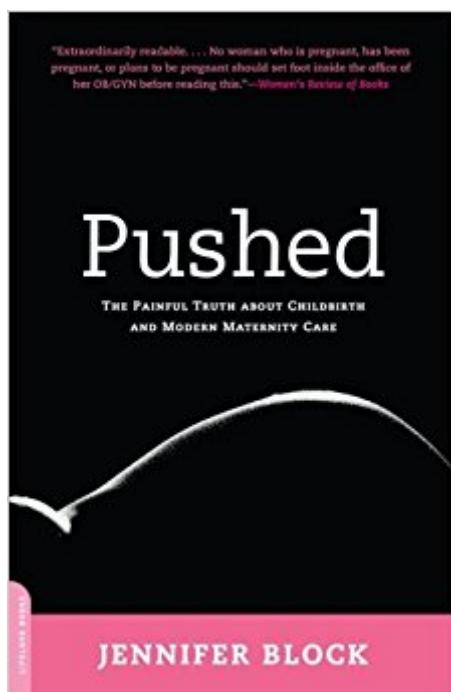


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# Pushed: The Painful Truth About Childbirth And Modern Maternity Care



## **Synopsis**

A groundbreaking narrative investigation of childbirth in the age of machines, malpractice, and managed care, *Pushed* presents the complete picture of maternity care in America. From inside the operating room of a hospital with a 44% Cesarean rate to the living room floor of a woman who gives birth with an illegal midwife, Block exposes a system in which few women have an optimal experience. *Pushed* surveys the public health impact of routine labor inductions, C-sections, and epidurals, but also examines childbirth as a women's rights issue: Do women even have the right to choose a normal birth? Is that right being upheld? A wake-up call for our times, Block's gripping research reveals that while emergency obstetric care is essential, we are overusing medical technology at the expense of maternal and infant health.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

According to writer and editor Block (Our Bodies, Ourselves), "the United States has the most intense and widespread medical management of birth" in the world, and yet "ranks near the bottom among industrialized countries in maternal and infant mortality." Block shows how, in transforming childbirth into a business, hospitals have turned "procedures and devices developed for the treatment of abnormality" into routine practice, performed for no reason than "speeding up and ordering an unpredictable...process

"A gripping exposé... Provocative and hotly controversial analysis of a side of reproductive rights

feminism seems to have forgot." -- Kirkus Reviews, (Starred Review) 5/15/07 "A stirring discussion of reproductive rights, informed consent, and the rights of the mother vs. the fetus... Recommended." -- Library Journal, 5/15/07 "The book is loaded with interviews, statistics and...some quietly deft storytelling." -- Chicago Reader, 6/29/07 "This is a worthwhile book for anyone who cares about reforming our health-care system--right from the start." -- Kansas City Star, 10/02/07 "[Block] really gets that maternity care is a woman's issue that all people should care about, not just mothers, and she has no agenda through a birth experience or professional work in maternity care. Pushed shines a spotlight on maternity care and asks important questions about the standard practices in America." -- BOLD Book Club, October 2007 -- This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Every pregnant woman or health care provider should read this book! It is a wealth of information and research that would cause anyone to pause and reconsider their treatment options and practitioner choices. The sway that money and Mal-practice insurance issues have over the decisions made for your health in ANY medical environment is ridiculous and clearly compromises the integrity of the field. I've been looking into becoming a birthing doula and am all the more inspired to come alongside pregnant couples who don't know their options (or that they even have any) and be a voice for and an educator to them. Thank God for this book and the time and effort put into bringing these issues to light, especially about an industry that makes money off of complicating a completely natural process that should not even be dealt with in medical settings except under rare and unusual circumstances.

I bought this book because my husband and I are thinking about trying to get pregnant some time in the near future, and as I was browsing books on the subject this came up. After reading the synopsis and the reviews, I thought that it might teach me something I didn't know (which, at that point, was a lot). So I bought it, and I'm very glad that I did. I learned about the different interventions that are pushed on women during labor in a hospital, and why, what the different kinds of midwives are, why some women opt for a home birth -- and that was just the tip of the iceberg. I feel much more informed now, and I am sure that when and if we have kids and I give birth, I will be much more prepared to stand up for myself and what I want because of this book. I have recommended it to several of my friends, because I think that no matter what sort of birth a woman wants to have, she should be informed about all of her options. Some of the other reviewers said that they found the book biased, but I did not find it so. The author clearly sees that there is a

problem with the way labor is managed in hospitals, but I think she was very evenhanded. Nor did I have a problem with the final chapter, when she gets into the abortion debate a little bit; it was done in the context of discussing women who have been forced into an intervention (or prevented from getting treatment) that is not in their own interest because the doctors are trying to save the baby (fetus). I found it thought provoking. To sum up, I really enjoyed the book, and I recommend it for anyone who is thinking about becoming a parent for the first time or having another child. (I say anyone because I think a father-to-be could learn a lot as well, and be better prepared to support his wife through the process.)

I read Jennifer Blocks "Pushed" in the 5th month of my first pregnancy. How lucky was I that this book came out right on time! A friend strongly recommended it to me and it was one of the best bits of advice I received during my pregnancy (another great bit was to pretend I was on my cell phone when walking down the street to avoid inane comments on my huge belly). Most importantly, this book showed me how important it is as a pregnant woman to sit up and take charge of your delivery. In the end, I didn't receive my ideal birth experience (I ended up with an emergency c-section) but I PUSHED back and stood up for myself as a patient in a way that I know that I wouldn't have felt informed enough to do if I hadn't read this book. "Pushed" effectively gives windows into the history of pregnancy and delivery in America and looks at the trends in both the insurance industry and medical practices. It is well researched and a strong example of good journalism. Ms. Block shows the solution for that "ideal birth" is a personal experience and personal choice. The issues are not black and white. Midwives are not a panacea. Doctors are not your enemy; they are struggling under the heavy foot of our current insurance system's structure. Your own silence is your enemy. I would have completely avoided a hospital delivery if I could have, but a medical condition made that impossible. Reading "Pushed" helped me to feel confident enough to ask questions, to ask for alternatives and to sometimes say no, because I did my homework, new my choices, and it was my right. I think Jennifer Block's work helps to reveal the over-reaching authority the medical industry has taken over the experience of pregnancy for women, infantilizing women by excluding them from full disclosure of the risks involved in the options that make it easy for doctors to control the natural pregnancy: pitocin, epidurals, episiotomies, fetal monitors. "Pushed" reminds us that the body, and the woman who owns it, has a voice and authority as well.

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