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Delivery in Germany and in Japan

Pregnant ladies visit the gynecologist for regular check-up and once the contraction starts, she will visit the hospital and have her baby there. After one week she will go back home. The whole process is basically the same here in Germany as well as in Japan. But still, some differences, I want to point out:

- Different health insurance systems,
- Function of the hospital,
- Cultural concept of family

Ad 1) Different Health Insurance Systems

Everyone in Japan and Germany should have some kind of health insurance. In Germany, there are two very different types of health insurance: Public insurance and Private insurance. All expenses of regular check-up and delivery are covered. In Japan, there is only public insurance. The insurance does not cover the normal pregnant check-up and delivery, only when medical problems arise. Instead they will pay a so-called congratulation money after delivery.

Ad 2) Function of the Hospital

In Germany, patients with public insurance can visit or enter hospital only after referral from the praxis doctor. Patients with private health insurance can visit hospitals by their choice. So, pregnant women visit the praxis doctor for regular check-up, but for delivery they enter the hospital. The role of praxis and the role of hospitals are clearly defined. In Japan, patients can visit hospitals of their choice. Hospitals have praxis function, too. In Japan, the pregnant woman can choose any doctor, as she likes. The basic rule is: From the first visit for pregnancy check up until delivery and post-natal check-up you should stay in the same clinic or hospital.

Ad 3) Cultural Concept of Family

In Germany, everything goes as couple. Of course, the husband will accompany her to the delivery room. He will take holidays to help his wife with the household and baby care. In Japan, to have a baby is not just a matter of the couple. That is a matter of the whole family, including the parents of the couple. So, most expected person for help is the grandmother. She will visit the new mother and will even stay with them. Before, it has been common to live together as three generations. When the due date is coming closer, the wife goes to her own parents and stays there until she is recovered fully. Nowadays, living together as three generations becomes less and less. But the custom, that the new mother stays with her own parents, separating from her husband around delivery, is still common.