

for. It seems that through the years women have been programmed to fear a natural event and yet at home here I was far more confident that my body knew what to do," said Jan.

"We did not go into this lightly. We felt able to make an intelligent and

home, rather than someone else's," said Jan.

FORMALITY

As no doctor would give Jan antenatal care on the basis of a home birth, they had to go through the formality of arranging for a hospital confinement. Jan's antenatal care was excellent.

along with her for her encouragement.

With all this activity going on, Emma woke up, came to have a look at how things were progressing, and assisted in the proceedings by holding a mirror so that Mum could see what was going on. She was excited and interested in the whole thing and was a great help.

At 2 am Anna was born into Martin's waiting hands, and immediately placed on Mum's tummy, by which time she was pink all over and breathing calmly.

Emma's reaction to the birth was "Oh look, it really is a baby. I wish my friends were here to see this." Later Martin cut the cord whilst Anna had her first feed at mother's breast.

On the now treasured tape recording of the event, Martin says: "OK my sweetie, look what you've got. Have a slurp of this."

"I was surprised how smoothly everything had gone," said Martin. "I expected it to be hard work for Jan, and it was. But I had the utmost confidence in her ability to cope. I believe the home and family environment enabled Jan to handle things without the use of drugs or gas and air."

DEFENDING WISHES

"For a long time I had been defending our wishes for a home birth," he said, "usually dwelling upon the negative side of our previous hospital experience, trying to convince all who would listen that we had a right to take this responsibility upon ourselves and not let it all get taken out of our hands. But now all that is behind us, and all the careful preparation has paid off."

"I have a happy, healthy and contented wife, mother and baby, and a four year old daughter who will never be afraid that birth is a mysterious, traumatic event, or that babies come from doctor's black bags or brought by storks."

Chronicle

HEALTH



The Davies family a few days after Anna's birth. Dad, Martin, mother Jan, Emma, four and Anna, two days.

A happy, normal home birth

Whilst controversy rages on the pros and cons of home birth, a Wanganui couple, Mr and Mrs Martin Davies of Bell Street, went quietly ahead with their plans for a happy normal home birth.

Martin assisted his wife Jan, 32, to deliver their baby girl Anna, almost 8 lbs, with just their other daughter Emma, aged four, and two friends present.

For Martin and Jan it was the culmination of careful planning for the home birth they had hoped for since the birth of their first child.

"I react badly to hospitals," explained Jan. "My first birth scarred me emotionally even though it was a so-called normal birth in hospital. However nice a hospital may be for some people, I wanted to be with family and close friends, rather than strangers just doing their job," said Jan.

ARGUMENTS

"We have listened to every argument against home birth, but I feel that there is a vast difference between accidental or spur of the moment home birth, and one that is responsibly and carefully planned for. It seems that

responsible decision and we had the courage of our convictions to do what we knew to be right for us," said Martin.

In New Zealand the Health Department allows for home birth. In fact it pays the attending domiciliary midwife, but it has to be in conjunction with a doctor to be lawful. Jan and Martin had a choice of three domiciliary midwives willing to assist. They were prepared to travel from Auckland, Wellington and Feilding.

The Davies' family approached eight doctors in Wanganui (including two gynaecologists) and also wrote to the local branch of the NZ Medical Association, but were refused support.

"We could have gone to any of the towns serviced by domiciliary midwives, but felt that we had the right to have the baby in our own home, rather than some-

"We were pleased that we had outlined our wishes for the hospitalised birth, with a six hour discharge in the event of having to go from necessity."

The couple had all preparations thoroughly in hand and had studied many books on the subject.

After a day of steadily increasing contraction, at 5pm on July 30, Jan relaxed in a deep bath for 2 and a-half hours, which she found really comforting. Martin rang two friends, familiar with home birth, who had been invited round to share the event. Later they all watched television whilst carefully timing the contractions which were now getting more intense.

Just before 1 am they moved to the bedroom, and got there just as the waters broke. Jan was encouraged to do exactly as she felt, with Martin puffing and blowing along with her for her