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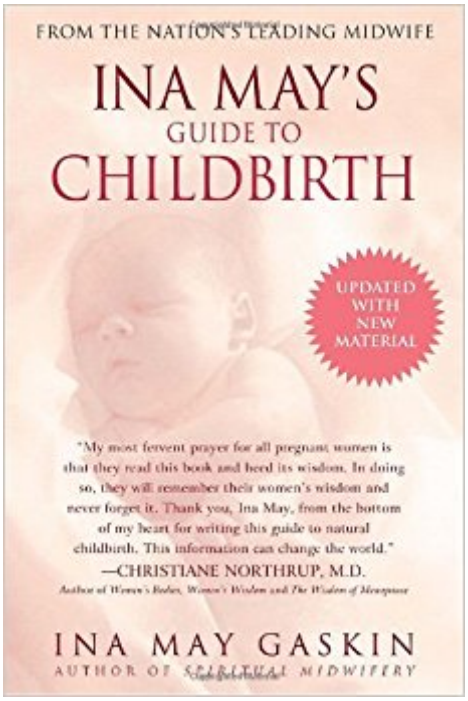
Ina May's Guide To Childbirth



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Synopsis

What you need to know to have the best birth experience for you. Drawing upon her thirty-plus years of experience, Ina May Gaskin, the nationâ ™s leading midwife, shares the benefits and joys of natural childbirth by showing women how to trust in the ancient wisdom of their bodies for a healthy and fulfilling birthing experience. Based on the female-centered Midwifery Model of Care, Ina Mayâ ™s Guide to Natural Childbirth gives expectant mothers comprehensive information on everything from the all-important mind-body connection to how to give birth without technological intervention. Filled with inspiring birth stories and practical advice, this invaluable resource includes:â ¢ Reducing the pain of labor without drugs--and the miraculous roles touch and massage playâ ¢ What really happens during laborâ ¢ Orgasmic birth--making birth pleasurable â ¢ Episiotomy--is it really necessary? â ¢ Common methods of inducing labor--and which to avoid at all costsâ ¢ Tips for maximizing your chances of an unmedicated labor and birthâ ¢ How to avoid postpartum bleeding--and depression â ¢ The risks of anesthesia and cesareans--what your doctor doesnâ ™t necessarily tell youâ ¢ The best ways to work with doctors and/or birth care providersâ ¢ How to create a safe, comfortable environment for birth in any setting, including a hospitalâ ¢ And much moreIna Mayâ ™s Guide to Natural Childbirth takes the fear out of childbirth by restoring womenâ ™s faith in their own natural power to give birth with more ease, less pain, and less medical intervention.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One of the very few stipulations my wife made after we learned we were going to have a child is that I read this book by the doyenne of natural childbirth in the U.S. While the tone of the book is much too touchy-feely/hippyish for me, I have to admit that it is well worth reading regardless of whether you're planning a natural childbirth or a fully tech'ed out hospital one. That said, it would be very easy to read it as gospel and get swept up in its giddy repudiation of modern medicine, so one should approach it with, if not a skeptical eye, at least with one's critical faculties fully engaged. There is also the potential that readers who are fully committed to a hospital birth may come away from this book feeling scolded, or as if their decision is somehow "wrong".The author is a superstar in the field of natural childbirth, largely as a result of her 35+ years work at "The Farm", a kind of birthing commune in Tennessee. The first half of the book is a compilation of natural childbirth stories written by mothers who've either done it at The Farm, or somehow in conjunction with the author. While these are certainly useful as illustrative examples of how it all goes down, they tend to get rather repetitive and could certainly stand to be scaled back a bit. And for those who know little about the birthing process, some of the terminology can be unclear. Finally, for those who might want to read this book on the subway (like me), be forewarned that there are some pretty graphic photos of childbirthing in this section.The second half of the book walks the reader through the entire process, mostly with the aim of explaining why modern medical childbirthing procedures are not based on the mother's health and needs, but are designed for convenience of the medical establishment.

I have read this book all the way through and am planning on attempting a natural birth in an NYC hospital in a very short time now. The OB has mentioned epidurals more than once as he believes that it is one of the great breakthroughs of modern medicine and for some situations it may be very beneficial. However, the hospital I will be going to will also allow a lot of leeway to have a less hospital driven birth. I will be working with a doula to make sure that my preferences are acknowledged and accommodated when possible (and a lot of them can be).That said, there were many things about this book that greatly annoyed me. The most prominent being the intimation that all modern medicine used in childbirth has horrible side effects. While I do get the impression that many of these drugs and procedures are overused I believe they were developed originally to help not control childbirth. Perhaps they have been abused over the past few decades and don't get the credit they deserve.Things I liked about the book: - The chapter 3 on pleasure/pain. The perception of pain influences how we deal with the sensations. - The chapter 4 on Sphincter Law. - The practical information in Chapters 6,7,8,and 9 dealing with labor and birth.Things I didn't like about

the book: - The quantity and quality of birth stories. There are to many and they are a little too granola for me and I'm pretty granola. Plus, they alienate husbands who aren't going to be as much a part of labor process. - The intimation that modern childbirth medicine is somehow bad. That sentiment is prevalent throughout the book and was a little offensive. It's not that the author didn't admit that it was had it's place but it was admitted only very reluctantly.

This book helped me change my life.After the necessary c-section birth of my son 5 years ago (I had pre-eclampsia), our new insurance company labled me as "high risk" and refused me maternity coverage. Since my husband and I wanted more children, I started considering a home birth with a midwife as a viable alternative. Needless to say my first birth experience put me emotionally on guard about my body's capability.As I was researching the safety of VABCs (vaginal birth after cesarean) and home-births, I came across Gaskin's 1970s book, Spiritual Midwifery. Its language was amusingly "hippy-ish," but the inclusion of positive birth stories was refreshing and inspiring. After reading most of it, I went in search of similar, more updated books.I found Ina May's Guide to Childbirth at a mainstream bookstore (being suprised at the lack of variety of birth experience offered on the shelf - is she the only person writing about homebirth nowadays?) Buying and reading this book new was one of the best emotional investments I have ever made in my life.The experience and knowledge I gained reading this book is similar to many of the sentiments expressed in these other reviews. It really gave me courage to welcome and joyfully (if a little nervously) anticipate the birth of my daughter in March of 2005.As for my labor, I would not call the sensations of the contractions "pain," I would call them "very heavy pressure." I credit this perspective to this book. Ina May (and her clients) helped me put contractions, transition, etc., into perspective. For example: Yes, I felt contractions every two minutes lasting about two minutes.

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