

# *Rochester Birth Network*

[www.rabn.org](http://www.rabn.org)

## **Home Birth**

### **Why Home Birth?**

Although the reasons for deciding to give birth at home vary, most families in this country who choose home birth share a belief that birth is a natural physiological process, not a medical condition which routinely needs intervention, and therefore can safely take place outside the hospital. Also common is the feeling that labor, birth, and early newborn/parent interaction are events which are facilitated and enhanced by the continuity, security and familiarity of the home environment. In addition, for some families, the decision to birth at home may be driven by a desire to take greater personal responsibility for the entire birth experience. A wish for more decision-making authority is often a motivating factor when families have had a disappointing previous hospital experience and wish to have a more enjoyable subsequent birth. Whatever your reasons for considering home birth, you can rest assured that for healthy low-risk women experiencing normal pregnancies, studies indicate that home birth with a trained attendant can be a safe option.

### **Safety of Home Birth**

Virtually all well-designed\* studies of planned home birth with a trained care provider have found that for healthy low-risk women, home birth is as safe or safer than hospital birth. The World Health Organization, Midwives Alliance of North America, and the American College of Nurse Midwives all recognize attended home birth as a safe option for all low-risk women.

To maximize the safety of home birth, a pregnant woman should be in good overall health and should maintain healthy habits and good nutrition during pregnancy. A home birth care provider should check for potential risk factors, and screen out women who have complications which might compromise the safety of home birth. The risk of some factors, such as vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) may be determined on an individual basis when compared to other factors (general well-being and health of the mother, reason for previous cesarean, etc.). Criteria for home birth may differ between providers.

A Canadian study published in the British Medical Journal in 2005 showed that planned home birth for low risk women in North America using certified professional midwives was associated with lower rates of medical intervention but similar intrapartum and neonatal mortality to that of low risk hospital births in the United States. It also showed that homebirth lowers the risk of cesarean. This supports the findings of all previous studies that were properly controlled\*.

\* Well-designed studies compare low-risk women having planned, midwife-attended home births with low-risk women giving birth in hospitals. Some poorly designed studies suggested that home birth was not safe, but these studies were done using raw data from birth certificates alone. In those studies, *all* babies born outside a hospital or birth center, including unattended homebirths, unplanned homebirths, precipitous premature births, etc. were factored in when calculating a morbidity and mortality rate, which alters the accuracy of the study.

## Sources:

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<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/abridged/330/7505/1416>;
- Medscape  
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(contact Amy Haas for a complete reference list [avhaas@rochester.rr.com](mailto:avhaas@rochester.rr.com) )

## Recommended Reading

*The following books should be available in local bookstores and libraries. If you have trouble locating them, most home birth care providers have lending libraries.*

A Wise Birth by Penny Armstrong and Sheryl Feldman

This beautifully written book chronicles the true story of Pennsylvania midwife Penny Armstrong as she serves and learns from a traditional Amish community. Possibly the best book ever to convey through simple stories the awesome power and beauty of natural unimpeded labor and birth.

Ina May's Guide to Childbirth and Spiritual Midwifery by Ina May Gaskin

These books combine practical information on preparing for and attending a home birth with dozens of home birth stories and photos emphasizing the intuitive, spiritual and relationship building aspects of home birth. Contains especially useful information for anyone having trouble finding a home birth provider.

Homebirth by Sheila Kitzinger

This book is a gentle introduction to the beauty and sensibility of birthing at home. It is highly recommended for anyone contemplating or planning a home birth. In addition, it has been reported by many as very helpful in helping to ease the anxiety of reluctant family or friends. It includes information on preparing for a home birth.

## Local Home Birth Providers

The following list includes licensed midwives currently offering home birth services in the Rochester area. All are affiliated with major health insurance plans which provide coverage for prenatal care as well as most or all home birth expenses.

**Meg Grindrod, CNM**

1654 Monroe Ave., Rochester NY 14618 585 669-2355 [Grindrodbartram@Juno.com](mailto:Grindrodbartram@Juno.com) , Attends only homebirths.

**Homebirthers of New York (HoNeY)**

117 N Jackson Ave., Endicott, NY 13760, 607-786-7580 [info@homebirthers.org](mailto:info@homebirthers.org), [www.homebirthers.org](http://www.homebirthers.org)

(For a list of Midwives who attend homebirths in the Ithaca, Syracuse, and Buffalo areas contact Rochester Area Birth Network directly.)

(For information on Homebirth after Cesarean please contact Amy Haas [avhaas@rochester.rr.com](mailto:avhaas@rochester.rr.com) )

\*Rochester Area Birth Network **Homebirth Circle** is held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at 1:45 pm.. Partners/husbands are always welcome. Please contact Lynn Barnett for more information. 234-0022 [lbarnett@rabn.com](mailto:lbarnett@rabn.com)

To speak with someone who has had a home birth, or for more information on homebirth contact: RBN at 234-0022, <a href="http://www.rabn.org">www.rabn.org</a>
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