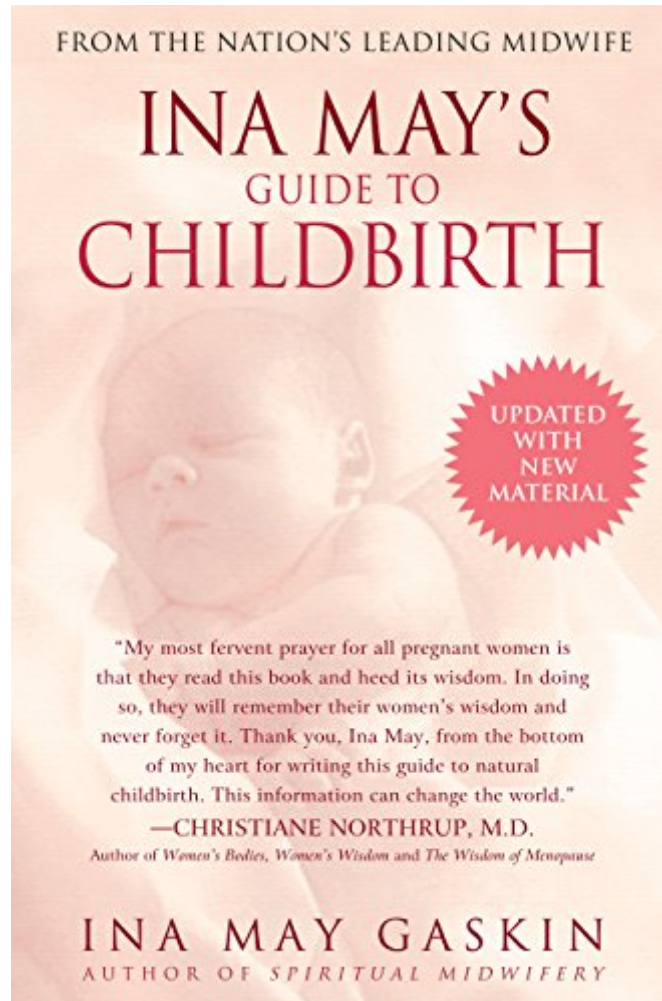


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Ina May's Guide To Childbirth: Updated With New Material



Synopsis

What you need to know to have the best birth experience for you. Drawing upon her thirty-plus years of experience, Ina May Gaskin, the nation's leading midwife, shares the benefits and joys of natural childbirth by showing women how to trust in the ancient wisdom of their bodies for a healthy and fulfilling birthing experience. Based on the female-centered Midwifery Model of Care, Ina May's Guide to Natural Childbirth gives expectant mothers comprehensive information on everything from the all-important mind-body connection to how to give birth without technological intervention. Filled with inspiring birth stories and practical advice, this invaluable resource includes:

- Reducing the pain of labor without drugs--and the miraculous roles touch and massage play
- What really happens during labor
- Orgasmic birth--making birth pleasurable
- Episiotomy--is it really necessary?
- Common methods of inducing labor--and which to avoid at all costs
- Tips for maximizing your chances of an unmedicated labor and birth
- How to avoid postpartum bleeding--and depression
- The risks of anesthesia and cesareans--what your doctor doesn't necessarily tell you
- The best ways to work with doctors and/or birth care providers
- How to create a safe, comfortable environment for birth in any setting, including a hospital
- And much more!

Ina May's Guide to Natural Childbirth takes the fear out of childbirth by restoring women's faith in their own natural power to give birth with more ease, less pain, and less medical intervention.

Book Information

File Size: 6438 KB

Print Length: 370 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0553381156

Publisher: Bantam; 1 edition (November 19, 2008)

Publication Date: November 19, 2008

Sold by: Random House LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B000S1LT1A

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #14,752 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #7 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Personal Health > Women's Health > Pregnancy & Childbirth #38 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Women's Health > Pregnancy & Childbirth #99 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Occult

Customer Reviews

One of the very few stipulations my wife made after we learned we were going to have a child is that I read this book by the doyenne of natural childbirth in the U.S. While the tone of the book is much too touchy-feely/hippyish for me, I have to admit that it is well worth reading regardless of whether you're planning a natural childbirth or a fully tech'ed out hospital one. That said, it would be very easy to read it as gospel and get swept up in its giddy repudiation of modern medicine, so one should approach it with, if not a skeptical eye, at least with one's critical faculties fully engaged. There is also the potential that readers who are fully committed to a hospital birth may come away from this book feeling scolded, or as if their decision is somehow "wrong". The author is a superstar in the field of natural childbirth, largely as a result of her 35+ years work at "The Farm", a kind of birthing commune in Tennessee. The first half of the book is a compilation of natural childbirth stories written by mothers who've either done it at The Farm, or somehow in conjunction with the author. While these are certainly useful as illustrative examples of how it all goes down, they tend to get rather repetitive and could certainly stand to be scaled back a bit. And for those who know little about the birthing process, some of the terminology can be unclear. Finally, for those who might want to read this book on the subway (like me), be forewarned that there are some pretty graphic photos of childbirthing in this section. The second half of the book walks the reader through the entire process, mostly with the aim of explaining why modern medical childbirthing procedures are not based on the mother's health and needs, but are designed for convenience of the medical establishment.

I have read this book all the way through and am planning on attempting a natural birth in an NYC hospital in a very short time now. The OB has mentioned epidurals more than once as he believes that it is one of the great breakthroughs of modern medicine and for some situations it may be very beneficial. However, the hospital I will be going to will also allow a lot of leeway to have a less hospital driven birth. I will be working with a doula to make sure that my preferences are acknowledged and accommodated when possible (and a lot of them can be). That said, there were many things about this book that greatly annoyed me. The most prominent being the intimation that

all modern medicine used in childbirth has horrible side effects. While I do get the impression that many of these drugs and procedures are overused I believe they were developed originally to help not control childbirth. Perhaps they have been abused over the past few decades and don't get the credit they deserve. Things I liked about the book: - The chapter 3 on pleasure/pain. The perception of pain influences how we deal with the sensations. - The chapter 4 on Sphincter Law. - The practical information in Chapters 6,7,8,and 9 dealing with labor and birth. Things I didn't like about the book: - The quantity and quality of birth stories. There are too many and they are a little too granola for me and I'm pretty granola. Plus, they alienate husbands who aren't going to be as much a part of labor process. - The intimation that modern childbirth medicine is somehow bad. That sentiment is prevalent throughout the book and was a little offensive. It's not that the author didn't admit that it was had its place but it was admitted only very reluctantly.

I relied heavily on reviews to decide which childbirth preparation route to go, so I think its only fair that I share my experience. To be clear, I mainly used this book and the hypnobabies home study program to prepare for giving birth. I was also really inspired by "The Business of Being Born". Along with all the hours spent reading and re-reading this book, and completing the hypnobabies program with my supportive and engaged husband, I did numerous other things to prepare such as prenatal yoga, choosing the best and most experienced midwife I could find, creating the optimal birth environment etc. I trusted the message of the book and program so much that I opted for a home water birth. In retrospect, I guess I felt sort of invincible. I thought I was set for a totally empowering, but challenging (of course) birth experience. I sort of imagined I would be like this earth mother goddess, trusting my instincts and allowing my body to do exactly what it was designed to do. After all, how could it go wrong? I was very healthy, have practiced yoga for over 10 years, have a high pain tolerance, was super prepared etc... Well, the way my birth unfolded was sort of like some massive cosmic joke. After all of my hormone fueled rants against the over-medicalization of birth and my clarity about the right way and environment to give birth in, I gave birth to my son flat on my back, under the harsh glare of fluorescent lights, in a hospital, with the assistance of forceps, surrounded by strangers and completely numb from the waist down. I suppose when I step back from all of the grief, agony and trauma involved, it's really sort of funny in a way.

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