



## *A Worksheet Guide to Help You Decide if You Want to Plan a Natural Birth*

Deciding to have a natural birth requires commitment and a certain mindset. Although I believe every woman possesses the potential to give birth without medicated pain relief, it may not be the best choice for every mama.

It is important to carefully think through the option of giving birth naturally so that you can make an appropriate decision and be confident in that decision. So let's walk through this thought process together and analyze what your true feelings are on this important topic.

Hint: There are no wrong opinions or answers to the questions in this guide!

## Why am I considering having a natural birth?

This is the most important question you can answer for yourself when trying to decide if you want a natural birth. Once you thoroughly answer this question for yourself, you will be able to figure out if your "why" is a good enough reason to be worth the extra effort involved in planning your birth as well as the extra physical pain you will experience during the birth.

Additionally, if you decide to plan for a natural birth, knowing your "why" and reminding yourself of it often will keep you motivated and encouraged to continue.

To dig deeper into this broad question, answer the following focus questions:

- What benefits are there for the baby that are important to me?

Answer:

- What benefits are there for the mom that are important to me?

Answer:

- What aspects of traditional, medicated deliveries do I dislike?

Answer:

- How have my family members' and friends' birth experiences affected me?

Answer:

- When did I first begin considering the option of natural birth?

Answer:

- Who do I know who has had a natural birth?

Answer:

- Do I view natural-birth-mothers as being happier with their birth experiences?

Answer:

Sometimes, as we begin to dissect our thoughts on a given issue, subconscious fears, expectations and belief systems begin to emerge. After answering the preceding questions, you will probably have a good starting point to begin figuring out what you truly want and why.

As we dig deeper into your mama heart, remember that there are no "right" answers and there is no scoreboard for determining whether you are a perfect candidate for natural birth. This exercise is simply for the purpose of helping you understand yourself better.

## What is my mindset on planning a natural birth?

The answer to this question will help you know how to plan, what provider to choose and what type of support to surround yourself with.

Give some serious thought to the following focus questions:

- Do I want to have a natural birth only if it works out and isn't too painful, or do I want to be all-in committed?

Answer:

- In my own words, how do I define "natural childbirth"?

Answer:

- What do I want the most out of my birth experience?

Answer:

The questions you just answered should give you a pretty good idea of what hopes and expectations you have about your possible pursuit of natural birth. Whatever your decision ultimately is, make sure your provider shares your values on what you want your birth to be like.

## What kind of support do I have to help make a natural birth successful?

This is a very important question to explore. While you can still achieve a natural birth without an abundance of support, it will be so much easier on you if you can identify and rely on your sources of support throughout the process of planning as well as the labor itself.

Try to think through every possibility when answering the following focus questions:

- What medical professionals do I have that support natural birth (pregnancy care provider, primary care provider, chiropractor, nurses at your delivery hospital, etc.)?

Answer:

- What loved ones do I have that support me having a natural birth (spouse, parents, siblings, grandparents cousins, friends, etc.)?

Answer:

- What online connections do I have that will encourage me in planning a natural birth (online forums or groups, Facebook friends, natural birth blogs, etc.)?

Answer:

- Do I have any providers or loved ones who will object to and discourage me from pursuing a natural birth?

Answer:

If you want to have a natural birth but, after going through these questions, you do not feel that you have sufficient support to do so, you may need to try to find different providers and consider hiring a doula if you are financially able.

Also, don't forget the importance of online connections. Join an online group that supports natural birth and "meet" and build relationships with other moms who are planning or have had a natural birth.

## What hindrances are there that might keep me from having a natural birth?

Some hindrances to natural birth are unexpected things that happen during labor, and it's not possible to predict those things ahead of time. But there are also a lot of things leading up to labor, during the planning and preparation phase, that can sabotage your desire or ability to have a natural birth.

The following focus questions will help you identify the hindrances you may encounter should you decide to plan a natural birth:

- Does my provider make negative comments about natural birth or my preferences for labor and delivery?

Answer:

- Do I have people in my life who will try to talk me out of having a natural birth?

Answer:

- On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most intense), how intense is my fear of labor pain?

Answer:

- How has the media's take on childbirth influenced my perception of what labor is like?

Answer:

Please remember that hindrances are not unchangeable. If you decide you do indeed want a natural birth, don't be discouraged from doing so because you feel there are a lot of hindrances. One thing that will avoid the hindrance of negativity from loved ones is to not

make known your natural birth plans to anyone who might be opposed to them. I highly recommend this.

Of course, if it is a provider who is opposed to your natural birth plans, you will need to try to find another provider. The last thing you need during labor is your doctor pressuring you to accept an epidural against your wishes.

As for fear of labor pain, you might be surprised by how well pain can be eased and even avoided sometimes by doing certain exercises and utilizing coping techniques prior to and during labor. If this is a big fear for you, read a variety of natural birth stories (there are plenty online) to get a feel for how other mamas have handled labor pain.

In fact, I highly recommend reading several natural birth stories regardless of whether or not you have a fear of labor pain. As you get more insights from fellow mamas about what natural birth is really like, you will be better able to decide if it's right for you.

It will also be highly beneficial to you to continue reading natural birth stories throughout your pregnancy if you decide you want a natural birth. Flooding your mind with success stories and the reality of how birth has been accomplished for centuries before the epidural was invented will keep you feeling positive and confident about your upcoming unmedicated birth.

## Is natural birth for me?

Once you have made your decision, come back to this worksheet and write down what you have decided to do in the space provided:

Answer:

If you have decided that natural birth is not for you, your homework is complete. If, however, you have decided to start planning a natural birth, keep this guide and review it now and then to remind yourself of why this is so important to you.

Whatever your decision is, I wish you all the best with your upcoming labor and hope your birth experience feels perfect to you!