WHERE YOU’LL BIRTH

Unassisted Home Birth

Pink Kit Method
Unassisted Home Birth

Published by Common Knowledge Trust
P.O. Box 892
Nelson, New Zealand
www.commonknowledgetrust.com

Editor: Kayla D. Rau

© 2001, Common Knowledge Trust

Common Knowledge Trust has asserted rights under Copyright And Trademark laws to be identified as the creator of all the work known as “Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method®.” All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, teaching, or other, without prior written permission from the copyright owners.

Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method®
www.birthingbetter.com

Disclaimer
The information in Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® is not intended to be used for the diagnosis, treatment, or prescription for any medical disorder. Please consult with your medical care provider before beginning this program.
Table of Contents

DEFINING “UNASSISTED BIRTH” .............................................. 1
ACTION, NOT JUST CHOICE .................................................. 2
  BIRTHING BY YOURSELF ....................................................... 2
THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE IS STILL
A NORMAL PART OF LIFE ...................................................... 4
  DEALING WITH THE UNEXPECTED ................................. 5
Defining “Unassisted Birth”

It is a big decision to have a birth at home without the presence of a birth professional—which is, by definition, an “unassisted” home birth. Certainly, this term “unassisted birth” is not the best. Another term is “free birth.” Perhaps a better term would be “without professionals” or “family birth”?

The term “unassisted” casts a shadow of implications that should not be associated with birthing:

- A woman doesn’t need assistance.
- In any other birth situation, a professional is the only person who can or does assist.
- And hidden deep inside that term is also the implication that a woman doesn’t have to assist herself.

Actually, if you birth without a midwife, doctor, doula, or other medical professional, you must assist yourselves more.

Families who are planning an “unassisted” home birth are behaving like their counterparts in traditional communities who have no choice but to birth at home or in a birth hut nearby. However, those millions of people also have no choice even if a major problem occurs. Within their cultural health system, anything that happens at a birth is normal and natural, even if uncommon or unfortunate. In our modern society, you do have the choice to seek medical care if you feel you need to. Even if no problems arise in your unassisted home birth, those people who are at the birth (regardless of their professions) must know how to assist the process in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of both the mother and baby and to help the woman cope with the naturally occurring pain.
Unassisted homebirths are often perceived of as a rejection of something (the medical profession), but, in reality, they’re often a choice for something. Sometimes the motivation might be a desire for the intimate privacy that can occur between husband and wife or for having a cigarette after birth, which a Birth Center or hospital might forbid and home birth midwife frown upon. Sometimes this choice simply comes from a physical distance from the hospital or a lack of midwifery care. There are many, many reasons why families choose to give birth without a birth professional present, not even a non-registered lay midwife, student midwife, or doula.

Now that you’ve made your choice, the question—from the Birthing Better with the Pink Kit Method® perspective—relates directly to the actions you should take to achieve your desired birth. Both of you have a higher responsibility than any other couple to learn exactly what you need to know to make your coming birth safer, easier, and more effective.

**Birthing by Yourself**

If you are resistant to becoming skilled as a woman or man to help your baby to come down, through, and out, you need to find other things in your life that do require skills and ask yourself why you have chosen to become skilled in those areas of but not in the birth process. Unless you have a very, very strong religious belief that accepts God’s will and that states you don’t need to do anything but have faith, and you are willing to totally accept the consequences of your beliefs, you do need to acknowledge that our human ability to be skilled does do these three things in other elements of life: prevent, reduce, and eliminate potential risks.

This is one of the fundamental questions you must ask yourself: If your ultimate desire and goal is to achieve as “natural” or “normal” a birth as possible with a positive experience and outcome, are you prepared to accept anything and everything that can naturally occur during birth, including death, injury, or pain?
You could have a very long labor or delayed 2nd Stage, or you might have a very straightforward birth but have back labor that’s so very intense, or contractions that pile on top of one another so that you are left overwhelmed, or tear badly, have a retained placenta or a postpartum bleed. You might have a very easy, straightforward labor and birth yet have a stillbirth, a baby with a birth defect that is life-threatening, or a compression in the cord. These are all natural processes and products of birth.

Modern cultures tend to be overly risk-adverse, and we cannot prevent all dangers, but there are definitely aspects of childbirth that you can have a huge impact on. You can

- prepare the pregnant body to give birth.
- learn skills to work with your baby’s efforts to come out of the pregnant body.
- use your skills to assist this process.

Let’s go through some of the issues discussed above. With skills, you will learn to open your body so there is less chance of you having either a long 1st or 2nd Stage. With skills, you can reduce back labor and help your baby move down past the narrowest dimension in your pelvis. You’re more likely to stay on top of a fast labor with intense contractions. Knowing how to properly prepare your baby’s birth passage makes you much less likely to tear. While skills may not prevent a retained placenta or a bleed, having an efficient labor can sometimes reduce the potential for a stillbirth or the consequences of a prolapsed cord. Birthing Better Pink Kit families firmly believe from their own personal experience that skills went a long way to increase the safety and wellbeing of their baby’s birth.

If you don’t feel like just accepting anything that might happen at your birth, you must develop a willingness to do everything possible to prevent undesirable natural things from happening and reduce them when/if they do. Take the responsibility for becoming a very skilled birthing woman and coaching dad, and include all those loved ones who will be with you. Everyone who is present at your “unassisted birth” should know how to best assist.
The Ultimate Experience is Still a Normal Part of Life

Birth is a definitive physiological and social process. In any place, at any time, it may well be the most physically intense experience in any woman’s life. It impacts not only the woman who becomes a mother, but also the man who becomes a father and the family that expands with the birth of a child. If birth were as common as eating, having sex, or even a monthly flow, all the interest around it would be reduced—imagine if women produced a litter every year. Certainly, the infrequency and intensity of giving birth places childbirth into a very special cultural role. This is true for all cultural, religious, and ethnic populations.

Another vital aspect of the uniqueness of childbirth is that it is the only human physiological process that includes two people in a life-and-death relationship: the mother and child. This cannot be underestimated. Although birth is, in the majority of circumstances, life-giving in both the symbolic and literal sense, pregnancy and childbirth are also vulnerable periods where illness, injury, and death are real elements.

Planning an “unassisted birth” may be a personal statement to you, but it’s also often perceived of as a political statement in societies that have advanced medical systems. There’s no doubt the medical response to pregnancy and childbirth comes directly from the reality of vulnerability for both mothers and babies, whether you like that or not.

You might be a person with a strong ideological belief about having a home birth without a professional in attendance. However, if you refuse to seek medical care for either yourself, as a mother-to-be, or for your child merely for ideological reasons, you need to ask yourself whether you would do that if you or your child were in a car accident or got really sick.

In other words, this ultimate experience should be integrated into your life in the same manner as other life experiences. If you never use medical care under any
circumstances, that is your personal right. If you use medical care sometimes, you need to decide while still pregnant under what circumstances you would seek medical care for your chosen birth experience.

**Dealing with the Unexpected**

No one should be afraid of birth, yet families need to be realistic and realize that the unexpected does occur. Preventing unpleasant, unexpected circumstances during birth is no different than safeguarding your child’s access to cleaning products under the sink or teaching them what things are safe to put in their mouth. Few parents take a laissez-faire approach to childrearing. Don’t do that for the birth of your baby, either.

If you transfer from your planned, unassisted home birth to the hospital, just continue to use your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills on the way there and throughout the whole process. You are giving birth. Your baby is being born. Using birth skills throughout labor and delivery is the most significant thing you can do for yourselves and baby.

Where you have your baby is not ultimately the most important issue. Being able to work with the process of birth wherever you birth, or with whomever, becomes much more important in the memories you’ll live with than where you gave birth or whether a birth professional was in attendance. Women are mistaken when they say “I had a hospital birth” or “I had an unassisted home birth.” Women “have” babies. This means every woman can and should always work with her baby’s efforts to be born no matter what is happening.

What happens if you find yourself unexpectedly giving birth at home, with no professionals around? This does happen with some Birthing Better Pink Kit families, quite unexpectedly, yet without the fear and anxiety often associated with accidental births. Birthing Better Pink Kit families birth more effectively. This means the birthing process moves along faster, particularly 2nd Stage, in families who have prepared their baby’s birth canal well.
You will never regret having skills or having your loved ones work with you. Working together is the true intimacy of childbirth and builds your family’s overall intimacy. Without a doubt, having this intimate experience in your own home with only your loved ones around is a beautiful life experience when it’s planned and executed well.