



FAMILY-CENTRED LABOUR AND BIRTH EXPERIENCE

Birth is a natural process that should be promoted by all maternal and neonatal health care providers.

Support for women during active labour and birth significantly increases a family's satisfaction with the birth experience, reduces the use of medications and interventions and enhances the positive attitude women need to care for their babies.

The overall aim of caring for women during labour and birth is to engender a positive experience for her and her family while maintaining her and her baby's health, preventing complications and responding to emergencies.

Whichever provider the woman and her family decide upon, interprofessional collaboration is needed to facilitate optimal maternal and newborn safety, particularly if care is transferred to or shared with other professional group members.

Key family-centred care recommendations:

- Women have supportive care involving the continuous physical presence of a caregiver during active labour and birth.
- Health care providers (HCPs) establish a rapport with women and ask them about their wishes and expectations for labour and birth. Throughout labour and birth, communication needs to be ongoing and responsive to the women's needs.
- Hospitals and birthing centres are encouraged to develop protocols and policies supporting traditional birthing customs and cultural practices.
- Women are treated with respect; supported in the process of continued informed choice throughout labour and birth; and encouraged to actively participate in their care decisions.
- HCPs demonstrate mutual respect and communicate and collaborate effectively, recognizing the vital role each plays in providing a safe and satisfying childbirth for women and their families.
- Maternal and newborn interventions only occur when the reasons to do so are well documented and evidence based.
- Develop processes that allow women to provide feedback on their experiences and their satisfaction with the policies and programs. Also engage them in the further development of policies and programs.
- The adoption of new technologies in labour and birth will have been accompanied by rigorous evidence to show their benefit for mothers and their babies, their cost effectiveness and their compatibility with professional guidelines.

For references consult **Chapter 4: Care during Labour and Birth** in: Public Health Agency of Canada. Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines. Ottawa (ON): PHAC; 2018.

For more information about the **Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines**, or to download this document, please search "maternity and newborn care" on **CANADA.CA**.



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