

UCAN Birth Childbirth Preparation Options Guide  
[www.BirthNaturally.org/ucanbirth.htm](http://www.BirthNaturally.org/ucanbirth.htm)

4. You may find that self-study works best for you. There are a variety of books about natural childbirth geared toward preparing women for birth. Popular favorites include *Birthing from Within* by Pam England, *Mind Over Labor* by Carl Jones, *The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth* by Henci Goer, and *Active Birth* by Janet Balaskas.

4. You may find that a Birthing from Within class best suits your needs. Birthing from Within courses are custom-tailored to what the parents want to learn and discuss. Fear release through birth art and journaling is an integral part of the preparation process. A variety of pain coping techniques are covered. No value judgment is placed on medication options. Women are encouraged to find their own best path through birth. Visit [www.BirthingFromWithin.com](http://www.BirthingFromWithin.com) for more information.

4. You may find that an eclectic, non-method, independent (non-hospital) childbirth class best suits your needs. The format and topics vary by instructor but generally include anatomy and physiology, nutrition, exercise, and pain coping techniques. **Because classes are not taught in a hospital, instructors are free to fully disclose the benefits and risks of various hospital policies and procedures.** CAPPA, ALACE, Childbirth International, ICEA, Lamaze, BirthWorks, and other organizations train and certify independent childbirth educators.

4. You may find that a hospital-based natural childbirth course best suits your needs. The focus tends to be on teaching a variety of pain coping (patterned breathing, etc.) and comfort measure techniques (massage, etc.) in addition to orienting moms and their partners regarding hospital birth practices and medication options. There may be more discussion regarding the benefits and risks of various interventions than one would find in the generic hospital class, but **as a course offered through the hospital the instructor may be discouraged from presenting a thorough analysis of the facts** due to the negative light they may shed on the hospital's policies. ICEA and Lamaze both certify hospital-based natural childbirth instructors.

Start Here

1. I don't know if I want a natural birth or not.

1. I know that I want to have pain medication.

1. I want a natural (no pain meds, no/low intervention) birth.

2. I want unbiased facts regarding the pros/cons of various options so that I can make an informed decision.

3. I want to learn natural pain coping techniques. I believe that childbirth pain is inevitable but it is normal pain that does not have to result in suffering. I believe birth pain has value.

3. I want to learn non-drug pain coping techniques or comfort measures and I also want to know my medication options.

2. I want to know what to expect in a typical, doctor-attended hospital birth so that I will feel more prepared to experience it.

3. I want to learn about epidurals and narcotics: how soon can I get them and how are they administered?

3. I want to learn ways of reducing or eliminating childbirth pain without medication. I do not believe pain is inevitable and I do not value pain as part of the experience.

Many hypnosis courses do not cover childbirth information such as benefits and risks of interventions, avoiding back labor, and other important childbirth topics so you may wish to supplement with independent reading.

4. You may find that a generic, hospital-based prepared childbirth course suits your needs. The focus tends to be on orienting moms and their partners regarding hospital policies and procedures, medical labor management techniques, and medication options.

4. You may find that a hypnosis for childbirth course best suits your needs. Choose the right one for you.

4a. HypnoBirthing, HypBirth, working with a hypnotherapist, New Way Childbirth, Natal Hypnotherapy, LeClaire, and other hypnosis options are available. Visit [www.HypnoBirthing.com](http://www.HypnoBirthing.com), [www.HypBirth.com](http://www.HypBirth.com), [www.NewWayChildbirth.com](http://www.NewWayChildbirth.com), [www.NatalHypnotherapy.com](http://www.NatalHypnotherapy.com), [www.LeClaireMethod.com](http://www.LeClaireMethod.com), or do an internet search for more information.

4. You may find that Bradley classes best suit your needs. Bradley thoroughly covers the risks of interventions and hospital policies in addition to covering topics such as nutrition, exercise, optimal fetal positioning, and physiology. Husbands/partners are trained as coaches to help you during your labor and birth. Pain coping and relaxation techniques are included. Visit [www.BradleyBirth.com](http://www.BradleyBirth.com) for more information.

4a. Hypnobabies classes combine powerful hypno-anesthesia techniques (your natural endorphins) with traditional childbirth education topics such as the pros and cons of interventions, avoiding back labor through optimal fetal positioning, nutrition, and physiology. Birth partners (your husband, sister, doula, etc.) are trained to assist you during the birth or you can do the program completely on your own. Hypnobabies also teaches traditional comfort measures and focuses on releasing fears so that you can be more confident and relaxed about your baby's birth. Visit [www.Hypnobabies.com](http://www.Hypnobabies.com) for more information.

**Tip:** Still not sure which preparation option might be best for you? Read birth stories! Here are some online: [www.pregnancybirthandbabies.com](http://www.pregnancybirthandbabies.com) and [www.thelaboroflove.com/birthstories/index.shtml](http://www.thelaboroflove.com/birthstories/index.shtml)