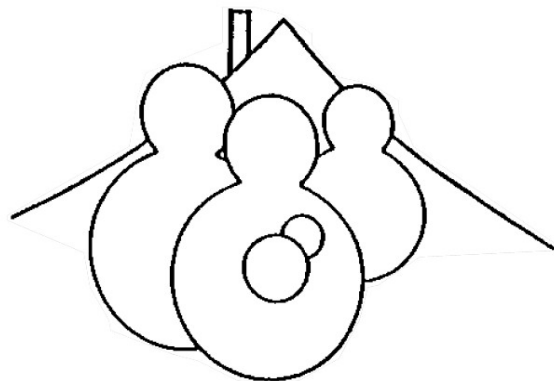


# Have You Considered a Home Birth?



Waikato Home Birth Association Inc.

# Waikato Home Birth Association Inc.

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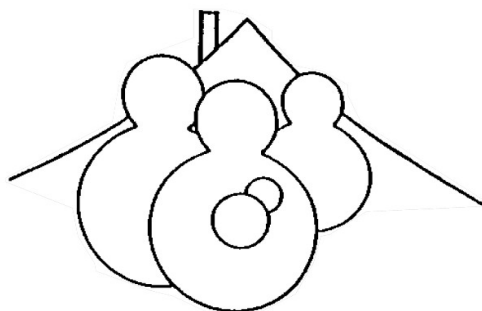
## What is the Waikato Home Birth Association Inc?

The Waikato Home Birth Association Inc (WHBA) is a group of people who have come together to provide information and support for birthing women and their families. The two beliefs that form the basis of our philosophy are:

- that for well women birth is a normal, healthy, active process that in the majority of cases should not require medical or technological intervention.
- that birthing women and their partners have the right to retain ultimate control over their birth and the decisions which affect them and their bodies.

First and foremost we support women's choice but we have a special commitment to, and belief in, the Home Birth option as being the optimal choice of birthing for most well women and babies. This is because home is a familiar environment, where women are most supported and where the family is retained in its proper context. We see our role as encouraging women to actively explore and research all their options and to make choices for a better birthing experience.

To this end members of the Association keep up to date with the latest research on birthing practices. Some members of the Association are involved as consumer representatives on the New Zealand College of Midwives (NZCOM) Midwifery Standards Review (MSR) Committee which monitors the quality of service provided by midwives.



## Contact Details

**Address** P O Box 311  
Hamilton 3240

**Website** [www.homebirth.org.nz](http://www.homebirth.org.nz)

**Email** [waikato@homebirth.org.nz](mailto:waikato@homebirth.org.nz)



Either send us an email or for contact phone numbers go to the Waikato Home Birth Association section on the above website by following the 'Find your Local Association' link.

## What can the Home Birth Association offer you?

- An extensive library of books and videos for members
- Bimonthly magazines for members
- Antenatal classes designed to help birthing parents explore their options (see below)
- Support to explore the home birth option
- Information to prospective support people
- Regular coffee mornings which provide a social network for like-minded parents
- National conferences are held annually
- Sell birth pool liners at a reasonable price
- can put women in touch with birth pools and caliphonts to hire

Members of the WHBA are a support network for women and their partners who choose the home birth option or are considering it as an alternative. Members are frequently asked to be advocates and we are pleased to be able to support birthing couples in this way. Finally the WHBA has a commitment to raise the level of knowledge and acceptance of home births within the community.

## Home Birth Preparation Classes

Sessions are relaxed and friendly and are limited to ten women and their partners and/or their support people. This enables participants to get to know each other. The classes are designed for women who plan to birth at home but are suitable for anyone planning a natural birth. Usually there are women in the group who have had babies before. We recommend that the people who will support you in labour also attend the classes.

For more details either send an email to [waikato@homebirth.org.nz](mailto:waikato@homebirth.org.nz) or go to the Waikato Home Birth Association section at [www.homebirth.org.nz](http://www.homebirth.org.nz) by following the 'Find your Local Association' link.



## Why Birth Your Baby at Home?

There are many reasons why women choose to birth at home, the most common being:

- a belief that childbirth is a normal function of her body and not a medical event
- a belief that birth is safer at home
- a desire to stay with the family before, during and after the birth to prevent disruption to family life
- a feeling of having more control resulting from being in a non-threatening environment
- the increased comfort of being in your own home
- wanting a more positive birth experience after having a previous traumatic birth experience
- concern about the discomforts and dangers associated with travel while in labour
- for religious reasons

## Is Home Birth Safe?

Home Birth statistics, both nationally and internationally, reflect that giving birth at home is the safest option in the majority of cases. Home birth midwives carry with them, and are trained to use, equipment for resuscitation of the baby and equipment and drugs for the treatment of unexpected haemorrhage of the woman after the birth. Because a woman at home does not use drugs during labour and because labour is allowed to follow its normal course without intervention, some of the common but unnecessary procedures used in childbirth are eliminated. Transfer to hospital is readily available if circumstances make this option necessary.

## What is the Cost?

There is no charge to women and their families. In New Zealand the LMC (Lead Maternity Carer) claims the Maternity Services Benefit from the government on the woman's behalf.



# What are the Advantages of Home Birth?

Some of the advantages are:

## **Familiar Environment**

During particularly vulnerable times we are all more secure in an environment which is familiar and non-threatening. It is important for a normal, natural labour to proceed without interruption. A woman feels much more in control in her own home. Research shows that there are less likely to be complications during labour if she births at home.

## **Midwife**

By the onset of labour, following regular visits during your pregnancy, your midwife is a known and trusted friend. She will attend as soon as she is asked and she will observe and support the normal birth process. She will remain for as long as she is needed throughout established labour and birth. She is skilled in recognising signs that something is not normal. She will continue to visit after the birth for up to six weeks.

## **Less Susceptible to Infection**

Both you and your baby are less susceptible to infection from the bacteria you are likely to encounter in your own home than those which exist in hospital or other less familiar environments.

## **Less Intervention**

The labouring woman is encouraged to believe in the natural birthing process, to listen to and work with her body and natural instincts thereby avoiding unnecessary intervention. Experience shows that well informed and supported women birth naturally, and that one intervention measure however small, usually leads to more.

## **No Medication**

A variety of strategies are used at home to ensure the comfort of the birthing woman. These may include the use of:

- acupressure
- massage
- positioning
- water
- heat
- emotional support
- homeopathy / herbs

Epidurals, pethidine and gas should not be available at home due to the associated risks to mother and baby.

## **Privacy**

A woman at home can move about as she feels free to. There are no protocols, routines or strangers to inhibit her. This freedom is essential to ensuring her comfort. The privacy of your own home or garden can be a wonderful way to spend your labour.

## **No Travel**

Travel during labour is painful and stressful and may result in inhibiting labour. By staying at home no decision has to be made on when to leave for the hospital or worrying about whether you have remembered to pack all you need and organise everything for the time you are away.

## **Bonding**

No separation of the family need occur during or after a home birth, allowing greater opportunity for bonding to occur.

## **A Family Experience**

Family, children, chosen relations and friends who may attend the birth experience a deeper bonding to the newborn baby. Children will not experience the stress of separation from their mother that they may feel if she were in the hospital. It is also easier for the children's needs to be met at home. For fathers the uninterrupted sharing of the birth and the time immediately after the baby is born establishes a solid basis for sharing of the parenting partnership.

## **Breastfeeding**

Research indicates breastfeeding is easily established by home birth mothers. Mothers and babies who have had a relaxed and stress free birthing experience without the effects of drugs are less likely to encounter some of the common post-natal breastfeeding difficulties.

## **Emotional Well Being**

Because the home birth mother has fully participated in her birth and has worked with her body without intervention or the use of drugs, she is much more likely to feel satisfied and elated. This experience along with continued established support from midwife, friends and family means the likelihood of post-natal depression is dramatically decreased.



# Waikato Home Birth Association Inc.

## Beliefs

1. Pregnancy and birth are normal, healthy, active processes.
2. In the majority of cases birth does not require medical or technological intervention.
3. Planned home birth is a safe alternative to hospital birth.
4. We are a pro-home birth group not an anti-hospital group.
5. Birth is a family affair, an experience to share as the woman chooses.
6. The bonding process can be enhanced by a satisfying birth experience.
7. Home birth enhances breastfeeding relationships and lessens the likelihood of postnatal depression.
8. When choosing birth at home it is essential to have regular antenatal check-ups.
9. The birthing woman (parents) have a right to information about birth options.
10. The woman (parents) have the right to decide where her (their) baby is to be born. This right should be exercised after considering the health of the mother and baby just prior to the time of birth.
11. The woman (parents) have the final right to decide whether or not any procedure is to be used at the birth.
12. People choosing home births need home birth oriented birth preparation classes.
13. It is important the woman (parents) choose a midwife who will best suit her (their) needs.
14. With good communication, decisions surrounding pregnancy and birth are responsibly made between the woman and the midwife.
15. Midwives should provide comprehensive information from which women (parents) can make informed decisions about their birth.
16. Midwives should be accountable to consumers and their professional body for their services.



# Waikato Home Birth Association Inc.

## Aims

1. To support women and their families before, during and after the birth.
2. To support women (parents) choosing to give birth at home by providing them with a wide range of birth information to enable them to make informed, responsible decisions regarding their births.
3. To promote a realistic and positive portrayal of birth in our society.
4. To publicise the home birth option and raise the acceptability of this option in our society.
5. To provide a forum for the sharing of knowledge, experiences and resources.
6. To bring together those who want home births with midwives and childbirth educators.
7. To work towards a sound home birth service which will include;
  - a) comprehensive ante-natal care and postnatal care.
  - b) a sound back-up service.
  - c) home help for parents.
8. To promote research on home birth and to collate and publicise home birth statistics.
9. To ensure the continued existence of home birth as an option and to work for increased political and medical recognition.
10. To help health professionals understand the needs of home birth parents and to inform them of the services available.
11. To communicate with other home birth groups to exchange expertise, literature and information.
12. To support home birth midwives.
13. To review the standards of practice of midwives annually.
14. To encourage all midwives to adhere to the New Zealand College of Midwives Standards (2002). Specifically to make available to women statistical information about the way they practice.



## **How do you Arrange a Home Birth?**

It is best to first contact the Home Birth Association who will put you in contact with the midwives whose practice reflects the home birth model. Alternatively you can look at home birth midwives' profiles on the [www.homebirth.org.nz](http://www.homebirth.org.nz) website.

Information is also available from:

New Zealand College of Midwives  
Waikato / Bay of Plenty  
P.O. Box 5542  
Hamilton

## **What is a Home Birth Midwife?**

She is a Registered Midwife who provides a home birth service for women and should be affiliated to the Home Birth Association. She can provide:

- information prior to pregnancy
- pregnancy testing
- all ante-natal care
- referral to any other health practitioner or specialist group if needed.
- care during labour and birth at home (and where applicable transfer to hospital is indicated)
- postnatal care at home for up to 6 weeks
- six week postnatal check of mother and baby

Her practice is reviewed annually through the New Zealand College of Midwives (NZCOM) by her colleagues and consumers.

## **The Role of the Midwife**

We view the role of the midwife as the guardian of natural birth. The midwife brings her skills and knowledge to the birthing situation and by respecting the autonomy of the woman and supporting the woman's natural physiological process she assists the woman to birth her own baby. It is from this framework that the home birth midwives who are affiliated with the Association work. The WHBA supports these midwives personally and politically and through this we support the women and their families that midwives offer their services to. Ultimately this special link between home birth midwives and the WHBA leads to an improved service and access to that service for all women. We are pleased to say that the quality of this service is reflected in our statistics.

# What Responsibilities does the Midwife have?

The midwife acts at all times in partnership with the woman for whose care she is professionally accountable. Her actions promote and safe guard the well being and interests of the woman. She ensures that no action or omission on her part places the woman's well being or safety at risk. She is responsible for providing information about her service, her experience, her interventions and her beliefs about birth. During her antenatal visits at home the midwife checks on the mother's health and the unborn baby's progress, discusses preparations for birth and breastfeeding and the mother's feelings and desires about the birth experience. The midwife should be easy to contact at all times and she should provide a backup service that the woman is familiar with.

## Choosing a Homebirth Midwife / Back up Midwife

Choosing a midwife to suit your individual needs is important so you need to ask around friends and the community for suggestions. You have the right to meet with more than one midwife on a no obligation basis before making a choice. Some of the things you may like to consider are:

- how long has she been a midwife.
- why did she become a midwife.
- does she provide a statement of the way she views birth and therefore the basis for her practice.
- how many births the midwife does per month (her caseload). The NZ College of Midwives recommends no more than 4 to 6 per month.
- her age and whether she has children.
- the convenience of where she will provide pregnancy care.
- how many home births has she attended.
- her transfer rates and under what circumstances she transfers.
- what are her arrangements should she not be available at the time of your birth.
- is she a member of her professional body (New Zealand College of Midwives) and does she have her practice reviewed annually.

## Transfer to Hospital

If a woman should change her mind during labour or should some complication arise before or after birth, she will be transferred to hospital. During her pregnancy she and the midwife will have discussed the care the midwife provides in hospital. Some home birth midwives provide full care for women who plan to labour and birth in hospital.

## Qualities we expect in a Midwife

A midwife should believe that birth is a normal physiological process rather than an illness, an instinctive process which for well women should not normally need medical or technological intervention. A midwife has an ethical responsibility not to intervene in the normal process of labour and birth. Her practice should reflect a wholehearted dedication to this philosophy.

A midwife should see her role as a facilitator who can help a woman explore and research options for her birthing experience and help her express her own needs in the birthing situation. The midwife can do this by including the woman in her own healthcare, building her knowledge of, and confidence in, her own body.

The midwife must at all times respect a woman's right to make informed choices over her birth. It is the woman who is in charge of her birth (or her advocate who she has asked to act on her behalf) and it is the woman who delivers her own baby. From this philosophy we see it is important that a written birth plan be viewed as a document of informed consent, a respected contract of care between a woman and her midwife.

A midwife needs to be informed and up to date, technically proficient, capable of recognising abnormality and knowing when referral is appropriate. She needs to be able to provide information fully and impartially for a woman to be able to make informed choices. A midwife needs to be able to work well under pressure and be able to respond in an emergency. A midwife needs to be knowledgeable and comfortable with a broad range of natural aids to women's wellness.

A midwife should be prepared to be accountable to her consumers and the midwifery profession for the way she practices.

In terms of professional qualities a midwife needs to show through her life experience an affinity with women, and that her desire to support and empower women be the main focus of her practice. She needs to be culturally and socially aware, respecting all the definitions of family and capable of attending a woman she is caring for without prejudice towards her personal circumstances.

A midwife needs at all times to maintain a professional attitude, respecting the privacy of the woman she is caring for. She needs to be aware of the issues that are affecting women in today's society and to care for a woman sensitively, woman to woman, in the environment the woman chooses and in a way that will lead to greater feelings of self esteem and confidence for the woman.

A midwife should belong to her professional body i.e. The New Zealand College of Midwives (Inc) and adhere to the standards of practice of such a body.



*Midwifery is a Women Centered Profession.*

# The Pregnant Woman's Bill of Responsibilities

The pregnant woman is responsible for:

- learning about the physical and emotional process of labour, birth and postpartum recovery
- learning about good pregnancy and birth care so that she may choose the best possible arrangements to meet her personal needs
- learning about the way in which her midwife practices
- caring for herself both physically and emotionally during pregnancy
- attending her antenatal appointments and informing her midwife if she is unable to attend
- her own preparation for home birth in a society which may be unsupportive
- meeting agreed upon requirements for preparation for birth at home
- informing her midwife of any relevant physical or emotional information which may affect the outcome of her birth and parenting
- choosing a suitable support person (persons) for her birth and for ensuring they are prepared for their role at her birth
- ensuring her support people carry out her preferences if she is unable to express them during labour
- the preparation of children for the birth and for the choosing and preparation of support people for children
- acquiring information about breastfeeding and the care of the newborn and registering the baby's birth
- arranging home support for herself and her family for after the birth
- evaluating the quality of care she has received and making any dissatisfactions she may feel, known to her midwife or to the Coordinator, Midwifery Standards Review , NZCOM Waikato / Taranaki, P.O.Box 5542, Hamilton.

The above and following checklists have been adapted by the WHBA from that prepared by the Manawatu Home Birth Association. It may be of use to you when planning your birth.

# The Pregnant Woman's Bill of Rights

The pregnant woman has the right:

- to choose her place for giving birth, how she gives birth and to be treated with dignity and respect
- to choose her midwife and be fully informed of her midwife's qualifications and experience
- to choose who will be present at her birth and the right to refuse entry or ask anyone to leave her place of birth
- of access to information about birth and particularly home birth
- to know about the way her midwife practices and what care she provides including antenatal, labour and birth and postnatal care
- to expect any information she gives her midwife to remain confidential
- to comprehensive and individualised antenatal care
- prior to the administration of any drug, medication, procedure or test to be informed of any direct or indirect effects or risks to herself or her unborn or newborn baby
- to determine herself whether she will accept the effects or risks of the above and give or withhold consent according to that decision
- to extra medical support when needed
- if transferred to hospital, to be treated with respect and courtesy and to be accompanied by her midwife and support person of her choice
- not to be separated from her baby except for valid medical reasons
- to comprehensive postnatal care including support for the establishment of breastfeeding, assessment and care of her newborn, and information about relevant screening tests and notification and registration of birth
- to be informed if there is any known aspect of her or her baby's care or condition which may cause her or her baby problems later
- of access to her and her baby's records and a copy of her notes when desired.
- in the event of an unexpected outcome to her pregnancy or birth to receive all the additional support and services that she needs
- to express any concerns about the care of herself and her baby to her midwife and receive satisfactory resolution of those concerns.

Dear Prospective Home Birther,

Your membership support of the association helps recognise and acknowledge our support for midwives and the work we do for women in maintaining the Home Birth option along with the support we give families in making choices that is not yet main stream in New Zealand.

## Waikato Home Birth Association Inc. Subscription Form

Use our subscription form (see below) and send a cheque

or

**Pay your subs online and email us**

You can pay your subscription via the internet, through your bank's bill payment services in just five easy steps

1. Set us up as a new person you want to pay  
**Waikato Home Birth Association**
2. Fill in our account details  
**03 1557 0028013 000**
3. Reference should include your name. Particulars should include your phone number and/or address (renewing members—please put 'renew' not 'new' in the reference)  
**Homebirther New078551800 1 Homebirth Place**
4. Choose the amount you want to pay for your subscription - \$40 per year or \$75 for two years.
5. Email us at [waikato@homebirth.org.nz](mailto:waikato@homebirth.org.nz) with your name, address, phone number, amount paid and anything else you would like us to know or any questions you have about us.

Your first issue of your newsmagazine will be posted to you as soon as we have all your details.

Waikato Home Birth Association Inc.

### SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please fill in this form, or mail your details on a piece of paper, with your cheque, to the address below.  
or email your details to [waikato@homebirth.co.nz](mailto:waikato@homebirth.co.nz).

**POST TO: Waikato Home Birth Association, P O Box 311, Hamilton, New Zealand**

Annual Subscription \$40 (2 years \$75) \$ .....

Practising Midwife Professional Sub \$40 (2 years \$75) \$ .....

Donation \$ .....

**Cheque enclosed for** \$.....

Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone: ..... E-mail: .....

I am a new member .....Yes No

I am a student midwife .....Yes No

Please post me a copy of the 'about birth' magazine? (cost \$4) Yes No