

Global Results with Action

It all started with six people at a Lamaze conference imagining, “What if all the organizations in the United States working on promoting normal birth and breastfeeding, from Lamaze to La Leche League, joined forces to create a shared agenda for improving maternity care across the nation?” That initial meeting of six led to a magical weekend in 1995 when 50 individuals and organizational representatives met at Mt. Madonna in California formally created the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) and the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative: 10 Steps to Mother-Friendly Hospitals, Birth Centers, and Home Birth Services (www.motherfriendly.org).

Over the next ten years, birth activists in many countries began to use the CIMS 10 Steps and to attend the CIMS annual meetings, asking ever more insistently that CIMS develop an international initiative that would work for any and all countries. The CIMS International Committee was born and soon became an entity of its own: the International MotherBaby Childbirth Organization (IMBCO).

A network of regional and country representatives helped to conduct a global survey of birth and breastfeeding organizations in 163 countries to determine their level of agreement with the CIMS 10 Steps. The information collected became the basis for the development of the International MotherBaby Childbirth Initiative (IMBCI): 10 Steps to Optimal Maternity Services, launched on International Women’s Day, March 8, 2008 (www.imbci.org).

The purpose of the IMBCI 10 Steps is to put into worldwide awareness and practice the MotherBaby model of care—a woman-centered, non-interventive approach that promotes the health and well-being of all women and babies during pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding, setting the gold standard for excellence and superior outcomes in maternity care.

TAKE ACTION! Together we can work toward our goals locally, nationally, and internationally. Make *Orgasmic Birth* a force in the movement.

Become an Orgasmic Birth Activist

AND TAKE ACTION



Orgasmic
Birth
The Best-Kept Secret

www.orgasmicbirth.com

“Activists have been the most powerful tools in improving maternity care.”

Marsden Wagner, MD

Who are the birth activists?

Anyone can be an activist for undisturbed and pleasurable birth whether she or he has had a baby or not. The most immediate sources for activism include childbirth educators, doulas, midwives, nurses, breastfeeding specialists, mothers, fathers, and health educators. and of course YOU.

What can you do?

Use your energy, your enthusiasm, and your talents. Even with a commitment of only a few minutes, you can take action and become an *active activist* in many different ways.

Quick and easy action steps

- ▶ Email, fax, or mail the *Orgasmic Birth* press release at www.orgasmicbirth.com (under the Press Kit tab) to newspapers and local radio and TV stations.
- ▶ Donate books on childbirth and breastfeeding to your local library.
- ▶ Endorse the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services' *Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative* at www.motherfriendly.org.
- ▶ Share evidence-based websites (such as www.childbirthconnection.com) with every pregnant woman you know.

- ▶ Send a donation to a birth organization such as the International MotherBaby Childbirth Initiative (www.imbci.org) and others listed under "Community," then "Links," at www.orgasmicbirth.com.
- ▶ Complete the Birth Survey at www.thebirthsurvey.com. Encourage new moms to do the same.
- ▶ Create intrigue: ask a local radio station to play a song from the *Orgasmic Birth* CD, available soon for purchase at screenings of the film and for individual use later this year.
- ▶ Donate birth documentary DVDs to your local library. Excellent choices that are reasonably priced include *Orgasmic Birth* and *The Business of Being Born*. The latter film interlaces intimate birth stories with surprising historical, political, and scientific insights along with shocking statistics about the current maternity care system. www.thebusinessofbeingborn.com.
- ▶ Get connected with other advocates for undisturbed birth by joining a Birth Network in your community or the Normal Birth Forum at the Lamaze Institute for Normal Birth (www.lamaze.org).
- ▶ At baby showers, give mother-friendly and baby-friendly gifts such as *Mothering* magazine (www.mothering.com). Suggest the same idea to friends attending showers.
- ▶ Reframe messages about birth. When sharing your birth story, use words that convey images of birth as pleasurable, such as "I was ecstatic when I felt my baby being born" or "I was able to work with my labor thanks to the support of my doula—she was so confident and reassuring."

Relay Without Delay

ONE ON ONE

Use all forms of communication to relay information about undisturbed birth to everyone you know: other mothers, your sisters, cousins, friends, and neighbors. Positive messages can have a surprisingly strong impact. While sharing stories, remember to listen to the other person's story and focus on the positive.

WRITE LETTERS AND ARTICLES

- Write to the staff and administrator of the hospital where you gave birth and describe your birth experience there. Suggest resources that you would like to see at the facility, such as birth balls, squat bars, and birthing tubs.
- Write to the wellness editor at your local newspaper about the health benefits of undisturbed birth.
- Write a review of *Orgasmic Birth* for a parenting, health, or pregnancy fitness magazine or newsletter.
- Write an article about undisturbed birth for a pregnancy or parenting magazine.
- Get more ideas from the Advocacy Tools section of www.cfmidwifery.org.

THE INTERNET

- Add links to your favorite birth and breastfeeding websites on your blog, website, or MySpace or other personal page.

- If you don't have a blog, start one. It's a powerful way to communicate. For instructions, see www.blogger.com or similar websites.
- Become familiar with websites that empower women to research their birth options.
- Email newspaper articles and editorials to birth and breastfeeding lists.
- Join online birth and breastfeeding group lists. Participate and advocate for creating pleasurable birth experiences, for *Orgasmic Birth*, for midwives, for birth centers, and for home births. A good place to start is to go to www.yahogroups.com, then search for your topic.
- Contribute an article to a Birth Activist group blog at www.birthactivist.com.

POLITICS

- Become politically active in your local, state, and/or national government. Write to your congressional representative and other legislators to discuss public health policies and laws that affect women's health. Visit your legislator personally.
- Bring attention to the World Health Organization's International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes: www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf. Support policies that ban hospitals from distributing gift bags from formula companies to new mothers. At www.banthebags.org, access the tool kit containing talking points and more.
- Women all over the world are being denied vaginal birth after cesarean. Rally for policy changes at hospitals where VBAC is not allowed. For details, see www.vbac.com and www.ican-online.org.

TAP INTO YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Host an *Orgasmic Birth* screening through www.orgasmicbirth.com.
- Use the arts to support new and creative ways of educating people about maternity care. For example, bring Karen Brody's play "Birth" to your community: www.birththeplay.com. Learn about Brody's mission at www.birthonlaborday.com.
- As a leader in your community, you can bring together like-minded people and start a Birth Network www.birthnetwork.org or a Friends of Midwives group like this one in West Virginia: www.friendsofmidwives.com.
- Apply for a grant to form a Birth Network at www.lamaze.org.
- Inspire higher levels of commitment. Encourage people to connect with others and to volunteer in birth activist organizations.
- Meet with midwives, lactation consultants, childbirth educators, doulas, and La Leche League leaders to discuss local issues and avenues for advocating change.
- Take a doula training: www.dona.org.
- Become a childbirth educator, lactation consultant, or both.
- Speak to high school health and family life classes and to college classes in women's studies or similar fields.
- Start a Pregnancy Club: bring together women who are due at around the same time. At monthly meetings, discuss what women can do to have an orgasmic birth. Place notices about the meetings in midwifery and OB offices, on local group lists, and in local newspapers.

- Be aware of potential future leaders in the field and mentor them.
- Encourage men to form a fathers' group.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATIVE ACTIVISM

- **Buttons.** Use thought provoking phrases to create awareness. Ideas: "Ask me about *Orgasmic Birth*," "Can birth be better?" "Is there pleasure in birth?"
- **Bookmarks.** Make creative bookmarks with similar slogans along with local birth and breastfeeding resource information.
- **Bumper stickers.** Create your own provocative statements, perhaps the same ones that you use on the buttons.
- **Songs.** Create new lyrics to a catchy song that reflect your favorite slogan. Then act it out with a dance!
- **Get posted.** Send digital photos of your buttons, bookmarks, and bumper stickers to ideas@orgasmicbirth.com for posting at the *Orgasmic Birth* website.