SESSION 1.

Physiological Birth at Home

KEY POINTS

The New Zealand College of Midwives recognises homebirth as a safe and reasonable option for healthy birthing people and healthy babies.

When a birthing person feels safe, their body is more likely to work optimally.

Early labour can last for hours or even days. Contractions may be irregular and inconsistent. You may lose your mucus plug. Your waters may break. Your body is working hard as your cervix begins to open, usually from 0–4 cm.
Let your midwife and support team know when labour begins.

Contractions usually become longer, stronger and more regular. You may need to concentrate and focus during contractions. This is a time to use your chosen coping techniques and consider different comfort and pain relief options.
Your cervix is generally around 4–8 cm dilated.
Contact your midwife and support team as advised in your birth plan.

SESSION 1.

Supporting Yourself Through Labour

KEY POINTS

Let your midwife know when your waters break. Contact your midwife promptly if your waters are green or you notice a large amount of fresh blood.

Alternative Pain Relief Options

- Tens machine
- Clary Sage essential oil
- Water
- Heat
- Accupressure
- Breath work

Discuss suitable options with your midwife as part of your birth preparation.

As labour intensifies, you may begin to feel overwhelmed or panicky. You might find yourself saying, “I can’t do this anymore.”

Contractions may be long and strong, with very little rest between them. This is a time for your support people to step up, offer reassurance and help you stay focused and feel supported.

SESSION 1.

Meeting Your Baby

KEY POINTS

Be an active participant in your labour. Try different movements and positions, such as:

- Standing upright and moving
- Hands and knees
- Rocking and swaying

Changing positions can help you find what feels most comfortable.

Your pelvis is a flexible structure that can move and adapt to support your baby's birth.

What names did you give the different birth positions? Explore the positions that feel comfortable for you and, where possible, aim to avoid lying flat on your back.

As your baby moves down and birth approaches, you may feel calm or sleepy, or you may experience an uncontrollable urge to push. Your baby's head is usually born first, followed by their body.

SESSION 1.

After Your Baby Is Born

KEY POINTS

Enjoy skin-to-skin contact with your baby. If you are both well, there is usually no need to separate. Give your baby the opportunity to breastfeed, including finding the breast themselves through the breast crawl.

Aim to offer the breast within the first hour, but there is no need to rush. Give your baby time to initiate feeding. Breastfeeding also helps the uterus contract and supports the birth of the placenta.

The placenta may take an hour or longer to be born. Your uterus continues to contract as it separates and is born. Delayed cord clamping allows the cord to stop pulsating before it is clamped and cut. Some families choose lotus birth, leaving the cord attached until it separates naturally.

Home Birth Aotearoa

COCKTAIL OF HORMONES

Birth Works Best When the Birth Person Feels Safe

OXYTOCIN

The love hormone and the driver of labour.
Oxytocin works best when we feel calm, comfortable and safe.
The biggest rush of oxytocin happens at birth.

ENDORPHINS

The feel-good hormones. Endorphins provide natural, morphine-like pain relief during labour.

They work alongside oxytocin to support the birth process.

ADRENALINE

The fight-or-flight hormone. During labour, adrenaline can work against oxytocin and may slow or stall labour.
However, at later stages of labour, adrenaline also provides energy to help you birth your baby.

PROLACTIN

The mothering hormone. Prolactin supports bonding between mother and baby and plays an important role in milk production.

WHAKATAUKĪ

