



Childbirth Class or Epidural?

What should you say when a friend says “I am planning on having an epidural—Do I need to take a childbirth class?”

Yes! — Childbirth preparation classes are about more than “natural childbirth.” Classes cover pregnancy, the stages of labor, birth and the many choices parents will make. They will help you to know what to expect during labor and birth, and understand hospital routines. They are not about how to avoid pain medications (unless you choose to).

Yes! — Classes teach coping skills and relaxation techniques that all parents can use at home in early labor, in the hospital before getting an epidural, and after birth whenever a fussy baby or difficulty feeding make it difficult to stay calm.

Yes! — Sometimes labor does not go as planned and the pain medication you think you will get is not an option. It is great to have some other options.

Yes! — Our childbirth series also include information about the postpartum period, newborn care, and breastfeeding, and all that information will be beneficial to you no matter what choices you make about pain medications.

Yes! – In a childbirth class, you have a chance to meet lots of other expectant families, share advice and support with each other, and make friendships that you can connect to after the birth of your babies.

For more information on pregnancy:

See our books: *Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn* or *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby*.
Take a childbirth preparation class at Great Starts, or in your local community.

For parenting tips, information for families, or to talk to someone about parenting:

In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

Outside of WA: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at www.circleofparents.org