



The International Childbirth Initiative (ICI)

The 12 Steps (summary version) to Safe and Respectful MotherBaby-Family Maternity Care

- Step 1** **Treat every woman and newborn with compassion, respect and dignity**, without physical, verbal or emotional abuse, providing culturally safe and culturally sensitive care that respects the individual's customs, values, and rights to self-expression, informed choice and privacy.
- Step 2** **Respect every woman's right to access and receive non-discriminatory and free or at least affordable care** throughout the continuum of childbearing, with the understanding that under no circumstances can a woman or baby be refused care or detained after birth for lack of payment.
- Step 3** **Routinely provide MotherBaby-Family maternity care**. Incorporate value- and partnership-based care grounded in evidence-based practice and driven by health needs and expectations as well as by health outcomes and cost effectiveness.
- Step 4** **Acknowledge the mother's right to continuous support during labour and birth** and inform her of its benefits, and ensure that she receives such support from providers and companions of her choice.
- Step 5** **Offer non-pharmacological comfort and pain relief measures during labour** as safe first options. If pharmacological pain relief options are available and requested, explain their benefits and risks.
- Step 6** **Provide evidence-based practices beneficial for the MotherBaby-Family** throughout the entire childbearing continuum.
- Step 7** **Avoid potentially harmful procedures and practices that have insufficient evidence of benefit outweighing risk for routine or frequent use** in normal pregnancy, labour, birth, and the post-partum and neonatal period.
- Step 8** **Implement measures that enhance wellness and prevent illness** for the MotherBaby-Family, including good nutrition, clean water, sanitation, hygiene, family planning, disease and complications prevention and pre-and-post natal education.
- Step 9** **Provide appropriate obstetric, neonatal, and emergency treatment** when needed. Ensure that staff are trained in recognizing (potentially) dangerous conditions and complications and in providing effective treatment or stabilization, and have established links for consultation and a safe and effective referral system.
- Step 10** **Have a supportive human resource policy** in place for recruitment and retention of dedicated staff, and ensure that staff are safe, secure, respected and enabled to provide good quality, collaborative, personalized care to women and newborns in a positive working environment.
- Step 11** **Provide a continuum of collaborative care** with all relevant health care providers, institutions, and organizations with established plans and logistics for communication, consultation and referral between all levels of care.
- Step 12** **Promote breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact**, refer to the 10 Steps of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and integrate into practice, training, and policies.