



Benefits of Vaginal Birth

The 5 People Who Benefit From a Natural Birth
by Dr. Corinne Brown ND

EVERYONE KNOW BABIES COME FROM VAGINAS. Even my 4 year old son knows babies come from vaginas.

But from my experience, once you become pregnant, and YOUR baby has to come out of YOUR vagina...suddenly it's like a newsflash. "Hold the PHONE. WHAT?! Sorry...wait. What?! The baby has to come out of my VAGINA?" Facepalm.

The reality of birth can take a solid 9 months to set in – and for some women, it never does. All the fear mongering around labour + birth in the media really mucks up the process of trusting your body to do what it's meant to do.

"It'll hurt so much!
You'll want to die!
You'll hate your husband!
Your vagina will never be the same!"

I can tell you from my own two labour room experiences, that NONE of those things are true. And besides, that Debbie Downer "labour is torture" story is getting so old.

"So many people say the same unhelpful things to all the pregnant women they meet." -> TWEET THIS

Let the WHY be your guide

Understanding WHY you want to have a natural birth is what will be what pull you through the tougher parts of your labour.

You will be the one to flip the script and sing a different tune about childbirth. You will be the one to give light, love + inspiration into the pregnant women you meet – confidence even!

Labour is powerful beyond measure, it's raw, it's intense, it's sensual, it's physical, it's challenging, it's beautiful. Let's talk about THAT for a change.

Birth helps you shed your skin and morph into the next version of yourself – one who has taken her body to the full extent it could go. I have seen the dark side of labour, and I know without a doubt that I'm better, stronger, wiser for having had that experience.

Natural birth benefits more people than you might think. YOUR natural birth has benefits that extend to five people:



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1) Benefits to Baby

Squeezing effect: Babies in utero are cuddled up in amniotic waters, and so their lungs are full of fluid. As the baby passes through the vagina, the fluid is squeezed from its lungs. This makes the initial moments on the planet much easier because the first breaths can be inhaled with ease.

With c-section babies, like my first son Rowan, it is more difficult for the lungs to inflate because they are still full of fluid. Zero squeezing has occurred. For these babies, early breaths are difficult and laboured as the fluid takes time to get reabsorbed by the body so the lungs can fully fill with air.

Labour hormones develop lungs: When labour starts, the hormones have an affect on baby's lungs. It's almost time to start breathing, so your body begins the process of "drying out" the baby's lungs. This is why even if you end up with a c-section, it is still beneficial to go through a trial of labour because some of the fluid has a chance to be removed.

Adrenaline awareness: When you reach the point of your labour when you're fully dilated, you will get a huge jolt of adrenaline. This is to give you the boost of energy and strength you'll need to push baby out! When your baby gets exposed to that adrenaline surge there is a period of wide-eyed alertness for immediate bonding with mom. [Click here to see Harvey's Adrenaline awareness, literally moments after he was born.](#)

Bacterial flora: When they're born vaginally, babies are exposed to all the good bacteria found in your vagina. Yes, you have bacteria in your vagina ([check out the NDtv episode on vaginal bacteria](#)). But suffice to say, this is a GOOD thing! The bacteria transferred from you is now across baby's skin, respiratory system, gastrointestinal system, and genitourinary system. This inoculation with your mature bioflora is the key to lifelong health benefits and immune system support. Having an established bioflora from his or her very first nano-second on the planet gives your baby a huge health advantage – a true gift!



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2) Benefits to Mom

Speedy recovery: The fewer interventions you encounter in your birth, the quicker you will recover. For instance, when Rowan was born by c-section, I had to stay at the hospital for 3 days (actually we begged our nurses to let us leave by day 2), versus when we had a natural VBAC with Harvey, we blew that popsicle stand within 3 hours! I mean, I wasn't skipping out the door clicking my heels – I was wheeled out and gingerly helped into the car – but then I was home in my own bed where I could recover: eat, drink, sleep + enjoy my new family of four.

Future labours: If you plan on having more than one baby, natural birth is the way to go! A body that is allowed to labour without intervention will typically labour significantly more efficiently the next time around. This ain't her first rodeo! In my case, my second birth was actually my FIRST vaginal birth. But it was maybe slightly more efficient than a true first-timer, because I had laboured for 24hrs + dilated to 5cm before my c-section with Rowan. So ideally, my third birth will be a breeze.

Greatest ecstasy known to woman: The birth of your baby brings about the craziest concoction of feel-good love hormones that you will ever experience in your life. Of course, with a c-section or epidural you will still produce Oxytocin and LOVE your baby! But the concentrations of the hormones aren't at the peak levels they are with an unmedicated birth. This concoction also lends itself to improved breastfeeding

3) Benefits to Your Partner

Seeing your power: You want to labour naturally for so many reasons, and to impress your partner may or may not be one of them. But it will be a definite outcome. Seeing you coping well in labour is just about the most impressive + attractive thing on the planet. It gives your partner a glimpse into what you are capable of and a deeper respect is established.

Bonding experience: Making babies + birthing babies involve a lot of the same hormones. Birth (and lovemaking!) is a processes that is driven by Oxytocin, your love/cuddle/bonding/orgasm hormone. And you do the same things to produce this magical Oxytocin in both scenarios: kissing, cuddling, touching, whispering, dancing, holding, loving. Birth has the opportunity to be like a tantric love sesh of intense depth + bonding with your partner, where your reward at the end is a baby!

His birth experience: Your birth is ALL. ABOUT. YOU. I'll be the first to tell you that. You are the queen-lady birth goddess, and everyone attending your birth is there to serve you. However, this is your partner's birth experience, too. Or the closest he'll ever get to one. The day your partner meets the new little baby you made together is a day he should love, cherish + adore forever as well. You can help create that for him.



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4) Benefits to Society

Birth trends: One by one we are impacting our generation's birth trends. Like it or not, as soon as baby is on the outside, we become a statistic – every one of our births is recorded in the literature for all time. C-section rates are at an alarmingly high rate of over 30% – over 25% of which were performed in low-risk pregnancies in 2013. Natural births are beneficial to society because they turn the tide on birth trends. For the short period of time when WE are the ones driving the trends, let's make a real impact. Lower the intervention rates, increase the vaginal birth rates – especially the VBACs. We can create a movement! We have the power to do that – all of us do. One by one.

Health care dollars – In Canada, it costs \$2800 to have a vaginal birth. A C-section costs \$4600. You save \$1800 on the cost of your birth if you stay home from the hospital and have a home-birth. Midwives are \$800 less *per patient* than an OB. Natural birth, especially when performed at home, has the potential to free up tons of health care dollars that are currently being consumed by unnecessary interventions.

5) Benefits to Women

Female empowerment – Women are unsure. Uneasy. Uneducated about birth. They don't trust their bodies. They don't do the work to prepare for a natural birth, because they're not even sure they can achieve one. Women need to know how powerful they are! Birth is the way to slice directly to the heart of that power + empowerment.

Inspiration to other women – Flip the script! No more horror stories! Inspire them, lead them, help them learn what they need to know to give birth naturally and love their labour. Even if all the negative birth stories women spread around are TRUE, why are they sharing them with women who are about to go through it? Don't these women know that fear is the #1 WORST thing you can bring into the labour room with you? Probably not, because they took fear into the labour room with them. So don't contribute to the vicious cycle. Be the change! A huge piece of changing the conversation around birth for our generation is passing the torch and cheering on the women who are next up at bat.

Respect for birth: Somewhere along the way, respect for birth has been lost. It has become medicalized and institutionalized – a moneymaker. A shift is definitely in the midst, but we still have a ways to go. Birth is everything – our beginning, our bodies, our babies. Birth is our ROOTS. Natural birth impacts a VAST number of people when you step back and look at it, big picture style. Let's give it the respect it deserves – let the WHY be your guide.

- Erica Nabuurs, Medicine Woman