

Five ways the childbirth experience is improving

Nancy Travis 10:03 a.m. EDT August 31, 2015



Lee Memorial Health System offers a family-focused approach to childbirth, striving to provide the healthiest and easiest experience possible. (Photo: special to the news-press)

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Maternity care and childbirth practices are ever-evolving to improve the quality of care and support for mothers and babies. Understanding this is a momentous time in your life, Lee Memorial Health System offers a family-focused approach, striving to provide the healthiest and easiest birth possible. Here are five new things we're doing to ensure your experience is safe and more enjoyable:

Dancing For Birth offers a mix of fitness and education inspired by various forms of dance from around the world that women can use to help prepare physically and mentally for their unique birth experience. Mothers-to-be master the movements over time so they can utilize them instinctively during labor. Women can join the class anytime — even after childbirth. Babies love the motion and are easily soothed while being held in soft slings as mom dances. Dancing for Birth also helps women feel supported and empowered as they come together and learn from one another during class.

Laughing gas labor was popular in the U.S. until epidurals became standard procedure in the 1980s. Nitrous oxide has long been used throughout the world to help women cope with childbirth. Lee Memorial Health System is now offering laboring moms Pronox, a 50/50 blend of nitrous oxide and oxygen administered through a mask that offers pain relief without needles or the effects of anesthesia or narcotics. Traditional medications used during labor can take months for the baby's liver to metabolize. Nitrous oxide is so short acting that it is cleared from the mother's body via the lungs in about a minute with no known lasting effects on mother or child.

Delayed cord clamping for one to three minutes can have long lasting health benefits for newborns, especially premature infants. By delaying clamping premature babies receive extra blood from the placenta, allowing many of them to avoid needing a transfusion to treat conditions like low blood pressure. As long as the infant is healthy enough to delay clamping, it can potentially increase blood volume by up to a third — and it's the baby's own blood. Studies have also found that keeping mother and baby tethered may increase the child's iron level retention as well as boost neurodevelopment, social skills and fine motor skills later in life.

The golden hour allows mother and newborn baby skin-to-skin contact for the first hour immediately following birth. This time together calms and relaxes, decreasing postpartum pain and bleeding while also stabilizing the baby's temperature, blood sugar level and heart rate. The golden hour helps with the transition from the womb to the world and is a great opportunity for breastfeeding and bonding. Mothers who spend the first hour skin to skin after delivery report more maternal satisfaction and confidence.

Breast milk depots are designated drop-off centers where mothers can donate breast milk. Donors find comfort and pride in knowing that they are helping babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) who depend on donated milk to thrive when their own mother's milk is not available. After screening and processing at a milk bank, donated milk is distributed to babies in the hospital under a physician's prescription. Knowing the positive impact that breast milk can have for a lifetime, Lee Memorial Health System is very excited to be able to provide this service to the community and is asking lactating mothers in the community to consider donating.

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Locations

The Family Birth Suites of Lee Memorial Health System:

- Cape Coral Hospital, 636 Del Prado Blvd, Cape Coral
- Gulf Coast Medical Center, 13681 Doctors Way, Fort Myers