

Technology-Intensive Birth: Is It Good for Babies?

A BirthNet Fact Sheet

Nearly all of the 4 million babies born in the US each year are exposed to some level of technological or medical intervention during birth:

◆ Ultrasound through Continuous Electronic Fetal Monitoring	89% (3.56 million)
◆ Intravenous Fluids Through the Mother	86% (3.44 million)
◆ Pain Relief Drugs Through the Mother (some are combined)	80% (3.2 million)
• Epidural anesthesia	63% (2.52 million)
• Narcotics	30% (1.2 million)
• General anesthesia	5% (200,000)
◆ Artificial Oxytocin (pitocin) to Stimulate Labor Through the Mother	53% (2.12 million)
◆ Drugs to Start Labor Through the Mother (sometimes combined)	36% (1.44 million)
• Artificial oxytocin	31% (1.24 million)
• Prostaglandins	10% (403,000)
◆ Surgical Birth by Cesarean Section	25% (1 million)
◆ Operative Birth by Vacuum Extraction or Forceps	8% (334,000)
◆ Boys Circumcised	62% (1.17 million)

All medications and substances given to mothers pass to babies.

What do we have to show for all this technology in birth?

- ◆ High Infant Mortality Rate — Rose for the first time since 1958
27th in the world, nearly twice that of most other developed countries
- ◆ Highest Rate of Low Birth Weight Infants in 30 Years 7% (280,000)
- ◆ Highest Rate of Preterm Births in 20 Years 12% (480,000)
- ◆ Low Rates of Exclusive Breastfeeding as Recommended 9% at 6 months
- ◆ Injured, Traumatized, & Depressed Mothers — can cause depression in babies

What are we doing to our babies?

The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative and the Midwives Model of Care

- ◆ The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative and the Midwives Model of Care promote wellness, education, and individualized, woman-centered care.
- ◆ Midwives are specialists in normal birth.
- ◆ Countries with better outcomes for babies and mothers rely on midwives to attend most births.

***Support the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative and the Midwives Model of Care
for our babies...and for mothers.***

References available upon request



BirthNet
Educating the public to improve
maternity care for all women

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