

Home Birth

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) receives many inquiries regarding home birth and responds with a variety of resources including:

Home Birth: Resources for Payers and Policymakers

This resource outlines the research on home birth and may be used by payers, policymakers, and others to support reimbursement and legislation supporting home birth. It is available on the Web site at http://www.midwife.org/Home_Birth_Resource.cfm.

The ACNM Clinical Bulletin No. 7, January 2002, Criteria for Provision of Home Birth Services is available on the Web site at <http://www.midwife.org/memberFiles/education/ClinicalBulletinNo7.pdf>.

The ACNM Handbook: Home Birth Practice (Second Edition, 2004)

This comprehensive handbook, available from the ACNM Web site at <http://acnm.stores.yahoo.net/hombirpracha.html>, contains the answers to many of the questions we receive regarding home birth. It was designed primarily for midwives who are attending home births and for the education of student midwives. Much of the information, however, will be helpful to others, as well. Topics include home birth research, setting up a home birth practice, clinical aspects of home birth practice, and professional issues relating to home birth.

Home Birth Research

- Johnson, KC, Daviss, BA. Outcomes of planned home births with certified professional midwives: large prospective study in North America. *BMJ* 2005 Jun;18;330(7505):1416-. This publication evaluated the safety of home births in North America involving certified professional midwives (CPMs), and concluded that planned home birth for low risk women was associated with lower rates of medical intervention but similar mortality to that of similar hospital births.
- Murphy PA, Fullerton J. Outcomes of intended home births in nurse-midwifery practice: a prospective descriptive study. *Obstet Gynecol* 1998; 92:461-470. This study concluded that home birth “can be accomplished with good outcomes under the care of qualified practitioners and within a system that facilitates transfer to hospital care when necessary.”
- Olsen O. Meta-analysis of the safety of home birth. *Birth* 1997; 24:4-13.
- The ACNM Handbook: Home Birth Practice, Chapter 8.
- Annotated Bibliography for Home Birth Citations
http://www.midwife.org/siteFiles/education/Homebirth_Lit_Aug09.pdf

***Journal of Nurse-Midwifery** (JNM) Home Study Program**

A Home Study Program (HSP) on home birth was published in the *Journal of Nurse-Midwifery* (JNM) Volume 40, Number 6, November/December 1995. This special issue contains nine articles which address descriptive data as well as guidelines for client selection, preparation of couples, neonatal considerations, informed consent, and quality assurance. While continuing education credit is no longer available for this HSP, the content is still relevant to current practice. JNM is a peer-reviewed journal published bi-monthly by ACNM. Single issues, both current and back, exist in limited quantities and are offered for sale subject to availability. Reprints/back issues may be obtained by contacting Elsevier Science: 1-888-4ES-INFO (437-4636), 212-633-3680 (fax) or usinfo-f@elsevier.com.

Home Birth Experts

The ACNM **Home Birth Section** is part of the ACNM Division of Standards and Practice and is comprised of midwives with particular interest and expertise in home birth. The Home Birth Section authored the ACNM Handbook on Home Birth, the JNM Home Study Program and Clinical Bulletin #7 **Criteria for Provision of Home Birth Services**, in order to support those attending home births, to offer guidance to those interested in expanding into a home birth setting, to facilitate the inclusion of home birth practice in the curricula of midwifery education programs and to encourage and honor the choice of the childbearing family as to where and with whom they birth. The name of the Home Birth Committee chair may be found on the ACNM Web site: www.midwife.org.

Legal Guidelines

Legal guidelines regarding birth settings, when they exist, are addressed in two ACNM publications: **Nurse-Midwifery Today: A Handbook of State Laws and Regulations** (available on the ACNM web site), and **Direct Entry Midwifery: A Summary of State Laws and Regulations (2002)**, available from the ACNM Resource Catalog.*

Reimbursement

Realizing the good outcomes and significant cost savings associated with home birth, a growing number of third party payers are covering home birth services. There are, however, many insurance companies and managed care organizations unaware of the potential benefits of home birth. The Home Birth Practice handbook provides guidance for midwives negotiating contracts and the ACNM staff is available to address questions from third party payers.

Professional Liability Insurance

The availability of professional liability insurance for CNMs and CMs is a continuing challenge.

Finding a Home Birth Practice

The midwifery practice locator, available on the ACNM Web site (www.midwife.org) click “Find a Nurse-Midwife”) lists nearly 3000 nurse-midwifery practices. Unfortunately, the site of birth is not specified, but if you call the practices nearby and they do not provide home birth services, they are likely to be able to tell you which practices do. You might also check with the ACNM chapter chairperson for your local area or state (a listing is available on the ACNM Web site). Childbirth educators are an excellent source of information about options in your community; find them listed under "Childbirth Education" in the Yellow Pages. Your local chapter of **LaLeche League** or **Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies**, also knows about birth options where you live. The bottom line when it comes to shopping for maternity care is to ask, ask, ask. Ask your friends, their friends, your colleagues, relatives, and neighbors who they went to for care, what it was like and what they thought. Ask care providers about their practice and their experience. Then follow your instincts. Every woman is different. You are the only one who can know what is best for you.

* In 2000, the journal name was changed to the *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health (JMWH)*.

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The ACNM “QuickInfo” series was developed by the Department of Professional Practice & Health Policy to respond to common inquiries by summarizing ACNM resources regarding a particular topic, as well as listing selected literature and a variety of other resources. Your feedback is welcomed; contact our department at (240) 485-1844 or pphp@acnm.org. (Listing of other services and products does not imply endorsement by ACNM.)