

Childbirth in Finland

Childbirth educator and birth doula
Marjaana Siivola, Doules

Luennon järjestää Duo kahden kulttuurin perheille (duoduo.fi)
The lecture is organised by Duo for Intercultural Families (en.duoduo.fi)



Pregnancy and childbirth in Finland

- This lecture gives you an overview of what is the Finnish way of following your pregnancy, what are your options to deliver your baby and what are the routines during pregnancy and labor.
- This class is short introduction to the topic and focuses on pregnancy and beginning of labor.
- Medication, interventions, special circumstances and postpartum period is not covered.

Neuvola 1/2

We are pregnant! Where do we call?

- Contact neuvola when you have made your pregnancy test
- First appointment around week 7-10 of your pregnancy
- First or second appointment you will have an extended health examination and your partner should be present.
- If you want to have the Finnish Baby Package from KELA, you need to visit neuvola by the 16th week of pregnancy.

<http://www.kela.fi/web/en/maternitypackage>

Neuvola 2/2

What is neuvola?

- Neuvola is the maternity clinic
- Your pregnancy is followed up in neuvola
- You can find your neuvola from the city web page, since it is based on your residential area.
- You meet with a public health nurse 8-10 times during your pregnancy
- 2-3 appointments with your doctor
- Neuvola is for residents who are in the Finnish Social Healthcare system ie. who has the KELA card.
- If you don't have KELA card, you should look for private services

Routine checks at Neuvola

They follow up the pregnancy, your well-being, the baby's well-being and the whole family's well-being.

During your visit they routinely check

- Blood pressure
- Hemoglobin
- Urine for protein and glucose
- Weight
- Fundus measurement (your belly)
- Feel the baby from the top of your belly
- Listen to your baby's heartbeat after it can be heard with doppler

Screening during pregnancy

- 1-2 ultrasounds at a birthing hospital
 - Blood test screening for abnormalities
 - Free of charge or you pay the polyclinic fee (about 22e) if you have a KELA card
 - All are voluntary
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- No 4D ultrasounds. Those are private services.
 - Toxoplasmosis is screened only from risk groups. You can request it.
 - Group B streptococcal is screened only from risk groups. You can request it.

Guidelines and Precautions

- The Finnish guidelines during pregnancy are different from other countries
- Have common sense about choosing which guidelines you want to follow
- All countries have healthy children

- Most food guidelines are based on the risk of it to be polluted by bacteria or other harmful substance that can be harmful for the baby.
- Today food manufacture is safer than ever, so the risks are small, but are there. You will make the choice.
- Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus has a list of the guidelines with an explanation why some food should be avoided while pregnant (In Finnish). http://www.thl.fi/fi_FI/web/fi/aiheet/tietopaketti/ravitsemustietoa/suomalaiset/raskausaika/valtettavat_elintarvikkeet
- Today for example cream cheese manufacture has improved a lot and there has not been reported listeria epidemics in the last decades on eating cream cheese (In Finnish Evira.fi). <http://www.evira.fi/portal/fi/elintarvikkeet/hygieniaosaaminen/tietopaketti/elintarvikkeiden+riski-+ja+vaaratekijat/mikrobiologiset+vaaratekijat/ruokamyrkytyksia+aiheuttavia+bakteereja/listeriabaakteeri>

How to prepare for labor?

Prenatal Family Class
and
Childbirth Class

Prenatal Family Class

- Neuvola offers a family class, but not necessarily in English
- It can have for example 3-4 meeting prenatally and some postpartum meetings.
- Main cities has one in English. Ask your nurse in neuvola.

Here are some materials online for you in English

- Baby Journey (Helsingin ja Uudenmaan sairaanhoitopiiri HUS) <http://www.hus.fi/en/medical-care/medical-services/maternity-services/babyjourney/Pages/default.aspx>
- We are having a baby (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos THL) <http://www.hus.fi/en/medical-care/medical-services/maternity-services/babyjourney/Pages/default.aspx>
- Duo for intercultural families offers free lectures, chat and family classes <http://en.duoduo.fi/>

Childbirth Class - Prenatal Class

- Knowing the basics of childbirth will help you during labor
- Understand pros and cons of medications and interventions
- Make a letter to the midwife/birth plan where:
 - You introduce yourself
 - Write down how you have prepared for birth
 - Let them know what kind of birth you wish for
- Attend a childbirth class addition to the neuvola family class
 - Private classes in English can be found in several cities
 - Doules offers online childbirth class in English.

<http://doules.fi/in-english/childbirth-class/>

Birth - choice of location

- In Finland you have a choice of where to give birth.
- Most births in Finland occur in a hospital.
- We don't have birth centers yet
- You can also have a home birth, but it is not supported by the public healthcare system
- If you will deliver your baby in a hospital, you can choose within your hospital district (depends where you live).
- In the hospital you cannot choose your midwife
- Elective cesarean only for medical reasons

What can we do at home when the labor starts?

- Drink and rest and see if they stop.
- When you start having contractions they are often mild and you can go on with your daily living. You should rest and eat and do things that you enjoy. You can watch a movie.
- Go for a walk. Lift your knees high to allow the baby to descend
- During the night try to find a position that you can be in during contraction and rest in between.
- Alternate between rest and activity
- Change position every 30 min, unless you are sleeping

Additional tools

- Heat or cold pads in your back or belly
- Massage
- Relax between contractions
- Shower / tub / birthing pool
 - Tub can slow labor down in early labor
- Partners support is important. Hugs, kisses and encouragement takes you a long way.
- Vocalizing with low sounds
- Joga or dancing
- Relax and stay calm

Routine interventions during labor

- Breaking of water
- Monitoring of the baby's heartbeat and mothers contractions
- Internal exams
- Scalp electrode to the baby's head
- Synthetic oxytocin for 3rd stage

Pain Relief at the hospital

Addition to the non-medical pain relief mentioned earlier, at the hospital you have also:

- Acupuncture
- Aqua blister

Medical pain relieve

- IV painkillers in earlier labor
- Sleeping pills in early labor for the mom to get some rest
- Laughing gas: may need some practice, fast to work, fast to stop
- Epidural, spinal or combination
- Paracervical block: lasts around 1-2 h, late stage of labor
- Pudendal block: lasts around 30 min to an hour, late stage of labor, prior pushing

Important

- You are a client not a patient
- You have rights, but also responsibilities
- Find out about what kind of birth you are aiming for
- Find out about interventions and medications while pregnant
- New information is hard to comprehend when you are in labor
- Consider taking a childbirth class

Right after birth

- The baby is handed to the mother for skin to skin contact
- The midwife will check the baby while the baby is with the mother
- Partner can cut the cord if one wants to
- Baby can be on skin to skin contact with the mother for a good while
- First nursing is encouraged to take place
- Active third stage often takes place, oxytocin shot, for the placenta to be born.
- After placenta is born, they check it.
- You can shower and have something to eat
- It is not necessary to wash the baby at this point. Vernice on their skin protects them.
- You will transfer to the maternity ward about 2h after birth.

Postpartum hospital stay

- Hours to five days. 1-5 days
- Normal stay at the hospital is 2-3 days.
- Some hospitals has polyclinic births where the mother and baby can be discharged 6-24 h after birth.
- Often the baby is checked by a doctor 48 h after birth at the hospital
- Cesarean birth you might stay for 3-5 days.

Thank you!

Duo for Intercultural Families

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