

TYPE OF BIRTH

FROM  
Labor

URGENT

to an

Emergency  
Caesarean



Pink  
KIT  
METHOD®

## From Labor to an Emergency Caesarean

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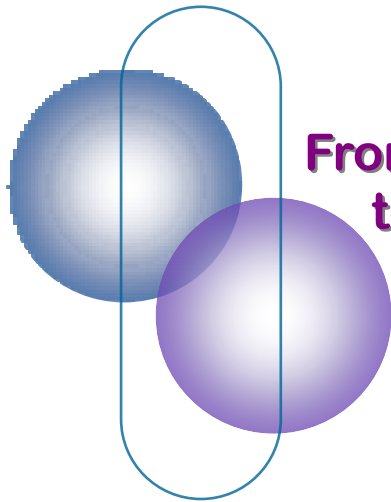
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Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method®  
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# From Labor to an Emergency Caesarean

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# From Labor to an Emergency Caesarean

## Caesareans and Your Pink Kit

Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® claims a unique place in childbirth. You will find here no judgment about where you birth, with whom, whether you should/should not use pain relief, or the pros and cons of natural births versus medical ones. There are lots of other resources you can tap into for those discussions and viewpoints.

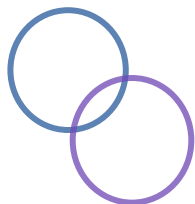
The job of The Pink Kit is not to take sides, but to encourage you, as a pregnant woman, and you, as a partner, to move beyond the politics of childbirth and become skilled birthing partners. The birth of your child is special and precious to you. You want to make the most of the experience and reduce or eliminate suffering or trauma.

Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® is all about birthing better, even if you don't have a better birth. Birthing better is possible in every single birth. Building positive birth memories that are bigger than the negative ones is a choice you make. It's easier to gain those positive memories when you use skills throughout your baby's birth, because you'll look back on what you *did* rather than what *happened* to you.

So, the first goal of this particular resource is to increase your baby's chances of being born vaginally. The second goal is for you to continue to work with your baby if an emergency Caesarean is how your baby is brought into this world.

### **The Big Question: Necessary or Not?**

Most women who still believe six months to a year after their emergency Caesarean that a surgical delivery was totally necessary for the their or their baby's wellbeing usually feel thankful that they live in a country where this type of healthcare is available. Not that every aspect of their experience was to their liking, but they are often just plain grateful they and their baby ended up safe.



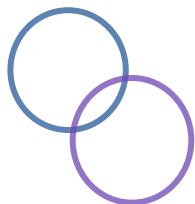
If you end up having an emergency Caesarean, how will you know it was or wasn't "life and death" necessary? You cannot go back and replay any birth. And the Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® cannot determine whether your Caesarean was essential, either. It's something you'll decide and believe in your heart, based on your situation.

If you surveyed every family who had an emergency delivery after being in labor, they would tell one of two hindsight stories.

- The emergency delivery was really, really necessary, and "Thank goodness I live in a country where that's available." These people can feel validated. There are lots of women and men like them.
- "The emergency Caesarean wasn't necessary, now that I look back on what happened." These people can also feel validated. There are lots of women and men like them.

Are there really any unnecessary emergency Caesareans? Nope. Every Caesarean is necessary at the time. So what does this mean? Given the present Caesarean rate in many countries (close to or above 1/3 of all births), it seems we are facing a major health crisis that puts 33% of all mothers or babies in imminent danger of death or injury without a Caesarean. Or perhaps modern women no longer can give birth as humans always have? Or perhaps women are too lazy, work too much already, can't be bothered? Perhaps there is a doctor on every corner with scalpel in hand, eager to cut you open? Perhaps there is another reason that no one is even thinking of: a lack of skills.

Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® is based on a firm belief that society at this time places almost no emphasis on having a skilled birthing population. Thus, expectant families do not know that they have to prepare the pregnant body to give birth or learn and use skills to do the activity of giving birth. From a Birthing Better Pink Kit perspective, this basic lack of skills results in increased medical interventions, including surgical deliveries.



## Changing Your Perspective

Changing childbirth means we have to change our perspective. No woman gets pregnant to “have” a medical or natural birth. Women get pregnant to have a baby. This means we must change the focus from “outcome” to how you can be truly engaged in your baby’s birthing process. And the way to stay engaged is to become skilled at giving birth. Up to now, society has not framed childbirth in this manner.

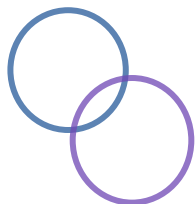
## Fate and You

Our modern societies don’t put any emphasis on childbirth skills because we are more or less fixed in a time warp based on an old adage that you’ll hear repeated again and again: “There is no way to know what your birth will be like; therefore, there’s nothing you can do about it.” Does this then mean that all these surgical births are required, because there is absolutely nothing anyone can do to prevent any of them? Is birth ruled by Fate?

From a Birthing Better Pink Kit perspective, there is absolute validity in the first part of that old adage. There really is no way to know what your birth will be like. However, the conclusion is inaccurate. You can do heaps to reduce and even eliminate many of the common causes for all medical interventions, including emergency Caesareans.

There has been an effort to give some control over the fate of childbirth by providing information so families can make “choices,” in the hope that “choices” will lead to a better birth experience. This approach also takes into consideration a modern medical profession that exercises strict vigilance over pregnancy and childbirth. This is both positive, if you need care, and negative, if you feel pressured into care you don’t want or believe you or your baby needs.

The problem with “choice” is that we *can’t* choose most of what occurs in the birth because there is no way to know what your birth will be like. (No one plans an emergency Caesarean. That’s why it’s called an “emergency.”)



So “choosing” what type of birth you want won’t necessarily lead to the birth you choose, and you might face an emergency Caesarean that, in hindsight, you may even feel was unnecessary. What a conundrum.

Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® offers another solution to the unpredictable fate of childbirth: developing a skilled birthing population. We must add skills to the equation. Without skills, we do leave birth to happenstance and feel powerless to fate. But when we shift our perception and behaviors, we can see giving birth as an activity that requires skillful preparation during pregnancy and skillful participation during the birthing process. Giving birth then becomes something we *do*, no matter how our baby is being born.

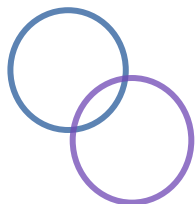
In other words, with skills, we focus more on what we can do to work with our baby rather than on what happens to us. Always keep in mind we are pregnant to have a baby, and we do the activity of having a baby with our baby.

## **Preventing an Unnecessary Caesarean**

The best way to prevent an unnecessary Caesarean is to get on with your labor. Because no one knows what their birth will be like, and believing that an emergency Caesarean was or was not necessary often only occurs months later, all we can do is try our best to make every labor effective.

Let’s take a step back from “The Birth” and start at the beginning so you can understand more deeply why preparing your pregnant body, learning skills, and using skills can actually reduce the potential for an emergency delivery, as well as nurture your confidence that you’ll meet the challenge of whatever birth you have.

The beginning is simple. You are pregnant now. Because pregnancy always progresses toward the process and activity of birthing, pregnancy is the time to prepare for giving birth. (There is one exception to this rule. If you have previously had a traumatic birth, you will also benefit from working with your Birthing Better



Pink Kit skills *between* pregnancies. This gives you more time to sort out what happened the last time and what you can do in your subsequent birth.)

When you focus on pregnancy as the time to prepare for birth, you have an alternative to obsessing over the possibility of unwanted medical interventions. That's the future, and it's not where you need to be. You need to rest your mind in the present, in the joy of preparing and building confidence . This is a skill!

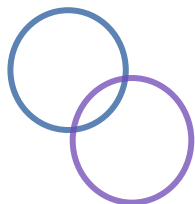
In order to get into The Now of giving birth, you must first get into The Now of preparing your pregnant body to become the efficient birthing body your baby and you want. Along with preparing your body, you and your partner also need to learn *during pregnancy* the skills you'll use together to work through labor and birth. By learning skills, the two of you can work with your baby's efforts to be born rather than let labor happen to you.

Just this one skill of staying in The Now will help immeasurably when you are actually giving birth. By remaining in the present when you are having a contraction, rather than projecting into the future, you'll use your skills to work with what is happening right then. This is power. With skills, you can choose to soften tension, breathe efficaciously, and stay open. Don't waste a single contraction!

If you've had a baby before and learned a few breathing and relaxation skills, you might think you've learned enough. But The Birthing Better Pink Kit skills are like having a banquet compared to knowing how to boil water. Since there really is no way to know what your birth will be like, it's essential for you to do more than what is "common" in our society to learn how to open your body to let this big object out. Each birth is different, and deepening your abilities increases your involvement and therefore the memories you are creating.

Enjoy preparing now. Learn now. Become competent now. Simply preparing your pregnant body to become a birthing body can render a surgical birth unlikely. Simply learning deeply effective birthing and birth coaching skills can reduce the need for an emergency Caesarean even further.





## The Causes of Emergency Caesareans

Ultimately, you'll have to do your own research into the problems that lead to unplanned Caesareans. It's important for you to do this yourself, during your pregnancy, because you can check off any problems that don't pertain to you. For example, if you're not pregnant with twins, you won't have any "twin problems."

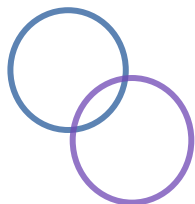
By eliminating those issues that you just don't have, you will be left with a small number of health problems that might happen and might lead you to an emergency Caesarean. Women who know there was a significant health concern that necessitated their Caesarean usually feel fine about it six months after the fact.

Aside from these few specific problems, emergency Caesareans take place after a period of labor that would normally lead to a vaginal birth. The most common reasons for a Caesarean after this kind of labor fall into these categories:

- Labor doesn't progress.
- Your baby gets stuck.
- You or your baby appears too tired.
- You aren't coping well.

Pain is an inevitable part of labor. You won't be able to avoid the intense sensations so common in labor, and you certainly don't have to like them, but you don't have to be a victim of them or feel out of control. Giving into the pain is often what leads to the above problems, and *that* is what makes an emergency Caesarean unnecessary!

By learning the right skills to work with the pain, using these skills during labor to cope with and manage the pain, and applying your willpower and determination, you can override your reactive and stressful behaviors. In doing so, you can prevent tension—which slows the birth down—keep your labor progressing, and perhaps avoid a number of situations that unskilled women fall into and that lead to surgical intervention.



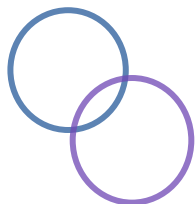
Furthermore, women who do not cope well with labor pain do not always know what they look like to others attending them. When a woman doesn't cope well with the naturally occurring pain of contractions, she is more likely to become tired and tense. Her birth will often then be long and drawn out, and the people around her will recommend surgical intervention.

Six months later, she might feel the Caesarean was unnecessary and that she could have coped. That's hindsight. You have to cope *in The Now* of your labor, not just believe you could have. Yet there is truth in this feeling. Women's behavior in labor really impacts the people with them, which is why skills play such an important role. Women without skills won't look skilled. When we are skillful, everyone is relaxed. When we look out of control, everyone wants to help.

No one wants to see you suffer. If you're not coping, you appear to be suffering. If you are suffering, everyone wants to get the birth over with. You can't make labors go much faster even with augmentation; therefore, they use Caesarean deliveries as a way to stop the suffering and extreme tiredness of both the mother and baby. But you can reduce or eliminate many forms of "suffering" from the pain by preparing your body for birth, then learning and using birth and coaching skills during labor and birth. Even with some health concerns, a labor that is progressing and a woman who is coping can still continue toward a vaginal birth.

Here's your bottom line. The more you prepare your body for birth, the better you can cope with the naturally occurring pain, remain relaxed inside, and keep your body open. Therefore, the more you prepare, the more likely your labor will progress toward a vaginal delivery, because you will be letting your baby out.

Pink Kit families who prepare for birth, learn skills, and use skills reduce the number of all forms of medical interventions, including emergency Caesareans. See statistics at <http://www.birthingbetter.com/more-articles/graphs.html>.



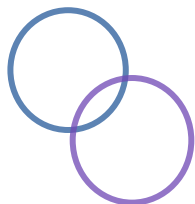
## **Mothers: A Skilled Emergency Caesarean**

In the event that, even after your best preparations and efforts, you face an emergency Caesarean, the first thing for you to remember is that this is your baby's birth, no matter how he/she enters the world. Although you might feel disappointed, you do not need to feel defensive. All births can be positive now that you have your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills, because you can remain engaged even throughout the surgery and recovery via your skills.

Birthing better even with interventions starts with making a choice that neither you nor your partner will isolate yourselves or disconnect from your baby's birth. Your Caesarean might come after hours of exhausting labor, and you might just be happy to become passive and be taken care of and get the whole thing over with, but that would be a major breaking point between you and your baby. A choice to disconnect, even after an exhausting labor or when you or your baby's health appears to be at risk, often leads to negative feelings months after the birth. Often, women feel they've missed out on something.

You don't want that! And it doesn't have to happen, if you continue to use your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills. You have plenty of time to work with your skills, because, although an emergency Caesarean is a phrase with the word "emergency" in it, lots of time usually passes before they can get you prepped and off to surgery. Yes, there are a few faster-than-light Caesareans, but these are more common on TV than in real life. In reality, even the worst car accident requires a lot of time for emergency vehicles to get there. That's true for anything that takes place outside of the hospital, as well as inside. With skills, you will always be able to work with your baby's efforts to be born, during the time it takes to actually get staff there, prepare the OR, clean your body, set you up on the operating table, and perform the procedure, until you are handed your baby.

If you don't think using skills matters, let's consider driving a car. Even (and especially) in the worst driving conditions, you must use your driving skills and



attentiveness. You can't put down that responsibility. Giving birth is like driving your body's vehicle with a passenger inside: your baby. Bad driving conditions might be an emergency Caesarean. But if that does happen to you, you must give yourself permission to use your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills to uplift the whole experience—why stop? The idea of using skills during a surgical birth is not common knowledge, but it makes common sense and should become part of all Caesarean deliveries, as well as all labors and vaginal births—*all* births.

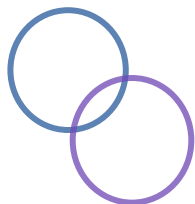
When you birth better and stay in *The Now*, you will feel proud that you persevered in a less-than-pleasant situation. There is much less possibility you will feel disappointed, afraid, let down, or disconnected from your child's birth. You will walk away with positive memories, a sense of accomplishment, and a reduced sense of the surrealism of an unexpected outcome.

## **Fathers: A Skilled Emergency Caesarean**

It is your job to encourage the use of your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills during your emergency Caesarean. Of course, you should have been closely involved in the pregnancy preparation mentioned above AND using the skills during labor to encourage a vaginal birth. But if an emergency Caesarean is required, you can lead the way to a connected birthing experience. It is common for women to surrender once surgery is recommended, but there is no real reason to stop using your skills.

Think about it. Giving birth is an activity your wife has to do, just like driving. Perhaps you prefer to do all the driving, but, in birth, she has to. So having an emergency Caesarean after a labor is not much different from your wife driving along and having something unexpected suddenly happen. You don't expect her to just throw up her hands and let outside forces take over. You want her to stay in control and in charge—that's when her driving abilities really kick into overdrive.

In a birth situation, you are often in a better place to understand this than your partner. The woman will have been laboring for hours, so she thinks she has done her work. You must remind her that the work is not over; it's just switched forms.



You may or may not be with her while she is being prepped. You need to remind her to use her skills during that period, because it will help her stay connected to her baby even while strange things are happening to her.

When you are in the operating room, your partner will be draped with you at her head while the surgery is performed, so you are perfectly positioned to use your breathing and relaxation skills. And your partner will deeply appreciate your helping her stay connected as you continue to work with your baby's efforts to be born.

Use your time well. Your doctors are there to take care of you medically, but you have to fill the time of an emergency Caesarean as much as of a vaginal birth.

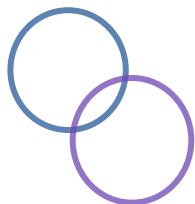
### **The unexpected led to a Caesarean**

*"We didn't plan to have a Caesarean. We were going to a Birth Center nearby, but at 28 weeks I developed severe pre-eclampsia and was rushed to the Base Hospital by helicopter, three hours from where we lived. By the time my husband even found out, our baby had been born.*

*"I remained in hospital, recovering for three weeks, and our son for several months. My husband was terrified, and I was unsettled and confused. I just hadn't felt sick at all, and suddenly everything was an emergency.*

*"When we fell pregnant again, we were given the Pink Kit. Boy, did WE need those skills. Wish I had had them during my first pregnancy. At least we would have started going through them and learned some skills to deal with the unexpected. They would have helped heaps for me from the moment my doctor said 'Oh my god!' through the weeks of recovery. I felt very disconnected from myself, our son, and my husband.*

*"My husband could have used them while driving up to hospital, working with me through my recovery, and our working with our baby. Because we lacked skills, our relationship took a huge dive after the birth and had a slow recovery until our next birth three years later.*



*“We can’t speak highly enough about the PK. There is no doubt that when you are pregnant, BOTH parents need to learn the skills to work together during their children’s births, no matter what happens.*”

*“Our second birth was very different, not because I went to term, had our daughter in a Birth Center, and had a quicker recovery. This birth was different because my husband and I participated in a skillful manner. This is what we’ll say to you: ‘Don’t go into birth without these skills.’”*

### **We lacked the skills to prevent a Caesarean**

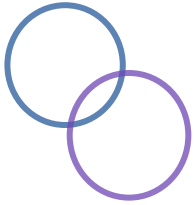
*“My wife is a staunch supporter of all things natural, home birth being one of them. I wasn’t so certain, to be frank. We’re people of strong faith, but we also live very rurally, and like all men I’d prefer to prevent a problem than have to clean up the mess.*”

*“But when you love your wife and it’s her body, you do what she wants. After all, we men can’t be blamed for thinking birth is ‘woman’s business.’ So we planned a home birth with a very respected and highly trained nurse-midwife.*”

*“Anyway, after ten hours of labor and three hours of pushing, the decision was made to drive to hospital, which was one hour away. We’d never heard of The Pink Kit, so we didn’t have those skills. In hindsight, and three Pink Kit kids later, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the first c/s would have been prevented had we had the skills. But then, we might not have taken them so seriously. We thought that the choices we made would give us the birth we wanted. What a ridiculous assumption, really. I didn’t become a welder by wishful thinking.*”

*“Anyway, our son was born by emergency c/s due to ‘deep transverse arrest’...that’s what the doctor called it. It meant that our posterior baby was stuck in my wife’s narrowish pelvis. The doctor informed me that both my wife and baby would die without the Caesarean.*”

*“She was livid after the birth and blamed everyone, including me. We fought for years. She insisted on having a VBAC at home. She got The Pink Kit Package and was religious in preparing her body and learning the skills. I dragged my feet because I couldn’t believe she’d risk herself and our child, but she was adamant, and I caved.*”



*"I didn't learn the skills deeply for that birth...maybe men are slower, but that's an excuse and not an excuse you should make. Learn the skills and help! But I learned heaps about what my wife hadn't known the first time. She birthed a 2½-pound-bigger baby because she knew how to stay open, keep her pelvis relaxed and mobile, and most importantly she did heaps of Internal work (herself for this birth, but with my help for the next two). I could see she knew what she was doing, and she did it.*

*"The Pink Kit skills should be as necessary as learning to boil water or how to do CPR or change a flat tire. They are essential skills. Do I think our first emergency c/s could have been prevented? Absolutely. Do I think it was necessary? Absolutely, at the time, because of our lack of skills."*

### **We stayed connected**

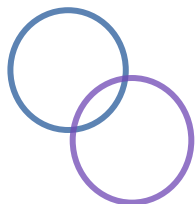
*"We used the PK Package during our first pregnancy. My sister and I were pregnant at the same time. She had a non-laboring c/s her first birth, because her daughter was breech. She and her husband wanted to try for a vaginal birth this time.*

*"They had used the PK in their first pregnancy but got blown out about their c/s and hadn't used the skills the day of their daughter's birth and really regretted it. This time, they really got stuck into doing the work and were determined to use the skills no matter what.*

*"But this is about our birth. We loved learning the skills. Learning them brought us closer together, gave my husband heaps of confidence, and gave me something to do while he was away. He was on duty overseas for a large part of the last few months, so we could only work together infrequently but did a lot on the phone and email.*

*"My birth was long, but we handled it beautifully. Our baby was very big, my water broke, and I didn't go into labor for 24 hours, got induced, and had a failure to progress after another 24 hours. We did great. I then ran a fever, and a decision was made to have an emergency c/s.*

*"Sure, we would have liked another outcome, but we just continued to use the skills while we waited for the operating theater to be set up, used the skills during the surgery and heaps during the next few weeks.*



*“I hear women talk about their births, both vaginal and c/s, but everyone seems so disconnected. Not us. We had a great birth and felt we made the right decision. Our baby was over ten pounds.*”

*“Yes, my sister and brother-in-law did have a vaginal birth, and we’ll certainly try for one next time.”*

## **Plan Now for the Future**

Yes, birth requires skills, and sometimes birth requires medical care. In spite of thorough preparation and use of your skills, you still might end up having an emergency Caesarean.

It’s best to prevent a potential emergency Caesarean in the first place by preparing your body, learning how to cope, and skillfully doing everything possible to get on with labor. But if you require an emergency Caesarean for health concerns or even an inability to cope, it’s much better to continue to work with your skills rather than become passive.

For over 40 years, Pink Kit families who have ended up with emergency Caesareans still feel great about their birth experience. This does not mean they cherish every moment or decision, but they feel fulfilled—and isn’t that the point?

So, if you have a labor that ends with an emergency Caesarean, you are now more likely to say:

*“I gave it my all and used the skills throughout labor and the surgery, which was great. The skills kept me focused and connected to my partner and baby. Without them, I might have felt disconnected. Yes, the Caesarean was unexpected, but The Pink Kit taught us we could still work together and with our baby.”*

Everyone wins, particularly you, the baby’s parents—because you stay connected.