

Fact Sheet

Ideals vs. Reality in U.S. Births

	WHO Recommendations	CIMS Suggestions	2004 U.S. Stats (4.1 million births)
Birth Attendants	Midwives for normal pregnancy and birth	Access to professional midwifery care	Midwives 7.9% (325,000)
Place of Birth	Out-of-Hospital preferred	Where mother prefers	Hospitals 99.% (4.07 million)
Electronic Fetal Monitoring	Not routine	Not routine	<i>No longer reported</i> Last reported 85.%
Pain Relief Drugs in Labor	Not routine	Only for complications	80%*
Induction of Labor	10% or less	10% or less	21.2% (870,000)
Episiotomies (Vaginal Births)	Systematic use not justified	Goal of 5%	23.7%** (667,000)
Cesarean Rate	10-15%	10-15%	29.1% (1.19 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.
- *2004 US Stats* – most taken from *Births: Final Data for 2004*, National Vital Statistics Report Vol. 55, No. 1, September 29, 2006 http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55_01.pdf.

No longer reported – In revising birth certificate reporting, NCHS no longer collects this information. Last reported rate (2003) is included here

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

** "National Hospital Discharge Survey 2004: Advance Data," *Vital Health Statistics*, No. 371, May 5, 2006.

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