

Do you Provide OB Healthcare to Somali Women?

See what Somali Women want you to know

Information from Somali Women's Focus Groups



Please provide me education prenatally on:

- **Purpose of prenatal visits**
 - “We don’t get enough education during pregnancy, sometimes we don’t understand the reason of seeing the doctor so many times, when the doctor tells me come back in two weeks I don’t go back for another four weeks, because I don’t understand the purpose of it, since I am fine.”
- **Whether or not I am a candidate for opening up female genital cutting scar tissue**
 - Counseling and procedure described in UpToDate: “Deinfibulation”
- **Difference between episiotomy and opening up female genital cutting scar tissue**
- **Contraindications of episiotomy** (a practice routinely done in Africa)
 - “If I had received education that I might not get any assistance as far as cutting me [episiotomy] to make the delivery easier it would be nice, but I was disappointed when that doctor said no **and I did not know why**. Back home they help you, they cut you [episiotomy], here no help at all.”
- **Things that can happen during pregnancy, labor and delivery:**
 - Assess individual preferences: i.e. some Somali women want know about risk of miscarriage and some do not
 - “Expected discomforts of pregnancy, to be better prepared for the pregnancy.”
 - What are legitimate reasons for caesarean section?
 - Fear that high C-section rates in some institutions are not necessary and might be economically driven
- **Nursing hotline # or triage #**
 - “Every pregnancy is different, sometimes you might be emotional, you can’t even take a joke, you take everything personal, I wish they had someone who can tell you what to expect, to tell that this is normal, provide some education”

When I’m in labor, please:

- **Provide overview/education about intrapartum care expectations as soon as possible**
- **Review risks, benefits and alternatives of medical interventions during labor**
 - “With my first baby when I requested epidural my provider just said if that is what you want then you get it, but with my second baby my provider explained to me that there are other options and benefits and side effects of epidural... I would suggest that providers provide education about interventions... Why are you doing what you are doing? What are the risk factors associated with the interventions?”

When possible, please:

- **Listen and communicate care**
 - “Listen to me when I am concerned about something”
 - “Ideal care to me means my doctor listens to me, and cares for me.”
 - “Good doctor, that listens to me, that is willing to help me, that provides me the care that I need, like if I am in pain, or discomfort, that will listen to me and treat me.”
- **Spend time during prenatal visits/labor**
 - Desire provider to sit down during visit
 - Desire provider to spend time with laboring Somali family
- **Provide option to see a Midwife or OB**
 - “For a woman to get ideal care during pregnancy and birthing mainly depends on the provider, for me I have five kids, and I only got what I consider ideal birth on my last one, because this time, my provider was a midwife. I would advise women who are pregnant to consider midwives.”
- **Female care providers**
- **Continuity of care**
 - “When your baby is delivered by someone who got a few minutes to review your chart and when the baby is delivered by a doctor that followed you for 40 weeks, it makes a big difference, it is someone that knows you, that you trust, or someone that you just met, they might not know what your values are, what your preferences are, it is hard.”
- **Be caring after a long labor, especially nurses:**
 - “Support from nursing team after delivery, the mother may be tired she may have been in labor for long time and exhausted from that, so it is necessary for the mother to have time to rest so the nurse can help with the baby.”
- **Involve Somali families in decision making**
- **Build trust**
- **Provide pamphlets in Somali language**
- **Offer CenteringPregnancy, group prenatal care:**
 - Women expressed desire to have: “a place where pregnant women can meet and share knowledge with someone facilitating”
 - “Somali CenteringPregnancy® combines monthly prenatal visits with group educational classes...an important space for Somali women to develop trusting relationships with their obstetric care providers.” - Fardous Guled, Chair of Perinatal Committee of Somali Health Board
 - Contact for information on current groups: fardous.guled@gmail.com

More information:

Ethnomed: <http://ethnomed.org/clinical/somali>
<http://somalihhealthboard.org>