



# Birth Circle of Kirksville

supporting informed choices, gentle births, and confident moms

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Join our chat group: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/birthcircle4u/>

## Birth Circle Meetings

We gather the third Saturday of each month from 10:15 a.m. to noon at the parish center of Mary Immaculate Church (no affiliation) for presentations, demonstrations, story sharing, and community building. It's a child-friendly atmosphere.

## Past Discussions/Demonstrations

Birth Plans, Standard Intervention, Nutrition and Exercise, Baby Wearing, Birth Video Watching and Sharing Birth Stories, Palpating, Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC) Support, Postpartum Care, Mother Blessings

## Upcoming Topics

May 17<sup>th</sup>- Nutrition and Exercise ; June 21: Pain Management ; July 19: Standard Interventions

## Lamaze Grant Progress Highlights

Newsletters, surveys, brochures and promotional information were recently distributed to 138 doctors, 45 supporters, and 17 Parents as Teachers (PAT) leaders in 10 counties in NEMO in an effort to spread the word about our organization and our projects.

In May we will mail letters to area doctors to inform them about our transparency project which asks them to volunteer intervention rates and complete a self-evaluation form for the Ten Steps to a Mother-Friendly Childbirth (see page 2).

We are gearing up for our Kirksville Farmer's Market booth on May 3<sup>rd</sup> (see Events Calendar on page 8 for all dates).

Our website has obtained over 240 'hits' since January, and 77 mothers have taken our on-line survey (for more information see page 8). Our Lending Library list will be available on-line in early May.

Our Better Birth Workshop, co-sponsored by Truman State University's Women's Resource Group, will be held at Truman's Student Union Building on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 8 – 5pm.

Schuyler County Health Department has our surveys available; NMCAA Outreach Office in Lancaster has brochures available.

## Transparency is Key in Improving Maternity Care

We believe that transparency is a key factor in expectant families finding a care provider and birth place with similar philosophies about pregnancy and birth. A family that is able to easily choose a care provider that offers the type of care they desire will be able to develop a stronger relationship with their care provider. The relationship between the care provider and family has a huge impact on decisions made during labor and the family's perception of their birth experience.

In May, all doctors providing maternity care services will receive a letter from us asking them to volunteer their Intervention rates so that expectant families can choose a physician with similar birth philosophy. We are also asking them to complete a Self-Assessment Tool showing which of the 10 Steps of the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative their practice includes. BCK would like to share their commitment to high quality maternity care with the general public by posting their intervention rates and answers to the Self-Assessment Tool on our website. The letter also invites all physicians to attend the Better Birth Workshop so that we can discuss ways to improve the birth experience for expectant families.

### Ten steps of the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative:

Step 1: Offers All Birthing Mothers Unrestricted Access to Birth Companions, Labor Support, Professional Midwifery Care

Step 2: Provides Accurate, Descriptive, Statistical Information About Birth Care Practices

Step 3: Provides Culturally Competent Care

Step 4: Provides the Birthing Woman With Freedom of Movement to Walk, Move, Assume Positions of Her Choice

Step 5: Has Clearly Defined Policies, Procedures for Collaboration, Consultation, Links to Community Resources

Step 6: Does Not Routinely Employ Practices, Procedures Unsupported by Scientific Evidence

Step 7: Educates Staff in Non Drug Methods of Pain Relief and Does Not Promote Use of Analgesic, Anesthetic Drugs

Step 8: Encourages All Mothers, Families to Touch, Hold, Breastfeed, Care for Their Babies

Step 9: Discourages Nonreligious Circumcision of the Newborn

Step 10: Strives to Achieve the WHO/UNICEF Ten Steps of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative to Promote Successful Breastfeeding

### New BCK Vice President

In April, former Vice President Breanna Farris resigned and the Birth Circle Board Members appointed Heather Martin to replace her. Heather Martin has a three year old daughter and a nearly one year old son. She has been interested in childbirth since becoming pregnant with her daughter 4 years ago. Heather is a student at ATSU-KCOM and plans on opening a Family Medicine Practice and catching babies at her practice as an out of hospital alternative for expectant families.

## BCK Established Policies to Better Serve Our Newly Formed Organization

BCK is growing and evolving very quickly. Because of this, BCK decided to create and implement policies that will allow us to function more professionally at our monthly meetings and when working with other representatives from the community. We also recognize that all women are different and require different types of care in order to feel safe during labor and birth. We want to ensure that we have policies in place that acknowledge these differences and that enable us to provide good support to all expectant families.

The most important new policies state that BCK Board Members and Representatives will refrain from including specific details (including but not limited to doctor names) of their birth experiences when discussing their personal birth experiences with anyone outside their personal circles during their term and that, when acting as a BCK Representative or Board Member, will neither recommend nor criticize doctors by name. Our intention with these policies is to assure families new to our Monthly Meetings that we respect them as the best decision makers for their pregnancy and birth; that we believe each pregnancy and birth are different and require different types of care; and to assure them that we will support their unique choices, regardless of our own personal choices.

Other new policies inspired future BCK activities and are summarized below.

1. BCK will host a reflective listening workshop. This will help Members learn and practice techniques that validate the emotions behind words.
2. We plan to tour the hospital maternity floor so that all Members can see the facilities, meet the staff, and become more knowledgeable about hospital policies.
3. We have formed a committee to create packets of information on the most commonly requested topics (i.e. birth plans, inductions, pain medication) to inform moms of potential options using research-based information.
4. We will continue to develop a working relationship with doctors and other relevant medical professionals that includes, but is not limited to, keeping them informed of our activities. We hope to inspire transparency by making our organization and its activities transparent.

We are excited that we are continuing to learn and grow as an organization in order to better serve all moms with all birthing preferences in the NEMO area!!

**Birth is not only about making babies. Birth is about making mothers  
- strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and know  
their inner strength. -- Barbara Katz Rothman**

## **Eight Things to do BEFORE Labor to Help Make Your Birth Better**

1. Choose Your Care Provider Carefully -- We interview everyone from babysitters to contractors; research for months before buying a new car; and try on a dozen pair of shoes before making a decision, yet many of us pick our care provider straight from the phone book! Many decisions made during labor are based on judgement calls by your care provider. Your care provider will make important decisions like whether you get to push for an extra hour or need a c-section, whether you can walk to stimulate labor or need pitocin, and whether to keep an eye on your high blood pressure or induce. Before deciding on a care provider, think about what is important to you in your birth, envision how you would like it to go, and interview care providers to find one that fits with your views. Ask about their intervention rates and compare them to the local stats for your area. Remember, the number one predictor of your chance of intervention during your birth is your choice of care provider. If you've already decided on a care provider, but feel its a bad fit, start your search over. Your choice of care provider is the biggest decision you can make before labor to ensure a better birth.

2. Avoid an Induction -- Sometimes an induction (artificially starting your labor) is necessary for your baby or your safety. In these cases, the benefit of having your baby outweighs the potential risk of induction, but many, many times inductions may be unnecessary. Inducing your labor may drastically change your birth plan, as well as make your labor longer and more difficult. Pitocin (the synthetic version of oxytocin, a natural hormone that produces labor) does not contribute to the production of endorphins in the same way as oxytocin, so labor hurts worse. Contractions are longer, stronger, and harder on mom and baby. Pitocin also requires constant fetal monitoring and an IV and may lead to an epidural and increased chance of c-section. Before consenting to an induction, ask questions and get all the information necessary to make an informed decision. Make sure to ask why the induction is necessary and what are the pros/cons of other options including the option of waiting for labor to start on its own.

3. Hire a Doula -- A doula is a woman trained in normal childbirth who meets with you prenatally to discuss your plans for your birth and then provides continuous labor support until your baby is born. A doula can help you remain calm during labor, remind you of what's normal and will speak positively and comfortingly to you. She helps dad participate in the labor and helps mom and dad feel closer. Research has shown that having a doula at your birth can lower your need for pain medication and pitocin and helps reduce your risk of c-section. Another plus, moms who had doulas at their births are more satisfied with their partner's role during labor than moms who don't have a doula.

4. Write a Birth Plan -- A birth plan is simply a piece of paper that states your preferences for labor and birth. Writing a birth plan is a wonderful way to organize your thoughts about your labor and birth, decide what is truly important to you, and help communicate your wishes to the hospital staff when you are in hard labor. Discussing your birth plan with your doctor is a great way to make sure you both share similar views on what will happen during your birth. Your birth plan can always change as your labor changes, but having your preferences written down makes labor much smoother.

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5. Read, Read, Read -- Read positive birth stories and birth books that emphasize birth as a normal, healthy process. Avoid books that promote a "do as the doctor says" mentality or focus on the possible complications of pregnancy. Positive information will help you rethink the way you view labor and birth and help you find the inner strength necessary for a great birth. Reading books with up-to-date research based information will help you make informed decisions during labor and help you stay in control.

6. Find Other Moms that Think of Birth Like You Do-- Everyone needs support regardless of the type of birth you are envisioning. Try to find other woman who share similar beliefs of birth or have had birth experiences similar to one you would like.

7. Take an Out of Hospital Birth Class -- An out of hospital child birth class will offer you much different information than one sponsored by your local hospital. Out-of-hospital classes usually provide more empowering information about birth as a healthy, normal process and other information based on current research. Most classes also cover normal interventions and how to avoid them, the basics of labor, and postpartum care. There are many different labor coping methods that are also covered in childbirth classes such as The Bradley Method, Hypobirthing, and others.

8. Ask Questions -- We learn by asking questions. We also maintain control over our pregnancies and birth by asking questions to find the answers we need to make decisions. Don't be afraid to ask your care provider questions -- write them down between visits so that you will remember them. At the same time, don't be afraid to question information your care provider gives you. If something he/she says doesn't sound right, ask for more information. A great question to use is, "I'd love to learn more about that. Do you know where I can read about it?" And, if your care provider suggests a treatment or change to your birth plan that you are unsure about, remember the favorite question of all two-year-olds, the simple, basic "Why?"

## **Book Review: The Official Lamaze Guide: Giving Birth with Confidence (2005) by Judith Lothian and Charlotte DeVries**

The Official Lamaze Guide covers a wide variety of general pregnancy and birth topics. Although its discussion of the physiology and normal changes of pregnancy is short and simplistic, the book does include a brief but refreshing introductory discussion of the history of birth and the idea of normal birth. The Official Lamaze Guide does an excellent job of covering best care practices for maternity care and providing information on other often overlooked maternity and newborn topics, such as choosing a birth place, circumcision and routine care procedures. The best part of the book is the appendices that offer extensive information on the effective care practices during pregnancy and the Mother Friendly Childbirth Initiative; however some of the resources are now out-of-date. This book is a great introduction to the issues and controversies surrounding maternity care and would be a great first-read for a newly pregnant, first time mom or anyone new to the idea of normal birth. The information is positive and empowering, and will help moms realize that they really do have choices during pregnancy and birth.

## News and Birth Related Websites...

### **Natural Labor—Better for Mom, Better for Baby:**

[http://www.mothering.com/sections/news\\_bulletins/march2008.html#induction](http://www.mothering.com/sections/news_bulletins/march2008.html#induction)

**Cesareans May Harm Lung Growth:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7137945.stm>

### **Purposely Breaking Water Does Not Speed Delivery:**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/30/health/research/30chil.html?\\_r=1&ref=science&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/30/health/research/30chil.html?_r=1&ref=science&oref=slogin)

**New research suggests a link between the use of baby lotions, powders, and shampoos and higher levels of potentially harmful manmade chemicals known as phthalates in infants.** <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=86915>

**A Due Month Calculator:** <http://mothersnaturally.org/naturalPregnancy/dueDateCalculator.php>

**Comprehensive list of pregnancy and baby books:** <http://www.lifepassages.net/Store.html>

## A Doula Assisted Birth Story

By Cheryl

My first baby was born by cesarean section. When I became pregnant again, my husband and I made the decision to VBAC and we also made the decision to enlist the help of a doula for additional support. (Editors note: a doula is a trained professional, usually a woman, who offers emotional, physical, and informational support to a woman and her family before, during, and after birth.) We decided to have a doula because we wanted to be as prepared as possible. This was to be my first time in labor, and we thought it would be helpful since we really weren't sure what to expect, especially with the added pressure that this was a VBAC. My husband knew that it was important to me and was in favor of whatever I thought was necessary to make the VBAC a reality. He admitted later that he had some concerns that his role in the birth would be marginalized, but later admitted that he was very glad to have the extra help and guidance himself as well.

I met with my doula regularly in the weeks preceding my birth. She was instrumental in encouraging me to think about things that I hadn't thought of previously. We discussed how I wanted to birth in great detail, including pain management laboring positions and birthing positions. Then she helped me formulate a birth plan based on what I envisioned for my birth. She suggested various books to read on VBACs and birth in general. My doula helped empower and prepare me to VBAC in the local hospital.

I went into labor at about 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, November. I called my doula as soon as my contractions were at regular intervals, 6 minutes apart. A few hours later she came to stay with me and my husband while I tried to rest as much as I could. I had a very slow labor and my doula stayed by my side to reassure me that my labor was completely normal.

At about 2:00 a.m. on Monday I felt that the contractions were getting stronger and we decided to go to the hospital.

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While my doula had been very supportive up to this point, she really guided me at the hospital. I was devastated to find out that, after over 24 hours of labor, I was dilated only to a one or a two. I couldn't believe that I hadn't progressed any further. Because my original plan was to labor at home as much as possible, my doula gently reminded me that we could return home to continue laboring. We decided to go home and I labored throughout the night, resting as much as possible.

The next morning, I laid in the bathtub, where I stayed for nearly three hours. I was quite uncomfortable and very tired. During this time, my doula was offering support and guidance not only to me, but to my husband who was beginning to question if everything was okay.

Eventually my labor began to pick up and I was fortunate enough to have a second doula arrive. When my contractions started coming every 3 minutes, we headed to the hospital. Upon my arrival, I was only dilated to a three. Both doulas urged me to keep moving to help labor progress so my husband and I took a brief walk around the hospital. When my doctor checked me after the walk, I had dilated to a five.

I was exhausted and was finding each contraction to be more painful. The doulas helped me a lot during this time. They encouraged me to continue eating and drinking. They encouraged me to keep mobile. Both doulas and my husband rubbed my back and legs during contractions to ease my discomfort as much as possible. I was fortunate to have three people cheering me on through a very long and tiresome journey. My doulas constantly reassured me that I could do it and that I was doing it.

After several more hours of labor, I gave birth to a beautiful 8lb 4 oz baby boy at 10:28 pm on Monday, November 12, 2007. I am so proud of my VBAC baby!

**Thoughts on my birth:** My husband and I have discussed my birth in great detail. We both truly believe that without the support of a doula my birth would have been a repeat cesarean. Without my doula reminding me that I could return home, I would have had a very different experience. My doctor described my labor as "dysfunctional" and I truly believe, had we stayed at the hospital from the beginning, I would have had medical interventions to speed up my labor which we feel would have likely resulted in a repeat cesarean.

### **Challenge: Tell Your Birth Story in Six Words.**

<https://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=9100026&postID=5053849896945915527>

Here's what some of the BCK mommas had to say...

- “Too trusting-hard life lesson learned”
- “Fought for vbac in kirksville-won!”
- “Baby came out, Mother came alive.”
- “Four days. Standing. Beautiful baby. Triumphant.”
- “painless labor, 24-hr transition, life-altering experience.”
- “home, confident, son sleeping, beautiful entrance.”
- “Mother's Intuition. Baby faster than doctor!”
- “old scar-HEALED, new mother born”
- “of my certainty, will and determination”

## BCK Birth Highlights

Michelle & Ronnie Brunnabend - natural hospital birth  
E than Xander, born on March, 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 7lbs, 15oz.

**\*\*\*\*\*Win a \$50 Wal-Mart Gift Card \*\*\*\*\***

### **Take our Birth Satisfaction Survey Online**

Drawing to be held in August at our Kirksville Farmer's Market booth. You need not be present to win. Winner will be contacted by phone or mail. To be eligible to enter the drawing, you must complete the survey on-line at [www.birthcirclekirksville.com/oursurvey](http://www.birthcirclekirksville.com/oursurvey)

#### Who can take the survey?

Anyone who resided in Adair, Knox, Linn, Macon, Putnam, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby, Sullivan, or Randolph county, AND had a hospital, birth center, or home birth in 2003 to 2008.

#### What kinds of questions are on the survey?

We are interested in assessing local intervention rates (such as c-sections, inductions, and pitocin augmentation) as well as how satisfied you were with you primary care giver during before, during and after birth (was your birth plan respected?, did you feel in control of your birth?, how did you feel about your experience?)

#### Why should I take the survey?

Taking the survey is one big way to let your voice be heard and to anonymously share your feelings and experiences with others. Your answers will also help BCK identify the areas of maternity that need the most improvement in the NEMO area.

#### How will the survey results be reported?

Survey results will be presented at the Normal Birth Workshop in Kirksville in early November 2008, and all area hospitals, birth centers, and physicians will be provided with a report of the survey results by January 2009. Results will also be available on our website or to individuals upon request.

**The survey takes less than 20 minutes to complete, and you will remain anonymous. Contact us to receive a paper copy of the survey. All surveys must be submitted no later than September 1, 2008.**

### **BCK's Kirksville Farmer's Market Booth**

Join us the first Saturday of each month from 7:00am to noon.

Our booth will include informational material and birth satisfaction surveys.

We plan to sell healthy baked goods, Maya wrap baby slings, and homemade items made by BCK mommas such as cloth burp pads, nursing pads, wipes, and toy slings.

## Local and National Events Calendar (May - July)

April is C-Section Awareness Month, <http://www.ican-online.org/> ; May is Doula Month

BCK Meetings: May 17- Nutrition and Exercise, June 21- Pain Management,  
July 19- Standard Interventions

BCK Kirksville Farmer's Market booth: May 3rd, June 7th, July 5th, and August 2nd and 30th

BCK Board Meeting July 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:15 to 8:30pm, Wooden Nickel Restaurant, Kirksville

Midwifery Today Conference. May 7-10 Ann Arbor, Michigan:

[www.midwiferytoday.com/conferences/2000and.asp](http://www.midwiferytoday.com/conferences/2000and.asp)

2nd International Babywearing Conference. June 25-28 Chicago IL

<http://babywearingconference.com/index.php>

## Area Resources

### **Whole Birth Prenatal Yoga**

The Integrative Wellness Institute, Shana Stremel 660.627.0066

### **Doulas**

Active Childbirth Options, Jo Wheeler 660.457.3184

Gentle Heart Doula Services, Laurie Griego 660.665.2264

Sacred Matters, Shana Stremel 660.627.0066

### **Columbia Community Birth Center (CCBC)**

Ivy White 573.447.2700 [www.birthcolumbia.org](http://www.birthcolumbia.org)

Prenatal and Infant Classes

Childbirth Education Classes Saturdays from 1-3 PM, beginning March 17th

Belly Dancing Classes DeeDee at 573.443.8574

Meditation Megan 573.657.1425

Mother Craft Nicole K-Weber 573.876.0676

### **La Leche League**

Lynn Carter 660.665.5866

### **Parents as Teachers**

Ricky Trosen 660.626.1455

### **Attachment Parenting Playgroup**

Jackie DeSanty-Combes 660.689.3012

For families interested in meeting others who practice extended breastfeeding, co-sleeping, babywearing, or positive discipline. Chat Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/APKirksvilleMO/>