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Continuity of caregivers for care during pregnancy and childbirth

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Background: Care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period is often provided by multiple caregivers, many of whom work only in the antenatal clinic, labour ward or postnatal unit. However, continuity of care is provided by the same caregiver or a small group from pregnancy through the postnatal period.

Objectives: The objective of this review was to assess continuity of care during pregnancy and childbirth and the puerperium with usual care by multiple caregivers. Clear benefits for women from continuity of care during pregnancy and childbirth. Care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period is often provided by multiple caregivers. The term 'continuity of care' refers to the actual provision of care by the same caregiver or small group of caregivers throughout pregnancy, during labour and birth, and in the period following birth. The review of trials found that women who had continuity of care by a team of midwives were more likely to discuss antenatal and postnatal concerns, attend prenatal classes, give birth without painkillers, feel well prepared and supported during labour, and feel prepared for child care. Resuscitation was also less frequently required for their babies.

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