New landmark study shows that

**Planned Home Births Are Safe**

The largest study of home births attended by Certified Professional Midwives, as published in the *British Medical Journal*, has found that home birth is safe for low risk women and involves far fewer interventions than similar births in hospitals.

**Safe & Healthy Outcomes**
- Results are consistent with most studies of planned home births and low risk hospital births
- Zero maternal deaths
- Intrapartum and neonatal mortality: 2.0 per 1000 intended home births (only 1.7 per 1000 intended home births when planned breech and twin births are excluded)
- Immediate neonatal concerns resulted in just 2.4% of newborns being placed in neonatal intensive care
- At six weeks well over 90% of mothers were still breastfeeding their babies

**Low Rates of Medical Intervention**
- Much lower rates of interventions for intended home births compared to low risk hospital births:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planned home birth</th>
<th>Hospital birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction of labor (only with oxytocin or prostaglandins)</td>
<td>2.1% *</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation of labor (only with oxytocin)</td>
<td>2.7% *</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic fetal monitoring</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episiotomy</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum Extraction</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesarean Section</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* These numbers differ from the BMJ article where data for CPMs included forms of induction and stimulation only used by midwives and not comparable to hospital births.

**Satisfied Mothers**
- Only 1.7% of the mothers said they would choose a different type of caregiver for a future pregnancy

**Few Transfers to Hospital Care**
- Only 12.1% transferred to hospital intrapartum or postpartum
- Five out of six transfers were before delivery, most for failure to progress, pain relief or exhaustion
- Midwife considered transfer urgent in only 3.4% of intended home births

**High Credibility**
- Included all home births involving Certified Professional Midwives in the year 2000
- 5,418 women in U.S. and Canada who intended to give birth at home as of the start of labor
- Prospective – every planned home birth was registered in the study prior to labor and delivery

“Outcomes of planned home births with certified professional midwives: large prospective study in North America.” Kenneth C Johnson and Betty-Anne Daviss. *BMJ* 2005;330:1416 (18 June). This article and related letters to the editor are available online, free, at [http://www.bmj.com](http://www.bmj.com). (Use the search feature and type Daviss for the author.)