

Fact Sheet

Ideals vs. Reality in U.S. Births

	WHO Recommendations	CIMS Suggestions	2003 U.S. Stats (4.09 million births)
Birth Attendants	Midwives for normal pregnancy and birth	Access to professional midwifery care	Midwives 8% (328,000)
Place of Birth	Out-of-Hospital preferred	Where mother prefers	Hospitals 99.1% (4.05 million)
Electronic Fetal Monitoring	Not routine	Not routine	85.1% (3.3 million)
Drugs in Labor	Not routine	Only for complications	80%*
Induction of Labor	10% or less	10% or less	20.5% (840,000)
Stimulation of Labor	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	15.8% (645,000)
Episiotomies (Vaginal Births)	Systematic use not justified	Goal of 5%	26.9%** (780,000)
Cesarean Rate	10-15%	10-15%	27.5% (1.1 million)
Breastfeeding After Birth	Immediately	WHO-UNICEF BFHI Guidelines	67%***

- *WHO Recommendations* – taken from a report on the *Appropriate Technology for Birth*, published by the World Health Organization in April, 1985.
- *CIMS Suggestions* – taken from *The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative* from the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS), 1996, www.motherfriendly.org. BFHI = Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.
- *2003 US Stats* – most taken from *Births: Final Data for 2003*, National Vital Statistics Report Vol. 54, No. 2, September 8, 2005 http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr54/nvsr51_02.pdf.

* *Listening to Mothers Report*, October 2002, p. 18

** "National Hospital Discharge Survey 2002: Annual Summary with detailed diagnosis and procedure data," *Vital Health Statistics* 13, No. 158, March 2005.

*** *Mothering Magazine*, No. 112, May/June 2002