

Ask Your Midwife

From a GateHouse
Media Investigation

Questions by an experienced mom:

Andrea Smith is a Missouri mother who lost her baby during a home birth

- How long have you been practicing and how many births have you attended?
- Have you been late to any deliveries? If so, by how many minutes?
- Where do you live and how far is that from my intended place of birth?
- Can you tell me about your partner midwives – the ones who will assist you at my birth or replace you if you're unavailable?
- What kind of emergency would involve a transfer to the hospital?
- If that happened, what hospital would I transfer to and how long would it take to get there?
- Have you ever been disciplined for your practice and, if so, why?
- Has a baby ever died or been severely injured under your care? What happened?
- Do you have a lawyer and have you ever been sued as midwife?
- Do you have a criminal history?
- Can you walk me through the complaint process?
- Can I see your informed consent document?

Questions by a former midwife:

Leigh Fransen is a former licensed and certified professional midwife

- What kind of midwife are you? Can I see your license and/or certification?
Leigh's note: Certified nurse midwife is the best. Even better is a certified nurse midwife with hospital admitting privileges. That's the situation in countries where midwifery is safer, like England and the Netherlands.
- Do you have malpractice insurance and, if so, for how much?
- Are you willing to change my due date if an ultrasound says something different than the date of my last period?
Leigh's note: If she says, 'Oh yeah, I do it all the time,' you're talking to someone who's dangerous.
- Have you ever been through a neonatal resuscitation program?
Leigh's note: Ask if she has ever resuscitated a baby and to walk you through the process.
- What would you do if I decided at the last minute I want pain relief at the hospital?
Leigh's note: The answer will tell you a lot about her attitude. If she says, 'You won't need it' and gives you a million reasons why you never need to go to the hospital, be careful. That's an indication she's more concerned about her own ego than about your comfort and your wishes.
- Are you willing to take high-risk patients?
Leigh's note: I wouldn't trust their clinical judgment if they said they take twins, breech babies or VBACs.

Looking for more information?

Check out the investigation online at gatehousenews.com/failuretodeliiver