

Finding Mother-Friendly Childbirth Across All Birth Options

By Susan B. Allen, CNM

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When pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, women might also begin to consider what they want their childbirth experience to be. Many times women do not realize they have a choice regarding health care providers, the place of birth and available support systems. One such support system is the **Coalition for Improving Maternity Services** (CIMS). CIMS is a group of individuals and national organizations whose mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs. Whether the choice of birth setting is home, high-tech hospital or anything in between, CIMS suggests that expectant women ask their care providers the following:

- Who will be with me during labor and birth?
- What happens during a normal labor and birth in your setting?
- How do you allow for differences in culture and beliefs?
- Can I walk and move around during labor?
- What positions do you suggest for birth?
- How do you make sure everything goes smoothly when my nurse, doctor, midwife or agency need to work with each other?
- What things do you normally do to a woman in labor?
- How do you help mothers stay as comfortable as they can be? Besides drugs, how do you help mothers relieve the pain of labor?
- What if my baby is born early or has special problems?
- Do you circumcise babies?
- How do you help mothers who want to breast-feed?

For more information, visit <http://www.motherfriendly.org/>, or call CIMS at 888-282-CIMS or 904-285-1613.□

Susan B. Allen, a Certified Nurse Midwife, is founder of the Midwifery Associates of the Rose Women's Care Service in Highland, NY.