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No Pain, No Gain—

Natural Birth vs. Cesarean

By Leslie Aldaz

Many people will ask, “Why would a woman endure so much pain during labor if she does not have to?” It is not that she would like to feel the pain, but she sees the numerous benefits of natural childbirth. Another popular way to give birth is through a cesarean, also known as C-section. Even though technology has dramatically evolved, this is still a dangerous surgery for the mother and child. When choosing how she wants to deliver the baby, the woman must think of the well-being of herself and the baby as well as what the complications might be and the recovery time.

During labor the main focus is on the mother and child, so why not have them both fully aware and alert to what is happening? During cesarean section, the woman’s lower abdominal area is cut open to be able to reach the uterus, followed by another incision in the uterus to deliver the baby, and then sealing up the incisions follows. This is much like opening a Ziploc bag, then opening a smaller one inside and resealing them both, but considering it is

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done with a human, it’s not that simple. Even though some women are awake during the procedure, they are highly drugged for the pain, making them not as fully alert as they would be during a natural birth. In a natural birth, a woman will use non-medicated ways to deal with pain, for example: breathing, visualization, vocalization and emotional support. This helps give her awareness of her body and the baby, because every medication or voluntary procedure affects not only the mother, but also the child.

With everything comes a risk of complications. Some complications of natural birth are the baby’s shoulder getting stuck on the pubic bone, premature delivery and the mother being too small to deliver the baby which only happens in one percent of women. Complications in a cesarean section are infection, heavy blood loss, blood clots and vomiting. As for the baby, it might face injury during the surgery, weak immune system and have breathing problems like asthma. Babies that are in voluntary C-sections are three times more likely to have respiratory problems. If that is not a bad enough complication, a woman who freely chooses C-section is 550% more likely to die than a woman doing natural birth.

If a woman does not die from the procedure, she might think she is during the recovery of a C-section. A woman who has a cesarean might stay three to five days in the hospital after the surgery and take about four weeks to fully recover from surgery. Not only does her scar need to heal, but her digestion system will take some time getting back to normal. This means taking everything slowly and needing more help with daily tasks. As for woman doing natural birth, many feel fine after birth and are able to walk and move around freely. Most women can leave the hospital twenty-four hours after giving birth, although most doctors prefer they stay for around forty eight hours to get the hang of taking care of their newborn.

After nine months of discomfort and pain, the last thing most women would want is to add several more weeks of recovery. That’s why natural birth should be a woman’s first choice; it has less risk, better for the mother and the baby, and will be the fastest way to recover. A woman should feel accomplished and empowered after giving birth, not in pain and nauseous. So when thinking of choices on how to deliver a baby, keep the mother and child’s health in mind. What’s a few hours of pain to several weeks of it?