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LABOUR OF LOVE

Meet the mums who love giving birth!

- More than two thirds of mothers say giving birth is a 'positive experience' - and a quarter actually 'love' being in labour
- 6% of mums claim they had an 'orgasmic birth'
- 36% plan the birth before they are even pregnant
- 73% of mums now happy to have a male midwife for the birth - but just 3% actually get one
- Call for more dads to share birth stories - as 96% of mums want dads to share their experiences but only half know a dad who's done this

Giving birth is often depicted as gruelling and painful - but a quarter of mums say they 'love' being in labour and giving birth.

A revealing new study shows more than two thirds of mothers (67%) describe giving birth as a very positive experience - with six per cent even claiming to have an 'orgasmic birth', where they found delivering their child pleasurable.

Overall the research, from video parenting site Channel Mum and the Positive Birth Movement, showed a quarter of mums (24%) said giving birth was much easier than expected, compared to just 20% who found it harder than they were prepared for.

Mums' favourite part of giving birth is just as the baby is being born, preferred by 41 per cent of women, followed by 27 per cent who claimed the moment they went into labour as their most enjoyable part of the birth process.

But the least liked time is pushing, with 38 per cent of mums finding it tough, along with a third (31%) who found the early hours of being in labour hardest.

The excitement around giving birth means almost two in five mums (36%) now plan the type of birth they want even before becoming pregnant.

To prepare, 92 per cent now watch or read birth stories from other mothers. The most popular source is hearing about friends' births, with three quarters of mums (73%) seeking them out. A further 58 per cent ask family members, 54 per cent watch TV shows like *One Born Every Minute* and a third (37%) go to an ante-natal group. One in five mums also watch birth videos on YouTube to get ready (17%), rising to 21 per cent of young mums under 30.

But there is still a lack of stories from dads sharing the birth experience. The research revealed an overwhelming 96 per cent of mums want to hear from dads but only 53 per cent knew of a dad

who'd shared his story - and just two in five (38%) said their partner shared his own story with other fathers.

The study of 2,209 mums also found the most wanted type of birth is water birth in hospital (34%) followed by normal delivery in hospital (33%), home water birth (15%) and normal home birth (12%).

However, just 40 per cent of mums actually get the birth they want, with 60 per cent not going to plan. Instead, the most common type of birth for the mums surveyed was natural delivery in hospital (32%) followed by emergency C-section (17%). And only eight per cent of mums surveyed got the most wanted type of birth, a water birth in hospital.

Of the mums who didn't get the birth they hoped for, two in five (41%) reported negative feelings with seven per cent even believing it contributed to them suffering post-natal depression.

But whatever the type of birth, 94 per cent of modern mums now go on to share their own birth story. A quarter of mothers (24%) post their story on social media, one in five at a support group and seven per cent make a video or post their experiences on parenting sites.

The most common reason was that they wanted to 'be honest' about birth, (61%) with half (48%) wanting other mums to know giving birth can be positive and a third (33%) to show you can get over a tough birth

And while 55 per cent of the 2,209 mums quizzed said they 'fell in love' instantly with their newborn, one in six (16%) admitted they did not bond straight away. A quarter of mums (26%) reported feeling shocked while six per cent were 'worried about the responsibility;' of caring for their child. However, 53 per cent agreed they were 'in awe' of their baby from the first moment they saw them. And almost three quarters of modern mums (73%) said they would be happy to have a male midwife, but just 3% actually had one for their ante-natal care or birth.

Commenting on the findings, **Channel Mum founder Siobhan Freegard** said: *"No other life changing experience has such a bad reputation as giving birth. Yes, it can be gruelling and it can go wrong, but it can also be amazing, empowering and even pleasurable, with a surprising number of mums saying they enjoyed an orgasmic birth. With more and more women coming forward and sharing their birth stories, mums-to-be are gradually getting a more balanced picture and realising most births are a positive experience for the whole family.*

"But it's time to hear more from fathers. They are fundamental in bringing a new life into the world and both mums and other dads benefit from hearing their experiences."

Milli Hill, birth expert and founder of the Positive Birth Movement said: *"The fact that giving birth can be a brilliantly enjoyable experience is a well-kept secret that is finally getting out! New developments such as social media, and our huge network of over 400 groups, where women can meet and tell each other their birth stories, mean that finally women are getting back in touch with the message that having a baby, rather than being something to fear, can actually be one of the most empowering and vital days of your life."*

For the most comprehensive set of video birth stories on the web, visit

<http://www.channelmum.com/topic/birth-stories/>

And to hear Dads talk about their experiences visit: <http://www.channelmum.com/blokestalkbirth/>

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For more information or an interview with Siobhan Freegard, please contact Lisa Malyon at Lisa@sensecommunications.co.uk or call 07525 204402.

NOTES TO EDITOR

- Survey methodology: A survey of 2209 UK-based mums was undertaken from 25th March 2016 to 12th April 2016.
- [Channel Mum is the UK's only video parenting site for mums](#). Recently launched by Netmums founder Siobhan Freegard OBE, it curates the very best parenting material from the fast-growing community of YouTube mum vloggers. Dubbed 'the honest face of parenting', Channel Mum has over 100 UK-based Vloggers already signed to the network, covering subjects from IVF to surrogacy to multiple births.
- The [Positive Birth Movement](#) is an organisation that believes that communication is the key to shaking up birth. By coming together, in real life and online, and sharing experiences, feelings, knowledge and wisdom, women can take back childbirth. Read their manifesto [here](#).
- Join Channel Mum's community on social media channels are: [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#).