

# sharing *Secrets* of labor & birth

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— Laurie Chamberlin CD, ICCE, LE

from a childbirth educator

BY LAURIE CHAMBERLIN CD, ICCE, LE

**P**regnancy. A time of physical and emotional change. There are only a few times in a woman's life when we can be this physically close to another person. Now, with our very own baby growing on the inside we may experience a whole new aspect of ourselves we have never seen before. Feelings of responsibility, joy, excitement and a willingness to create the best possible environment surface—all in intensely profound forms. By the time I meet most pregnant women, they are well into pregnancy and have passed the emotional signposts of the first and second trimesters. In the third trimester we begin to feel ready to prepare for labor and birth. Emotionally we may feel tired of pregnancy and be ready to meet our babies on the outside. A perfectly formed progression of events transpire so that we are ready for labor in a way we weren't emotionally or physically ready for earlier. After years of experience, I see how this day, this one day, has the charge to alter our lives forever. Most women don't realize the importance and power of this day and this is why I want to share the 'secrets from a childbirth educator' with you.



Mother of twins kisses one of her newborn babies.

### Timing is everything

The biggest mistake most first time parents make is to get to the hospital too early. Remember this: Head to the hospital when contractions are 4 minutes apart, 1 minute long, for 1 hour, or 411. When women get to the hospital too early, they increase their chances for routine hospital procedures. Pre-register so there is less paperwork to fill in upon arrival.

### Can we talk here?

It's common for women to worry about labor. "Will I need an episiotomy? Will I need Pitocin? What if I have to have a cesarean?" All doctors have different statistics on how commonly they perform such procedures; ask your doctor about this and anything else that is important to you. In childbirth preparation classes students often find it interesting to hear how much the doctor's rates vary, and sometimes they change to doctors they feel more comfortable with.

### Eliminate Show-Biz Blues

When packing your labor bag, don't forget the popcorn and candy

bar! After all, birth in America has turned into a great show! It might sound like the event of the century to be at a friend's birth, but studies show that most women don't want to be 'watched' in labor. This can create feelings of discomfort which may slow labor and lead to complications. When the baby is born what he really wants is to see his parent's faces for the first time. The first hour after birth the baby is imprinting and bonding to his parents and visa versa. We want to touch, smell, talk and breastfeed our babies right away if possible. Invite the family to meet the baby later.

### Uncover the fear and look it squarely in the face

The reality is that for most women labor is painful. If we choose to accept there is pain and empower ourselves by learning how to cope with contractions we reduce our fear and anxiety. If we can identify our natural coping style it will help us in labor and teach our partner how to help us, which makes them feel useful! Pain medication may be an option, and so are natural coping measures and comfort techniques, learn them. So many people say the day their babies are born feels like the first day of their life. When we bring education, compassion and awareness to our 'labor day' we increase our chances for positive experiences. One can only imagine how much it might affect a new family to step into this new realm after having a positive birth with better outcomes for the mother, the father, the baby, the family.



Laurie Chamberlin CD, ICCE owner of Chamberlin Childbirth teaches childbirth preparation classes, newborn care classes, lactation classes, early pregnancy classes and is a prenatal counselor for childbirth preparation. To schedule a private class or session or see a schedule of classes

visit her website. Laurie is also available for phone consultations and is a member of B.E.P.E. [www.bepe.info](http://www.bepe.info). 530.477.5442 [www.chamberlinchildbirth.com](http://www.chamberlinchildbirth.com) [lauriechamberlin@comcast.net](mailto:lauriechamberlin@comcast.net)

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— Allie

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