

Remember that these care models can be practiced in any setting by any provider. These models reflect cultural attitudes, and their adherents believe that they are providing the best care possible. Many settings and providers present a mix of these models. It's up to you to decide where you feel most comfortable!

MIDWIVES MODEL	MEDICAL MODEL
Philosophy of Care:	Philosophy of Care:
Birth is a social event, a normal part of a woman's life.	Childbirth is a potentially pathological process.
Birth is the work of the woman and her family.	Birth is the work of doctors, nurses, midwives and other experts.
The woman is a person experiencing a life-transforming event.	The woman is a patient.
Setting in Which Care is Provided:	Setting in Which Care is Provided:
Home or other familiar surroundings.	Hospital, unfamiliar territory to the woman.
Informal system of care.	Bureaucratic, hierarchical system of care
Cultural Approach of Providers:	Cultural Approach of Providers:
See birth as a holistic process encompassing all aspects of a woman's life	Trained to focus on the medical risks of birth.
Shared decision-making between caregivers and birthing woman.	"Professional" care may be authoritarian or paternalistic.
Equal relationship.	Dominant-subordinate relationship.
Information shared with an attitude of personal caring.	Information about health, disease and degree of risk not always shared with the patient adequately.
Longer, more in-depth prenatal visits.	Brief, depersonalized care.
Often strong emotional support	Little emotional support
Familiar language and imagery used. Jargon is explained.	Use of medical language or jargon without explanation.
Approach to Spirituality:	Approach to Spirituality:
Awareness of spiritual significance of birth.	Spiritual aspects of birth are ignored or treated as embarrassing.
Approach to Using Technology:	Approach to Using Technology:
Believes in the integrity of the birth process. Uses technology if appropriate and evidence-based.	Values technology, often without proof that it improves birth outcome.
Approach to Newborns:	Approach to Newborns:
Complex human beings. Initiate activities through in-born instincts and desires.	Passive beings who await being acted upon.
Feel deeply, learn and remember.	Feel less or no pain than children or adults.