

## **The Development of “The Birthing Spa”**

The modern childbirth movement had its beginnings when Grantly Dick-Read’s books called “Childbirth Without Fear” was published in 1933. His work spawned further development of the modern childbirth movement by influencing several pioneers in the movement.

Dr. Fernand Lamaze, a French obstetrician, developed the Lamaze method. This was based upon his perception that a woman could be conditioned to respond differently to labor pains. He reasoned that with supportive people by her side she could journey through labor and birth with little or no sedating medication. This allowed a woman to be alert in order to form a health and vital bond with her newborn.

The movement got a strong boost in the early 1969’s when Dr. Robert Bradley, an American obstetrician, published his pioneering book, “Husband Coached Childbirth”.

Dr. Bradley used the mother-animal pattern of relaxing in a calm environment to help women understand how they could relax during the childbirth process. This allowed a woman to feel more in charge of her birthing experience.

He also pioneered getting fathers into the labor and delivery area in order to support the mother-to-be in labor.

Dr. Lamaze followed this idea and incorporated education of fathers and mothers to help in prepared childbirth.

In the 79’s Dr. Michael Odent, a French obstetrician, pioneered a change in the labor ward by emphasizing that a woman should be allowed to move about during labor as her body would indicate and not be strapped in bed. In the 70’s he introduced whirlpool tubs into the labor process as an additional comfort measure for a woman.

These four obstetricians laid a thorough groundwork for changes in childbirth. They were greatly aided by the growing interest in women to be actively involved in decisions regarding the birth of their children. A strong

belief in the childbirth movement is that a woman inherently knows what her body needs during the labor and birth process. By being in tune with her body and allowed to move about, the labor and delivery process will go smoother ... with less need for intervention or medication.

This allows a mother to safely welcome her newborn baby into the world and be fully alert to bond with the infant who is also fully alert to nurse from the mother.

Up until this time, labor and delivery units were designed with the doctor's and nurse's interest in mind. The childbirth movement spawned a new type of delivery system and the birthing center was born.

Birthing centers initially strongly adhered to the concepts developed by the pioneers in the childbirth movement. Namely, that a woman would be involved in the birth process and could avoid unnecessary intervention by having a natural setting in which to give birth.

As this concept grew in popularity, many hospitals adopted a birthing center approach; but unfortunately, this became watered down by the medical establishment. Some units simply put up new wallpaper and deemed themselves a birthing center.

By the 90's nearly every labor and delivery unit claimed to be a birthing center. The concept of family-centered childbirth was replaced by a growing intervention by the obstetricians.

C-section rates skyrocketed during the 70's as obstetrician intervention became the norm. They lowered in the 80's and 90's with the childbirth movement -- only to rise again in the new millennium, as obstetrical intervention again became the norm.

In many hospital units, epidurals are the only way of providing comfort measures for relief of pain, and some units have more than 80% of their births take place under epidural anesthesia.

This is in spite of the fact that epidural anesthesia has never been associated with any positive outcomes in childbirth. C-section rates are

now greater than 30% nationally and up to 40 and over 50% in some hospitals.

Modern childbirth, with the exception of the nice wallpaper and husbands by the side of the laboring woman, in many ways has regressed to the same intervention rates as the 50's, 60's, and 70's.

**At Fort Logan Hospital, we pioneered the way with opening the first birthing center in the state of Kentucky in 1985.**

Since that time we have used the LDRP concept for all our births. This allows a woman to labor, deliver, recover and stay for her postpartum stay - - all in the same birthing suite -- with her husband at her side and her baby in the room with her.

**We have annually had the lowest C-section rate in the state of Kentucky.**

In 2008, Fort Logan Hospital opened up the new facility, and this presented the new opportunity to once again move forward progressively in the concept of birth.

**We opened up The Birthing Spa, which is the first hospital unit of its kind in the nation.**

The elements of The Birthing Spa were developed in order to help pamper a woman at a time when she needs it the most. We continue to use the LDRP concept so that each mother and father – with baby can be together in their own Birthing Suite throughout the entire hospital stay ... without experiencing the disappointing letdown of moving into smaller boring rooms.

The Birthing Spa Suites are furnished with rocking chairs and therapeutic massage chairs, which allow a woman to have comfort both during labor as well as after delivery.

Each room has a large private bath which includes a full whirlpool bath and a separate walk-in multi shower head shower (a double/triple shower).

Each Birthing Suite also has a door leading out into the private garden courtyard with a soothing rock fountain.

The Birthing Spa has an open visiting policy based upon the mother's wishes.

We have father assisted births and children are welcomed at all stages of labor and birth process as desired by the parents.

After delivery, we have a professional massage therapists who give mothers a complimentary ½ hour massage to sooth some of her sore muscles and refresh her body.

As an added feature, each of the doctors who deliver in The Birthing Spa are typically on call every day so that a woman can have her own familiar physician present when she goes into labor and delivery and not merely a partner (a stranger) who happened to be on call that day. The professional relationship with your own physician that you have built upon over the nine months of prenatal care serves your best interests just when your needs are the greatest.

The Birthing Spa moves ahead in providing multiple **Comfort Measures** to women.

We also help restore confidence to a woman as she faces the challenge of childbirth. We look forward to helping you through your pregnancy to experience a safe beautiful birth and to enjoy the thrill of holding your newborn.