

Childbirth Models of Care

Medical

vs

Midwifery

Philosophy

- Birth is viewed as a pathological[†] event.
- Body is unpredictable and cannot be trusted to birth physiologically.
- Medical interventions can and should be used, even in non-emergency situations.
- Care provider is regarded as key decision maker.

- Birth is viewed as physiological[‡] process.
- Technology is inherently riskier than normal, uninterrupted birth.
- Physiological principles should be utilized.
- Woman is regarded as the key decision maker.

Response / Reasoning

- Prenatal care focuses on pathology (finding problems).
- Care provider uses medical interventions and treatments as preventative measures.
- Medical professionals assess and control the birth process.

- Prenatal care focuses on the woman and her life.
- Care provider monitors for changes and intervenes or transfers to hospital if needed.
- The woman is allowed more control over the process, including monitoring and assessments.

Outcomes

- Baby is born healthy most of the time.
- Some complications of nature are avoided.
- Risks of intervention are added.
- Medical providers need more control to address complications of medical interventions.

- Baby is born healthy most of the time.
- Complications of medical interventions are avoided.
- Increased risk of missing complications of nature due to reduced interventions.
- Interventions used only as needed, woman retains more control in decision making regarding interventions.

† **pathological** – involving, caused by, or of the nature of a disease

‡ **physiological** – the manner in which the body normally functions to accomplish the process of birth