

## Fact Sheet

# State of American Childbirth

**Pregnancy and childbirth are normal, healthy processes  
for the majority of women and babies.**

### SCOPE AND SCALE OF MATERNITY CARE -- EACH YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES:

- Over 4 million Births <sup>1</sup>
- 99% in Hospitals <sup>1</sup>
- Over 90% Attended by Surgeons <sup>1</sup>
- Second Most Common Reason for Hospitalization <sup>3</sup>
- Most Common Reason for the Hospitalization of Women <sup>3</sup>
- Care for Mothers and Babies combined Rank 4<sup>th</sup> in Hospital Expenses <sup>4</sup>
- Over 6.8 million Obstetric Procedures Performed – 2<sup>nd</sup> Most Common Category of Surgical Procedures <sup>3</sup>
- Three of the Four Most Common Surgical Procedures Performed in the United States are Obstetric <sup>3</sup>

**Nearly all women giving birth in hospitals are subjected to  
some level of technological or medical intervention.**

### THE MOST COMMON INTERVENTIONS ARE:

- Over 31% (1.3 million) Cesarean Surgeries – Has risen over 50% since 1996, *HIGHEST EVER*<sup>2</sup>
- Vaginal Birth after Cesarean (VBAC) rate has fallen over 50% since 1996, *ACCESS DISAPPEARING*<sup>1</sup>
- 34% (1.4 million) of Labors Medically Induced <sup>5</sup>
- 41% (1.66 million) Need Vaginal Stitching (episiotomy, tears, vacuum extraction, forceps) <sup>5</sup>
- 47% (1.88 million) of Labors Artificially Stimulated <sup>5</sup>
- 60% (2.4 million) of Women Denied Fluids <sup>5</sup>
- 76% (3.04 million) of Women Restrained In Bed <sup>5</sup>
- 85% (3.4 million) of Women Denied Food <sup>5</sup>
- 86% (3.44 million) Given Drugs For Pain Relief <sup>5</sup>
- Over 90% (3.68 million) of Women Attached To Electronic Fetal Monitors <sup>5</sup>

**What do we have to show for all this intervention?**

### OUTCOMES IN THE UNITED STATES:

- High Infant Mortality Rate – Stayed Flat over the last 6 years, 29<sup>th</sup> in the world – Twice as High for African American Babies <sup>6</sup>
- Maternal Mortality Rate – Not Improved in 20 years, 25<sup>th</sup> in the world – Four times as High for African American Mothers <sup>7</sup>
- 12.8% (over 546,000) of Babies Born Preterm – has Risen 21% since 1990 <sup>2</sup>
- Over 8.3% (over 354,000) of Babies Born Low Birth Weight – has Risen 19% since 1990 <sup>2</sup>
- 44% (1.76 million) of Mothers have Emotional Or Physical Impairment after Birth Interfering with Ability to Care for their Babies <sup>7</sup>
- Over 25% (1 million) of Mothers have New Health Problems after Birth <sup>7</sup>
- 63% (2.52 million) of Mothers have some symptoms of Postpartum Depression <sup>7</sup>
- 18% (720,000) of Mothers show symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress with 9% showing all signs of PTSD.<sup>7</sup>

**With all the money we spend, why aren't our outcomes better?**

Countries with lower costs and better outcomes for mothers and babies  
rely on midwives to attend most births – and many support out-of-hospital births

**The Midwives Model of Care & The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative**

[www.cfmidwifery.org/mmoc](http://www.cfmidwifery.org/mmoc)

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

**Promote Wellness, Education, and Individualized, Motherbaby-Centered Care.**

**Midwives are Key to Effective, Affordable Mother-Friendly Childbirth**

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## References

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