

Childbirth education classes are a lot more than just funny breathing. Learn everything you ever wanted to know about your body during labor, medications, complications and how to help your partner through labor.

Starting Childbirth Class Search



You can begin the search for classes by asking your care-giver, your friend with babies, or the hospital's maternity department for suggestions. Then call and ask the providers of childbirth education to describe their classes. Find out who the teachers are. Is it possible to interview the teacher before registering in a class? You can learn a lot in a brief phone conversation. Is the teacher an independent certified childbirth educator who sub-contracts her services? Or is she an employee of a hospital or group? Does she belong to one of the local and national organizations of childbirth educators?

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Ask about the teacher's qualifications. Some sponsors require a medical background, such as nursing or physical therapy. Others require a college degree, sometimes in a related field, such as psychology, social work, education, or biology. Some have no specific educational requirements. Many sponsors require that their teachers have a child. In addition to background requirements, most teachers have received training in childbirth education. Training may be minimal [for example, the teacher may be required only to observe a series of classes] or it may be rigorous. Certification by one of the national or international childbirth education organizations may be required. Some community childbirth education organizations provide

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Choosing a childbirth class shouldn't be difficult, but there are many options to consider when taking a class. Think about: Are the teachers experience and certification? How many couples are in one class? What time are the classes? Where is it located? How much does it cost? (Or check and see about Insurance reimbursement)

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their own training and require their own certification. The certification process may include classroom sessions or workshops, written work, examinations, observation of childbirth classes, attendance at births, and teaching under supervision.

Find out the number of classes in a series. They range from about four weekly classes to as many as twelve. Classes may last from one and a half to two and a half hours. What topics are covered? [Possible topics include self-care in pregnancy, preparation for normal and complicated childbirth, caesarean birth, newborn care,

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breastfeeding and bottle-feeding, and the beginnings of parenthood]. You should know how much time is spent on learning and practicing techniques for coping with labor, such as relaxation, breathing patterns, massage techniques, and methods of visualization and focus.

How large are the classes? Classes may range in size from private sessions for one or two couples to very large classes for forty or fifty couples. A small, intimate class may be important to you, or you may prefer a more diverse larger group. If the group is large does the teacher have one or more assistants to provide more personal contact with the students? Is there room for everyone on the floor? Is personal contact by phone or private consultation available if you wish it?

Will there be a reunion of the group after the babies have been born? If so, it indicates the teacher is aware of the importance of the group support. It also shows the teacher has an interest in following up on her students.

Specialized Classes

In many communities specialized classes are offered-for example, early pregnancy classes, home-birth classes, refresher classes [a shortened series for those who have had childbirth classes during a previous pregnancy], cesarean preparation classes, classes for single mothers, lesbians, parents with a language barrier, parents with impaired

hearing or vision, and teen parents, classes for women planning on giving up their babies for adoption, classes on vaginal birth after a previous cesarean, sibling preparation classes for other children in the family, grandparent classes, adoptive parent classes, and breastfeeding classes. Postpartum classes for parents with their infants are also offered in many communities.

Professional and Other Labor Support

Professional staffs provide one kind of support during labor; their expertise and perspectives give a woman confidence that she may not otherwise feel. But professionals are also busy with other responsibilities, such as recording information in the chart, listening to fetal heart tones, taking blood pressure, doing vaginal exams, placing electronic fetal monitors and intravenous tubes, preparing for delivery, and even caring for other women at the same time. Nurses may not be able to supply much emotional support because of the other demands on them. Today many women are also supported through labor by one or more loved ones. In addition to a nurse or midwife. These support people, if prepared, can do things the nurse does not do-foe example, give the woman continuous, loving encouragement, help with creature comforts, like rubbing her back, mopping her brow, and bringing her water and juice, and will help with relaxation and with techniques for coping with labor.