

Culture Report

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The Amish relocated to the United States from Europe in the early 18th century, with most of the group still residing in Pennsylvania. Changes in how the Mennonite-based church and lifestyle should go began about 1850, and the Amish communities split into two different belief systems (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024). The Old Order Group believes in their old-world traditions, and the New Order Group embraces technological advances while still maintaining the foundation of their traditions. The Arthur community of Amish is estimated to be about 2,000 persons (Wesner, 2023). The Amish communities in my area are the Arthur Amish which spans across Moultrie County, Douglas County, and Coles County, Illinois (Wesner, 2023). The Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital is where these communities go when needing medical care that cannot be done by traditional methods at their homes.

The religious belief of the Amish is that God has called them to live a simple life of faith, discipline, dedication, and humility. The Amish believe their religion should be practiced and seen in their actions of their daily lives (Discover Lancaster, 2023). As part of their simple life faith, you will see the Amish in plain clothes consisting of solid pastel or navy blue material. Women will have their hair covered to show their commitment to modesty, and men will be clean-shaven until they have married. The Amish believe that God has a personal interest in their lives, families, and communities and is the force that holds them together despite the pressures of the outside world to change with the times and be more modern (Discover Lancaster, 2023). Most health care needs are done by a "doctor" who goes door to door within the Amish community, utilizing home remedies and folk remedies passed down from generation to generation.

The Amish regard God as the ultimate healer. When dealing with pain or other health ailments, even at the end of life, the Amish will turn to their faith in God to get them through and

provide what they need to get better or have a peaceful passing. The Amish will utilize family traditional herbal remedies and do what they can within their community before seeking help at a modern hospital. Amish tend to stick with their community for prenatal care via Dulas and Midwives. Checkups in the hospital setting are spaced every eight weeks instead of every four due to lack of insurance and the community paying for the health care out of pocket (Business Bliss Consultants FZE, 2020). When there are about five weeks left before delivery, Amish women will use a unique formula comprised of various herbs, and it is believed to help make labor easier by calming the uterus, calming nerves, and easing pain (Business Bliss Consultants FZE, 2020).

Family is seen as the heart of the community. The Amish value time together and include everyone in their family group in everyday tasks and community events (The Amish Village, 2021). The Amish typically have a large family with 7 to 8 children and multigenerational units within one home (The Amish Village, 2021). Elders are respected in the communities and are treasured for the knowledge and wisdom they pass down through the generations.

Communication within the Amish community is very open. The Amish lack the idea of confidentiality regarding health care, like what those outside an Amish community expect to see. Women and men can talk to strangers but can decide not to. Amish prefer communication to be direct and do not favor passive-aggressiveness as they do not see how this is helpful in communication (Conlin, 2021).

The Amish typically eat the foods they grow and prepare on their homesteads. They will eat out at restaurants if their travels keep them from home over an extended period where they cannot get home to prepare a meal (Wesner, 2023). Due to the healthy diet of Amish women, the

incidences of prenatal diabetes and hypertension are low in the Amish culture (Business Bliss Consultants FZE, 2020).

The Amish community value living a simple life where they live the way God intended man to live. They do not try to stand out or take credit for their actions because this is boastful. The "doctors" within the Amish community do not talk about what they do, especially when treating a fellow Amish member, because that would be seen as the "doctor" playing the role of God (Conlin, 2021). The same thought process also applies to prenatal care and child-birthing experiences. If the Amish woman gives birth at home or a birthing center, the focus is on bringing the gift of new life into the world rather than on what was done to make it happen.

When working with patients of the Amish culture in the hospital setting, be mindful of how much the treatments, meds, and procedures cost. Amish do not have health insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid and rely on their community to help cover hospital costs if this is where they have to go to deliver their child. If it is not an absolute necessity, then advocating for the order not to be written would be beneficial in relieving some stress on how high the hospital bill will be. Amish women do not participate in modern medicines like epidurals for pain relief. If an Amish woman is a patient, then knowing ways to refocus her through Lamaze breathing, guided imagery, massage, and prayer is essential. Amish mothers will have a specific birthing gown they will want to wear. This will preserve modesty but still allow an opening for where the baby will be born and an opening on her stomach for skin-to-skin contact after birth (Amish Furniture Factory, 2023). Amish culture does not see the necessity of having the baby immediately start breastfeeding. Amish mothers will provide the baby with watermelon seed tea or jello water, which is thought to prevent jaundice in the baby (Amish Furniture Factory, 2023). It may be hours before the baby is breastfed after birth.

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